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POLAND

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LONDON
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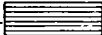

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

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POLAND

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE tragic fate of Poland has excited the deep, if not always very practical, sympathy of the British people with the cause of the Poles ever since the crime of the first partition was perpetrated. Recent events have deepened this sympathy and inspired it with a more definite purpose. Three times the tide of war, terrible in its devastation beyond all human experience, has swept backwards and forwards over that devoted land. Once more it must return, if the stricken country is at last to find peace and a reasonable measure of contentment. For the Polish Question has now resolved itself into this comparatively simple issue: Will Poland, in the words of the Grand Duke Nicholas, "at last be united under the sceptre of the Russian Emperor . . . free in faith, in speech, and in self-government?" or will she remain disunited, at the mercy of the German conquerors, a fragment of her perhaps endowed with an illusory independence, but all alike exposed to the

ruthless propaganda of German Kultur? That is the question.

The vast majority of the Poles understand the simplicity of the issue and have made their choice of allegiance; for, if the Russians have chastised them with whips, the Germans have chastised them with scorpions, and in the new spirit astir in the Russian people there is a larger hope of reconciliation, on the basis of a common liberty, than in the hardened temper of a young Germany which has been suckled by the Prussian wolf. Other voices, indeed, are heard from the Poles of the dispersion, muffled echoes of which come to us from amid the turmoil of the great struggle. There are Poles who see, or affect to see, in Germany the instrument of their deliverance. There are others, more numerous and less wholly unreasonable, who have revived the old trust in Austria, so often betrayed, and dream of a Poland reunited under the sceptre of a Habsburg prince. The weight to be given to these discordant opinions will be discussed in the last chapter of this book; the causes that have produced them will, it is hoped, be clear from its general argument. In view of the history of Poland since the partitions such differences of opinion were inevitable.

Meanwhile the tragic prominence given to the Polish Question by the war has awakened

an interest in it once more in this country. The power of the British Empire is engaged on the side of Russia, and in the ultimate settlement British public opinion will carry weight. But this opinion is, in the matter of Poland, all but wholly uninstructed, for the simple reason that the materials for forming an instructed opinion have been lacking. The foreign literature on the Polish Question, in all its developments down to the present time, is enormous. In Russia, in Germany, in Austria-Hungary it has remained a living issue of which the fateful importance has never failed to be realized, and it has been continually discussed and re-discussed in all its bearings. In France too, though in a less degree, the traditional sympathy with the cause of the Poles, and the consciousness of the importance of the unsolved problem of their future to the continental balance of power, have kept alive a certain interest in the development of their relations with the partitioning Powers. In the English-speaking world, on the other hand, public interest in the Polish Question seems to have died away all but completely after the failure of the insurrection of 1863. The sorry part played by the British Government in that tragic episode may well have contributed to this state of mind; for men grow weary of the tale of wrongs which they are conscious of

having no power to right, even had they the will to do so. However this may be, it is safe to say that even for educated people in England the history of the Poles practically ends in 1864. Since then only the most meagre accounts have reached this country of the situation of the Poles in Russia or Germany. Occasionally a fitful interest has been aroused by newspaper paragraphs which have revealed something of the methods of the Prussian bureaucracy in Posen or of the Russian bureaucracy in the "Congress Kingdom." From time to time writers in Reviews have sought to illuminate some special phase of the question. But it is significant of the general attitude of the British public that it has not been thought worth while to translate into English any of the important works in Polish and Russian, dealing with its more recent phases, which have been published and widely read in French and in German versions. It is still more characteristic of our insular unconcern for what is happening on the Continent that the few histories of Poland in English say nothing, or practically nothing, about the developments of the national life of the Poles and of their relations to the partitioning Powers during the last fifty years.

Yet it is precisely the developments since the insurrection of 1863 which must be studied by those who wish to understand this ques-

tion of Poland, to which recent events have given so fateful an importance and so poignant an interest. If we know nothing of the fortunes of the Poles, or of the movements of opinion among them, after 1864, we cannot possibly understand the issues of the present struggle so far as the future of Poland is concerned. For the year 1864, which saw the crushing of the last Polish insurrection, marked the beginning of a profound change in the attitude of the Poles towards Russia and the West respectively. The fundamental issues of the Polish Question, so far as the national aspirations of the Poles are concerned, are deep-rooted in the whole past history of Poland. But the particular issues which determine the sympathies of the Poles in the present war can only be understood in the light of the history of the last half-century.

To contribute to such an understanding is the object of this little book. It does not set out to retell the whole history of Poland, even in outline, but to collect out of that history and present in logical sequence those factors which have a direct bearing on the Polish Question in all its phases down to the present time. That such an attempt entails occasional summary treatment and notable omissions will surprise no one who knows the vastness and almost infinite complexity of the subject. But though the peculiar dangers

of generalization can hardly be avoided in a sketch of this character, it is possible to avoid the still more insidious danger arising from views and prejudices. The attempt, at least, has been made in the following chapters to make the treatment of the subject as objective as possible, to keep at a distance the natural prejudices arising out of the war, and to avoid that sentimentalism which, in too many recent utterances about the Russians and the Poles, has served only to confuse the issues. No attempt will be made to disguise the national faults which have brought upon the Poles so disproportionate a punishment, and the narrative will, it is hoped, make clear the import of the Grand Duke Nicholas's words: "One thing only Russia expects of you: equal consideration for the rights of those nationalities with which history has linked you." Equally little will any attempt be made to condone the past follies and cruelties of the Russian rule in Poland. The legitimate claim of Russia, as opposed to Germany, on the sympathies of the Poles and of their well-wishers does not lie in any contrast between their respective former policies towards Poland, but in the fact that the Russians, even before the war, had shown strong signs of repentance and amendment, whereas the failure of the Prussians in their policy of coercion had only hardened their hearts.

Finally, if we are to obtain a clear judgment on the issues involved in the war, it is necessary to be scrupulously just to the German point of view. This, it must be confessed, is an attitude exceedingly difficult to take up and to maintain. In the case of the Polish Question, however, it is rendered easier by the fact that German opinion is itself by no means united upon it. In recent years, especially, a vast amount of controversial literature has appeared in Germany on the subject, and thus, while giving credit to Prussia for the good work she has done in the economic development of her Polish provinces—which the Poles themselves acknowledge—it has been possible in the following pages to draw from responsible German writers a sufficient condemnation of the Prussian spirit of domination and of the policy of ruthless Germanization which has been its outcome. It must be remembered, however, that it is only the failure of this policy which has condemned it in the eyes at least of many of its German critics. For all the Germans have been schooled in the belief, founded partly in history and partly in legend, in the irreconcilable opposition between the Slav culture of the East and the Romano-Teutonic culture of the West. All have been inspired by their teachers with an almost fanatical faith in the superiority of

German civilization, and in its claim to ultimate supremacy; and on the eve of the war the increasing tendency in Germany—in contrast with the conciliatory disposition towards the Poles growing up in certain quarters in Russia—was to clamour for more and more drastic measures, in order to hasten the day of this supremacy in the Polish provinces. This clamour has been inspired partly by national aggressiveness, partly by a great fear—the fear of the silent advance of the Slavonic flood which for decades past has been eating deeper and deeper into the eastern borderland of Germanism. The world now has experience of the terrible effects produced by this combination of the spirit of conquest with the spirit of fear in the case of the Germans. Domination or decline is their watchword, and the cause of the Poles in the present war is, therefore, bound up with that of all other peoples whose freedom is menaced by the German effort to expand in order to live.

CHAPTER II

POLISH ORIGINS

GREAT obscurity surrounds the origins of the Slav peoples of Central Europe, and of the Poles among them. We know that a

thousand years ago the Slavs occupied a far greater extension of territory westward than is now the case. In the north their tribes were settled in all the countries along the shore of the Baltic as far as the borders of Holstein, whence the boundary southwards between them and the Germans was marked, more or less effectively, by the line of the Elbe and the Saale. Southward they had penetrated the whole length of the Balkan peninsula, and south-westward as far as the Carnic Alps and the Adriatic; but these southern Slavs were cut off from their northern brethren at the close of the ninth century by the great Magyar irruption into the central Danubian plain. The kingdom of Hungary, thus founded, has remained ever since as a wedge driven in between the Slavs of the north and south; and it is only in quite recent times that, with the advance of Russia southward, these severed branches of the Slav race have once more been brought into relations with one another.

The question of the causes and character of these great Slav migrations has a certain interest in view of the secular antagonism between Teutonism and Slavdom, of which the Polish Question in some of its more important aspects is a phase. The Slav is represented, both by his friends and foes, as by nature gentle, pitiful, submissive and

unaggressive—such, in short, as the Russian *muzhik* is painted for us in the novels of Tolstoy. This character, together with a certain native incapacity for political organization on a large scale, was indelibly impressed on the race by the conditions under which its distinctive qualities were originally developed. For the original home of the Slavs is supposed to have been in Polesie, among the great marshes of the upper Niemen and the Pripet, where even now, when drainage has done much to improve the country, a pale, undersized, dreamy and imaginative people leads a precarious and isolated existence in scattered island groups. It was the gentleness of the primitive Slavs, combined with a power of endurance which they had acquired in a bitterly hard school, which gave them their value in the slave-markets of the world, and, harried by mounted slave-raiders from the steppes in winter, and by slave-raiders in boats from the sea in summer, they became to such an extent the bondsmen of all mankind that the very name of their race became in many languages synonymous with the condition of bondage—of the slave.

That a race with such a character and such a record should have displayed, and still display, so astonishing a capacity for expansion has led to much discussion. In the main this expansion has not been, like that of the

Teutonic race, by means of violent conquest, but by means of peaceful penetration, the outward flow of population under economic pressure in the direction of least resistance. Where it has been by conquest, the impulse, it is argued, has not come from the Slavs themselves but from other races, Teutonic or Ural-Altai, which have mingled with them or led and driven them to war. Thus it is to Baian, the great chagan of the Avars, that the mighty expansion of the Slavs in the sixth century is ascribed. Westwards and northwards across the central plains of Europe, and southwards into the Balkan peninsula, they were driven before the Hunnish cavalry, forced ever to bear the first shock of the battle and, the victory gained, left behind in the devastated lands while the Avars rode back with their booty to their vast robber camps in the Danubian plain. Thus, when the short-lived empire of the Avars fell, the Slav peoples who had formed the outposts of the chagan's power were left, a jetsam of disjointed groups, throughout the length and breadth of Central Europe, to work out their own political destiny. In the south they were faced by the waning power of the Byzantine Empire; and from the eighth century onward, all along their western border, from the Baltic to the Adriatic, by the expanding power of the Germanic Empire.

With the fortunes of the southern Slavs we need not further concern ourselves. Of those of the northern group, in the east and west, it is necessary to trace some of the earlier developments, if we are to have a clear idea of the historic relation of the Poles to the Germans on the one side and to the Russians on the other.

Of the earliest relations of the East and West Slavs and Balto-Slavs—the Poles, Masurians, Lithuanians and Russians—next to nothing is known. It is not till the tenth century, when the German missionaries had penetrated beyond the Elbe and the Oder as the pioneers of Latin Christianity and Teutonic civilization, that there are any records of the relation to each other of the Poles and Russians. Such broken lights as their records throw on the subject reveal no such antagonism between these two great branches of the Slav race as afterwards developed. There was, indeed, a great similarity between them at this early stage. Both had evolved the rudiments of a political organization, and in both this was the work of an intruded Teutonic element. In the case of Russia this fact is clearly recorded. It was the Scandinavian *Ros*—Vikings from the Baltic—who, rowing on their plundering expeditions up the great northern rivers, gradually mastered the whole network of Russian

waterways, established settlements upon them, and ultimately, after subduing the Finns and Slavs, combined their petty states in a mighty empire under the Scandinavian dynasty of the house of Rurik. No record exists of any similar Teutonic influence in the case of the Poles. The legendary origin of the nation is, indeed, purely Slavonic—the creation of a peasant State between the Bug and the Carpathians under the peasant dynasty of the Piasts, just as the Czech kingdom of Bohemia originated in the rule of the peasant family of the Přemyslides—and the Poles claim to be the purest of the Slav peoples. But there is evidence to show that the Vikings, coming inland by way of the Elbe, the Oder and the Vistula, played their part in influencing the development of the Poles into a conquering race. Boleslaw¹ the Brave (992–1025), who created a Polish kingdom stretching from the Elbe to the Dnieper, and from the Baltic to the northerly bend of the Danube and the head-waters of the Theiss, depended for his power on an army of landless men who, from certain indications, would seem to have been Norsemen. However this may be, the relations of Boleslaw and his immediate successors with the Russian rulers of Kiev seem to have been

¹ For the pronunciation of Polish names see the Index at the end of the book.

intimate enough. Sometimes they were at war, sometimes in alliance against common enemies—the Czechs, or, more usually, the savage Prussians and Lithuanians. There were quarrels, but clearly there was not as yet any sense of a fundamental cleavage between the two peoples.

This cleavage was due primarily to the character of the frontier lands that later divided them. In the thirteenth century Poles and Russians were still struggling for the possession of Red Russia, the territory between the Carpathians and the Bug now forming East Galicia. But from the north the savage Lithuanians and Yatvyags had thrust themselves in like a wedge between them, and in the fourteenth century the Lithuanian empire, taking advantage of the weakening of the Russians by the Mongol invasions, extended itself southward over the whole of the present Western Provinces of Russia. Under this pressure the Russian centre of gravity had been transferred eastwards from Kiev, first to Vladimir and then to Moscow, and intercourse between the Poles and Russians was severed. Between Poland and Muscovy now lay the impenetrable morasses of the Pripet and Niemen, which formed at the same time the watershed between their river-systems. If we bear in mind that at that time the rivers were the

only highways of communication, we may realize the significance of the fact that those of the Russians ran to the north and south, while those of the Poles flowed to the west and north-west.

Not only was there no trade or other intercourse possible between the two peoples, but any influence from the outside world which penetrated to them came from widely different quarters. It is this which determined the lines of their divergence. The process began early with what might have been expected to be a unifying force, but proved the most powerful factor in their mutual antagonism—their conversion to Christianity. The tenth century was an age of great missionary enterprise in these regions. Greek Orthodox evangelists penetrated into Russia by way of the trading towns on the coasts of the Black Sea, while Catholic missionaries came from Italy across the Alps and down the Danube, or from Germany along the Baltic coast and up the great rivers. There was, indeed, as yet no formal schism between the Churches of the East and West, but for all practical purposes the breach between them, consummated in 1054, already existed, and there was keen competition between the missionaries of the rival systems. It was, then, an epoch-making event when, in 988, Vladimir of Kiev was converted to Christianity

in its Greek Orthodox form. The conditions which determined his conversion were similar to those which had led the Emperor Constantine, seven centuries earlier, to adopt Christianity. The Orthodox creed had made great headway among the Russians; Vladimir saw in it a powerful instrument for welding the loosely-knit realm together; and he imposed the new creed on his whole realm, carrying it with fire and sword northward, up the Dnieper and down the Lowat, as far as Novgorod. But the motive was political, not religious. Though he would tolerate no creed but Orthodoxy in Russia, he made no effort to interfere with the activities of the Catholic missions beyond his own frontiers, and even encouraged them. Thus he established from the first the tradition of Orthodoxy as inextricably bound up with Russian nationality.

The Christianization of Poland took another form. Here, too, the envoys of Rome and of Byzantium competed for a while; but it was the Catholic influence that predominated from the first, partly owing to the vigorous initiative of the Popes, partly to the fact that the trade route from Prague gave easier access to Poland for the missionaries from Moravia than any open to the Byzantines. Yet when Mieszko I, the father of Boleslaw the Brave, adopted Christianity,

it was again political motives that determined his choice of obedience. He needed powerful protection in order to secure his independence against the Romano-German emperors, who till the end of the twelfth century continued to assert their overlordship over Poland, and such protection he found in the Pope. In contrast with Orthodoxy in Russia, Roman Catholicism was from the first regarded in Poland as an instrument for realizing the international ambitions of the ruling dynasty, and this purpose it served. Neither Mieszko nor his immediate successors cared for Christianity in itself; it was merely an aid in their external policy. And for this reason it made but slow progress in their territories, and there was no attempt to impose it by force.

This original religious separation was of immense importance in its effect on the whole future development of the relations between the Russian and Polish peoples. It not only divided the peoples by a barrier of creed, but led to the development of their respective civilizations on wholly different lines. Russia, by adopting Greek Orthodoxy, came under the influence of the stereotyped Byzantine culture and the spirit of her national life and institutions received an oriental impress which it has never lost. Poland, in adopting Latin Christianity, was drawn into contact with the

West, and became one of the group of nations which have inherited and developed the Romano-Teutonic civilization. The contrast between the two cultures constitutes the crux of the Polish Question, so far as this concerns the relations of the Poles with the Russians. If, after nine hundred years, there is at last hope that the secular conflict arising out of it will end in complete reconciliation, this is largely due to the growing influence of Western ideas in Russia. It is also due to the chastened character of Polish nationalism, which has lost something of that uncompromising quality which in the past has so often led it to miss the substance in grasping at the shadow. This quality was not due, as the Germans fondly imagine, to any original fault and corruption of their Slav nature, which made the Poles a nation incurably vain and inconsequent, but is to be assigned to historical causes. The spirit of Polish nationalism, in short, as it has been exhibited during the last hundred years, can be explained only as the outcome of the character and constitution of the former Polish State, and of the causes and methods of its overthrow.

CHAPTER III

THE EXPANSION OF POLAND

THOUGH the tragedy of their fate has made the Poles a people conquered and oppressed, their immemorial tradition was that of a conquering race; and to this tradition they cling, their aim being not liberty alone, but also the right to assert their supremacy within the limits of their former empire. The limits of this empire fluctuated greatly, and its expansion was not continuous from the beginning. The kingdom of Boleslaw the Brave was partitioned by his grandson Boleslaw III, on the eve of his death in 1139, and Poland remained for more than a century and a half split up into a series of rival principalities, until the greater part of it was reunited, early in the fourteenth century, by Wladyslaw Lokietek, duke of Great Poland, who in 1320 assumed the title of king.

It was during this "partitional period" that the seed was sown of the rich crop of troubles growing out of the relations of Poland with Germany, which forms another aspect of the Polish Question. From the days of Mieszko till the close of the twelfth century the German emperors had claimed, and often effectively exercised, overlordship over the Polish princes. The assumption by

Wladyslaw of the royal title marked the definitive repudiation of this claim, but not the end of German influence. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there was, indeed, an ever-increasing pressure of German expansion eastwards. Under the Saxon and Franconian emperors, from the tenth to the thirteenth century, not only had the boundaries of the empire advanced to the line of the Oder and the Bobr, embracing the still Slavonic countries of Bohemia and Moravia, but the frontier line between the Slav and German races, which in the time of Charles the Great had been the Elbe and the Saale, was advanced beyond the Oder, Silesia—though still under Polish rule—becoming completely Germanized. This process was largely the result of the policy of the Polish princes themselves, who, especially after the depopulation of the country by the Tatar invasion of 1241, encouraged German peasants to settle on waste lands and founded cities which they peopled with German immigrants.

Even more important, from the point of view of this onward pressure of Germanism, was the establishment early in the thirteenth century of the military order of the Teutonic Knights in the debatable territory between Germany, Poland and the savage Balto-Slavonic tribes of the Baltic coast lands. The Teutonic Order had been founded in

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1191 at Acre in the Holy Land, where its headquarters remained for a hundred years. The fact that its members were all of German nationality, however, suggested the deflection of their energies from fighting the infidel in Palestine to fighting the pagans on the north-eastern marches of Germany. The invitation came to them from Christian, missionary bishop to the Prussians, who had received from the Polish duke of Masovia a portion of the district of Kulm, between the Vistula and the Memel (Niemen), as a fief, and had there founded the military order of Dobrzyn to help him reduce his refractory flock to obedience. Since neither his own preaching nor the prowess of the knights could avail to break the stubborn spirit of the Prussians, he invited the assistance of a branch of the Teutonic Knights who had settled in Transylvania and, proving too independent, had recently been expelled by the King of Hungary. The Grand Master of the Teutonic Order at this time was Hermann of Salza, whose relations with the Emperor Frederick II were a warranty of his imperialist views. The bishop's invitation was accepted, and the Order was established at Kulm, the Knights of Dobrzyn being incorporated in it. In 1229 the Order began the conquest of the Prussians, building castles to guard each step of its advance—among others the

famous fortress of Thorn, named after Toron in Palestine. In 1230 the Duke of Masovia, glad to have a barrier between his territories and the Prussian savages, made over to the Order the whole of the district of Kulm. In 1227, by their union with the German Knights of the Sword, who since 1201 had been reducing Livonia to the law of the Gospel, they also acquired this country. In 1234, by surrendering their lands to the Pope and receiving them back as a fief of the Holy See, they obtained the status of a practically independent principality. Thus was established to the north of Poland the vigorous German power which, after many vicissitudes, was ultimately to fall under the dominion of the Hohenzollern Electors of Brandenburg and so develop into the modern kingdom of Prussia.

One effect of this expansion of Germanism eastwards by colonization and conquest was to force the Lithuanian tribes to combine for purposes of defence. The thirteenth century, accordingly, saw the beginnings of a Lithuanian principality under Ryngold and his son Mendovg, the latter of whom in 1260 succeeded in throwing off the yoke of the Knights of the Sword. But it was in the fourteenth century that Lithuania expanded into a formidable power. Gedymin (1316-41), the second of a new dynasty of rulers, not only

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consolidated his realm by wise laws and the introduction of the elements of western civilization, but led his fierce hosts to the conquest of Black Russia and of all the Russian principalities as far south as Volhynia. His empire was partitioned at his death, but in 1345 it was reunited by agreement among his sons. Olgierd, who had been baptized into the Orthodox faith, was recognized as Grand Prince of Lithuania and reigned till his death, from his capital at Vilna, over an empire which embraced all the present Western Provinces of Russia.

We are now in a position to survey the international situation of the Poles at the time when Wladyslaw Lokietek, crowned King of Poland in 1320, began anew the process of their unification and expansion. To the south Red Russia (Galicia), the original seat of the Piast power, was an independent principality under the influence of the Lithuanians, and beyond the Tatra Mountains and the Carpathians lay the Magyar kingdom of Hungary. To the south-west the Giant Mountains (Riesengebirge) separated the medley of Polish principalities in Silesia from the kingdom of Bohemia, which in the thirteenth century Ottokar II had expanded temporarily into a mighty empire, and whose kings continued to lay claim to the shadowy crown of Poland. On the west were the powerful

Marks, or border states, of the Romano-German Empire, restored to fresh vigour by the genius of Rudolph of Habsburg, founder of the fortunes of the present reigning dynasty of Austria-Hungary. To the north was established the aggressive power of the Teutonic Knights, the headquarters of whose Order had been transferred, after the fall of Acre, first to Venice and then, in 1308, to Marienburg on the Vistula. On the east lay the new and vigorously expansive power of the Grand Princes of Lithuania, which cut off the Poles from all contact with the Russians, who had been driven from their sacred city of Kiev to found a new centre in Muscovy.

It was their relations with this last power that did most to determine the future of the Polish empire. Both the Poles and the Lithuanians were equally threatened by the aggressive spirit of the Teutonic Knights, who were fast losing any religious character they might ever have possessed and, recruited as they were from the chivalry of all Europe, constituted a fighting force as efficient as it was cruel. In 1325 Wladyslaw Lokietek entered into an alliance against them with the Grand Prince Gedymin, the first proof of the conscious community of interests between Poland and Lithuania which was ultimately to lead to the union of the two countries. There were, indeed, cases of quarrel

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enough between them. They were, for instance, rivals for the reversion of Red Russia, about which, under Casimir the Great (1327-70), son and successor of Wladyslaw, they came to blows. But the consciousness of their common interests was too strong to allow the breach to widen. The quarrel was ended by a compromise under which Red Russia was partitioned, Casimir receiving as his share what is now East Galicia, with the capital Lemberg (Lwow), which was thus definitely incorporated in the Polish kingdom. The same powerful motive led, after the death of Louis the Great, King of Poland and of Hungary, to the marriage—sorely against her will—of his heiress Jadwiga with Jagiello, Grand Prince of Lithuania, who embraced Catholicism, and as King of Poland in right of his wife took the name of Wladyslaw II. The union thus effected was a purely personal one, and it was soon found to be impracticable. The Lithuanians, jealous of their independence, disliked being subject to a Polish king and they differed from the Poles in race, culture and, more important than either, religion—for many were pagans still, and of the boyars, or nobles, two-thirds belonged to the Orthodox Church. Accordingly, in 1401, Wladyslaw made over the Grand Duchy to his brother Witowt, on the understanding that the two States were to

have in all things a common policy, an understanding which was elaborated with much detail in the so-called Union of Horodlo in 1413. Thirty-four years later, under Wladyslaw's son Casimir IV, they were again united under his single crown, but it was not till after more than a hundred years had passed that they were finally amalgamated, in 1569, by the Union of Lublin, and even then the union was an uneasy one. Thus from the first are apparent those antagonisms which, as will be pointed out later, go a long way to vitiate any natural claim that the Polish irredentists might have to include the Western Provinces of Russia in a restored Poland.

At the time of the accession of the Lithuanian dynasty nearly all the external conditions were defined that were to determine Poland's fate as a power. To the north the conquest of Samogitia in 1378 by the Teutonic Knights had linked up Livonia with the rest of their dominions, consolidated their power over all the Baltic coast lands from the Vistula to the Gulf of Finland, and cut off the vast territories of the Polish-Lithuanian dynasty wholly from access to the northern seas. Clearly it would be an object of the Polish kings to overthrow this power and thus recover their Baltic sea-board. Westward and southward, on the other hand, there was nothing to be gained by an aggressive policy.

Silesia had been completely Germanized, and was hopelessly lost to Poland precisely at this time, when the petty Silesian dukes formally accepted the suzerainty of the crown of Bohemia. With the Germanic Empire the frontiers were already defined as they remained until the Partition of 1772. It was otherwise with the frontiers on the east and south-east. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania stretched its vast and loosely-knit bulk over practically the whole of the basin of the Dnieper, east of which it included the modern Russian Governments of Smolensk, Mogilev, Chernigov and Poltava, while from north to south it extended from the latitude of Moscow to the coast of the Black Sea between the mouths of the Dnieper and the Dniester. To the north of this lay the dominions of the Teutonic Knights and the republic of Novgorod; to the north-east the increasingly aggressive power of the Grand Princes of Moscow; to the south-east the dissolving empire of the Tatars of the Golden Horde. Of all this vast frontier, north, east and south-east, there was no part that was stable and fixed, and the history of its fluctuations is that of the Polish-Lithuanian empire in its relations with successive conquering races—the Tatars, the Turks and the Russians. It was fateful for the whole future relations of Poland and

Russia when, in 1380, Dimitri of the Don overthrew the khan of the Golden Horde on the field of Kulikovo, and so established that primacy of the Grand Princes of Moscow which a hundred years later, after the Turkish conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Ivan III, first tsar of Muscovy, was to expand into a claim, for himself and his successors, to the inheritance of the divine authority of the Orthodox Emperors of the East.

For nigh on two hundred years, from 1386 to 1572, Poland was ruled by sovereigns of the Lithuanian dynasty of Jagiello, a strong and able breed of princes for the most part, who maintained and increased her position as a great European Power. It is not necessary, for the purposes of this study, to trace the complicated history of their diplomacy or their wars, of which it will suffice to give the results in broad outline. The most immediately important of these results was the steady expansion of Poland northwards at the expense of the Teutonic Knights. In 1410 the allied Poles and Lithuanians defeated them severely at Tannenberg, and in the following year a treaty was signed at Thorn by which Samogitia and Dobrzyn were ceded to Poland. Some years later the growing discontent of the Prussian country gentry and burghers with the oppressive rule of the Order gave the opportunity for a still more

decisive advance. In 1454, at the invitation of the "Prussian League," Casimir IV proclaimed the annexation to Poland of the Prussian provinces. Twelve years of devastating war with the Teutonic Knights followed. But in the end the Poles conquered, and by the second treaty of Thorn, signed in 1466, Poland recovered Pomerelia, the districts of Kulm and Michalow, the bishopric of Ermeland, and the cities of Marienburg, Elbing, Danzig and Thorn. The Teutonic Knights, reduced to the status of vassals of the Polish crown, were confined to Prussia proper, with their capital at Königsberg. Henceforth the Grand Master was to sit on the left of the King in the Polish diet, and half the knights were to be of Polish nationality. In 1526 the Grand Master Albert of Brandenburg-Anspach embraced Lutheranism, secularized his territories and made them into an hereditary duchy. East Prussia was thus added to the dominions of the House of Hohenzollern, but it remained a fief of Poland until in 1656 its independence was secured by Frederick William I, the "Great Elector" of Brandenburg, as the price of his alliance with Poland against Sweden.

In 1526, the year of the secularization of Prussia, the duchy of Masovia, with its capital Warsaw, which for five hundred years

had maintained an independent existence, lapsed to the crown of Poland through the extinction of its line of dukes. In the extreme north the Teutonic Knights still maintained themselves in Courland and Livonia, but before long they needed the help of Poland against the attacks of the Muscovite Tsar, and in 1561 the Grand Master Gotthard Kettler, following the example of Albert of Brandenburg, secularized his territories, and, as first duke of Courland, consented to hold them as a fief of the Polish crown. Thus, by the end of the Jagiellonic period, Poland had once more gained control of the Baltic sea-board and of the great rivers which were the channels of communication for her trade northwards. It was, however, a question of feudal suzerainty, not of national assimilation. West Prussia, indeed, then as now was populated mainly by Poles; but the duchy of Prussia remained an isolated outpost of Germany, and in Courland and Livonia the German element continued to dominate. The Prussian Germans, descendants of a rough fighting stock, were never content with their subordination to an alien crown. Their chance connection with the Electorate of Brandenburg was to give them independence, and later on to make them the nucleus of that powerful Kingdom of Prussia which helped to tear Poland to pieces and continues to hold in

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unwilling subjection the population of the Polish provinces which fell to its share.

Meanwhile there had begun along the eastern frontier of the Jagiellonic empire that mighty contest with the rising power of the Russian Tsars which, two hundred years later, was to issue in the ruin of Poland. Ivan III, "the ruler and autocrat of all Russia, the new Tsar Constantine in the new city of Constantine Moscow," having reduced the independent Russian republics and principalities to obedience, turned his eyes westwards to Lithuania, which offered a tempting field for his ambitions. The personal union with Poland had been broken once more by the death of Casimir IV in 1492; the majority of the people of the Grand Principedom were Russian by race and Orthodox in creed; in its centre lay Kiev, the original seat of the princes of the House of Rurik and the holy city of Russian Orthodoxy. Ivan, proclaiming himself the protector of Orthodoxy in Lithuania, carried his arms into the country and in 1503 succeeded in annexing Chernigov and certain other towns for a time to the Muscovite dominions. His policy was continued by his successor Basil III and, with still greater persistency, by Ivan IV, "the Terrible." The latter succeeded in 1569 in wresting Smolensk and other eastern provinces of Lithuania from Sigismund II, the

last prince of the House of Jagiello, though they were reconquered by Sigismund III in 1617. More significant of future developments, however, were Ivan's efforts to open up communication with western Europe and to obtain for Russia a sea-board on the Baltic by the conquest of Livonia. These efforts failed, for the Swedes and Danes were equally interested with the Poles, the Lithuanians and the Teutonic Knights in preventing their success, but they pointed the path which many years later Peter the Great was to follow to a triumphant issue. Russia was destined to pass through a serious internal crisis, which all but destroyed her nascent power, before the accession of the House of Romanov opened a new era in her history, and one more fatal to the empire of the Poles. So far, during the Jagiellonic period, the main result of the increasing pressure of the Muscovite Tsars on the eastern border had been to promote that closer union of the Poles and Lithuanians of which the stages have already been mentioned.

Before concluding this sketch of the Polish-Lithuanian power at the period of its widest extension it is necessary to say something of those regions to the south-east, the Ukraine—the country “on the border”—where the limits of this power were most ill-defined. Here on each side of the lower reaches of the

Dnieper, whence the great steppes stretch eastwards to the Ural Mountains, was the debatable land between the Poles and Lithuanians and the Tatar nomads. Into this no-man's-land had gradually filtered fugitive peasants and serfs from the north, mainly Ruthene by race and Orthodox by religion, who settled on the plains and maintained a frontiersmen's existence in constant war with the Tatars. From these enemies they learned all the arts and crafts of the warfare of the Steppes, and from them they borrowed their name of Cossacks—*Kazaki*, or free-booters. Though nominally under Lithuanian rule, they really formed free democratic communities which eked out a precarious existence by brigandage at the expense of the Tatar khans and piratical raids on the Turkish trading towns on the Black Sea—for they were bold mariners as well as excellent light horsemen.

For many years they were a source of grave inconvenience to the Polish crown, their exploits leading to international complications with the Khan of the Crimea and the Sultan of Turkey. But in 1576 Stephen Batóry, the newly elected King of Poland, who as Prince of Transylvania had learned to appreciate the fighting qualities of these unquiet neighbours, organized 6000 Cossack families into a militia, under a Polish *hetman* or chief, to

guard the frontier against Tatar raids, at the same time ordering that those not included in this organization should have the status of ordinary Polish peasants. But the Cossacks objected to serving under a nominated hetman, and those not in the militia resented bitterly their depression to the condition of serfs. In 1590, accordingly, many of them migrated southward and set up an independent community, of which the headquarters was the island of Hortica below the falls of the Dnieper—whence their name of Zaporozhian Cossacks (from *za*, behind, and *porogi*, the rapids). This famous community maintained its democratic organization, but it was taken into the pay of Poland and its elected hetman received the insignia of his office from the Polish king. It was the attempt of the Poles to make their sovereignty effective, by assigning the lands to Polish nobles and carrying on a vigorous Jesuit propaganda against the Orthodox faith, that led, towards the middle of the seventeenth century, to the great Cossack rising, under the hetman Bogdan Chmielnicki, by which the Polish empire was all but shattered. The Cossacks, now in alliance with the Tatars, burst like a tornado into Poland, and in 1649 the Poles were compelled to recognize the demands of Chmielnicki, who for a year and a half ruled the Ukraine as an independent prince. In 1658, however,

he was routed by the Poles at Beresteczko, and three years later, unable to maintain himself unaided against the Poles, he appealed for help to the Tsar Alexius, as protector of the Orthodox faith, and transferred his allegiance to Russia. A war of thirteen years followed between Poland and Russia, during which Charles X of Sweden also took the opportunity of invading Poland. The final outcome as between Russia and Poland was that, by the Peace of Andrussowo in 1667, the overlordship of the Cossacks was divided between the two Powers, the frontier of Russia being advanced to the Dnieper. The holy city of Kiev was thus once more restored to the Russians, and Poland was reduced within the limits which she retained until 1772. This was the most important result of the Cossack rising, but the short-lived principality of the Ukraine is not merely of historical interest. It revealed the existence of a separate Ruthene or Little Russian national consciousness which, obscured for more than two centuries under a double oppression, has become in modern times articulate again in the Ukrainophil movement.

In thus sketching the process of the expansion of Poland during the period of the rule of the Jagiellonic dynasty it has not been necessary to trace all the complicated relations of Poland with the Powers of

central and southern Europe—the Empire, Bohemia, Hungary and, after the ruin of Hungary on the disastrous field of Mohacs in 1526, the Ottoman Empire. It is sufficient to know that the genius of its Lithuanian rulers had raised Poland, by the close of the sixteenth century, to the position of a first-class European Power. In order to understand how it is that Poland has become the shadow of a great name, it is necessary to examine the nature and internal constitution of this Power, of which the inherent weaknesses led to its downfall.

CHAPTER IV

THE POLISH BODY POLITIC

THE ultimately determining cause of the downfall of Poland, as the Poles themselves have since recognized, was the fact that they had never developed a true national consciousness. Like the Turks and the Magyars, the Poles were a conquering race which never amalgamated with the conquered peoples, as the Franks had done in Gaul and the Normans in England, to form a united nation. The principle on which they based their power was very frankly stated by Archbishop Naruszewicz in his *History of the Polish*

Nation, published in 1788, which was an attempt to settle the question, then much agitated, of the fundamental constitution of the ancient kingdom of Poland. According to him, the Poles in early days conquered the country of the Vistula and the Warta, dividing the land among them and reducing the original inhabitants to slavery. The land-owners, whether great lords (*pans*) or petty gentry (*szlachta*), formed the Polish people; the slaves were the peasants or serfs.

This doctrine of conquest, as applied to the relations of the governing classes and the mass of the people, which was to prove so fatal to Poland, was little more than a pretext to justify an intolerable oppression which had its origin in causes even less respectable. Until towards the end of the fourteenth century the condition of the Polish peasants had been as tolerable as that of the same class in the countries of western Europe; but in 1374 the Angevin King Louis granted to the nobles certain privileges by which the peasants were reduced to servitude, and from this time until the death of Sigismund II Augustus in 1572 a gradual system of spoliation went on, till in the end the serfs were robbed of every civil and political right. All the land, as well as the serfs living upon it, became the absolute property of the lords, who had the power of life and death over

their slaves and uncontrolled jurisdiction within the often enormous area of their estates. How they exercised it we can judge by a quotation given by the historian Lelewel from an eighteenth-century writer. "The nobles," he said, "regard the cultivator and the plebeian as dogs; that is the expression used by these abominable men, who, if they kill a peasant, whom they call the rubbish of the earth (*chlop*), say they have killed a dog."

Wherever the Poles succeeded in establishing their influence this wretched system was also extended. In Lithuania, at the time when the Grand Prince Jagiello became King of Poland, the peasants were free cultivators. But the new intimate relations with Poland led to the introduction of Polish ideas of nobility; at the time of the Union of Lublin in 1569 the Lithuanian peasants had lost most of their liberties, and two centuries later their condition was as miserable as that of their fellows in Poland proper. It was to escape from these intolerable conditions that the bolder spirits among the subject peoples migrated southwards to form the free Cossack communities. Later, during the successive crises of Poland's fate from 1772 onwards, the more liberal of the Polish nobles themselves saw the necessity of reconciling the peasants to the national cause. But, though much

was said and promised, nothing was done, and it was not till after the final ruin of the cause of Polish independence in 1864 that the serfs were emancipated, not by the Poles but by the Russians, and not for Polish but for Russian ends.

In addition to this vast social, economic and political gulf between the Polish "nation" and the enslaved masses of the people there lay between them also, in the greater part of the Republic, a religious barrier. For, while the Poles were Catholics, their White Russian, Ruthene and some of their Lithuanian subjects belonged to the Orthodox Eastern Church. Up to the time of the Reformation their Catholic faith had sat somewhat lightly on the Poles; they had shown none of that proselytizing zeal which distinguished the Russians; and during the sixteenth century Protestantism made such headway among them that it seemed likely that this would become their national religion. But this was changed when, in 1565, King Sigismund II accepted the decrees of the Council of Trent and invited the Jesuits to re-establish the faith in his Kingdom. Their success introduced a new, more intolerant, type of Catholicism and strengthened the antagonism between the Russians and the Poles by adding a fresh motive of religious hatred. Henceforth Catholicism became for the Poles what Ortho-

doxy had long been for the Russians, the symbol and guarantee of their national unity and race predominance.

To cut off the subject populations, notably in the debatable frontier provinces, from religious intercourse with Muscovy became now an object of Polish policy. This was achieved, in 1595, by the so-called Union of Brest-Litovsk, proclaimed at the instance of the Metropolitan of Kiev, under which the Orthodox communities in Poland-Lithuania were forced or cajoled into repudiating the obedience of the Metropolitan of Moscow and accepting that of the Pope. The great Uniat Church, or Church united with Rome, thus created, which retained the Greek rite—*i. e.* ritual, organization and discipline—while submitting to the Roman obedience, has remained ever since a bone of contention between the Russians and the Poles, whether in Poland proper, where it is strong in the south-eastern Ruthene districts (Cholm), or in the Western Provinces of Russia, from Lithuania—where the White Russian peasants largely adhere to it—southwards to the Ukraine, where it has become in some sort the symbol of Ruthene separatism. From the Russian point of view the Uniat Greeks were and are rebels against the Orthodox Church and Russian nationality, to be reduced to obedience by any means; from the

Polish point of view the Union, which represents a sort of compromise with the national Catholicism, was and is the symbol of Polish predominance, cultural and, potentially at least, political. The Empress Catherine II, carrying on in the age of "enlightenment" the policy of Vladimir of Kiev, compelled the Uniat Church in the provinces annexed by her under the partitions to submit to the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Holy Synod and conform to the Orthodox model, and this policy, after it had been relaxed by Alexander I, was taken up again by Nicholas I and Alexander III. These developments will be discussed later. For the present it suffices to note that, save in the purely Polish parts of Poland, the peasants were separated from the nobles by a difference of religion, the consequences of which even the establishment of the Uniat Church—known as "the peasant's Church"—did little to ameliorate.

The fundamental cleavage between the "nation" and the masses of the people in Poland need not have been fatal had the Polish nobles—a very numerous body—been capable of subordinating their private interests to the public good. In Hungary, too, the Magyar nobles constituted the body politic; they alone were the "people," the *populus*, as distinguished from the *misera contribuens plebs*, the "miserable tax-paying

plebeians." But the Magyars, for all their faults, have always had a strong sense of the community of their interests, as defined in their ancient Constitution, and a reverence for the law as the ultimate guarantee of their liberties; and thus, for a thousand years and amid perils innumerable, they have succeeded hitherto in preserving not only their nationality but its predominance. For the Poles, on the other hand, any sense of community was from first to last entirely overshadowed by a passionate insistence on the vindication of their individual liberties, which as often as not represented the very negation of the conception of law.

The contrast is instructive, and its origins must be sought far back in those of the two peoples. That of the Magyars was the nomad horde, whose union was its strength; the Hungarian Parliament retained for centuries the impress of its original character as a mass meeting of a people of mounted warriors; and even during the dark period of the Turkish conquest and Habsburg oppression the tradition of national independence and unity lived on in the county assemblies, which never became the centres of disruptive tendencies. The Poles, too, were magnificent light cavalrymen—in all modern armies their national costume has become the uniform of the lancers, as that of the Magyars is of the

hussars—but their character was originally that of personal retainers and later of a feudal chivalry rather than of a national militia. The army with which Boleslaw the Brave had established his empire consisted of landless adventurers; the State he founded was not a national State; and when it was partitioned among a number of independent princes there was no common sentiment to preserve or to create the tradition of the subordination of particular and local interests to the national idea. The Polish-Lithuanian empire was a creation from above, the work of a series of great warriors and rulers, notably those of the dynasty of Jagiello, and its sole cohesive force lay in their power to hold it together. It is characteristic of the evil fate of the Poles, that the history of their constitutional liberties is that of the triumph of personal and sectional interests over the kingship, the only force making for national unity and strength.

Just as the British Parliament had its origin in the Great Council of the Anglo-Norman kings, so the Polish Constitution may be traced back to the councils of the Polish princes during the partitional period. These councils were attended only by the *pans*, the great territorial nobles, but during the fourteenth century the Polish princes followed the example of feudal sovereigns

everywhere in summoning meetings of the "estates" for the greater convenience of obtaining supplies. Of these dietines (*sejmiki*), which were attended by the *szlachta* and a few burgesses from the more important towns, there were originally five:—three in Great Poland, one in little Poland, and one in Poznań (Posen)-Kalisz. Another was established for Red Russia (Galicia) in 1433, and ultimately there was one in each Palatinate. Thus, even in Poland proper, the kingdom was of the nature of a confederation of states, which retained under the united crown a full measure of their sectional spirit. It was not till 1493 that a national Diet (*sejm*) legislated for all Poland, and it was seventy-four years later that a parliament for the whole empire was established by the Union of Lublin.

The completed structure of the Polish Constitution was as follows. At the head of the "Republic" was the elective King, who was assisted—or opposed as the case might be—by ten Ministers: two Royal Field-M Marshals (for Poland and Lithuania), two High Chancellors, four Chancellors, a High Treasurer, and a Marshal of the Household. The King shared the supreme power with the Senate, which was composed of the two Archbishops—the Archbishop of Gnesen being primate—fifteen Bishops, thirty-three Pala-

tines or Woiwodes (*woy*, war, and *wody*, leader) of provinces, and eighty-five castellans. The national Diet was held every two years, and six weeks before it met were held meetings of the dietines in the several Palatinates for the transaction of local business and, ultimately, for the election of deputies to the Diet. The Senate was empowered to issue temporary ordinances pending the meeting of the next Diet.

The weaknesses of this imposing constitutional structure were many, but the most fatal was that the central parliament never had the genuine support as an institution even of the classes represented in it. The great nobles disliked it because it threatened their local independence and power; the *szlachta*, too limited in their outlook to realize their own interests in a broad national policy, preferred the provincial dietines as offering an easier field for the display of their self-importance, and a more concentrated organization for the assertion of those class "liberties" which alone they valued and it was their only consistent policy to increase.

As in the case of the Germanic Empire, the main opportunity for obtaining this increase was given by the elective character of the monarchy. It had indeed been customary in Poland, as in the Empire, to elect to the throne the heir of the reigning house. But

this was not obligatory, and every fresh election was made the occasion for wringing new concessions from the crown. In this way were legalized, as permanent elements in the Constitution, the principle of conditional allegiance and the right of "confederation" and rebellion, which were the prime causes of the lapse of Poland into utter anarchy. It is possible that, had the dynasty of Jagiello survived, this miserable process of internal disintegration might have been checked. As it was, the death of Sigismund II and the year of anarchy that followed put a climax to it. Two foreigners, the Emperor Maximilian and Henry of Valois, brother of the King of France, were rivals for the crown. In the end the French prince, by flattering the *szlachta* and the use of lavish bribes, succeeded in winning the prize. But the concessions he had been forced to make deprived the crown he had bought of all authority, abolished the last vestige of the hereditary principle, and turned Poland from an elective monarchy into an aristocratic republic with an elected head. Henceforth each new king had upon his election to sign a compact which effectively deprived him of any power in the State.

The nobles were not content with destroying the power of the crown; they objected equally to any effective power in the parliament. In

trying to picture to ourselves the debates of this assembly we have to dismiss from our minds all analogies with modern legislative bodies. The Polish Diets and Dietines were turbulent meetings of armed men, in which there were no parties, but plentiful factions based on the personal rivalry of one great noble with another, on the jealousy of the *szlachta* for the power of the magnates, on sectional quarrels between one locality and another. Nor was there any acceptance of the principle on which all modern constitutional systems are based, that minorities must give way. This principle, indeed, was equally foreign to the Hungarian parliament, in which votes were "weighed not counted," but here at least the weight of votes, that is to say, the importance of the people voting, did decide the issue. No such system would have been possible in Poland, where the principle of feudal subordination had never been admitted, and every gentleman considered himself as good as another. Equally impossible was it for free nobles to bow their will to a mere majority. In the Dietines the principle had been early established that all decisions must be unanimous and, since the nobles attended fully armed, unanimity was occasionally arrived at by the majority driving out or killing the minority. The same principle was introduced, how or when

is not clear, into the national Diet, sometimes with somewhat similar results, and constitutionally it was open to any deputy to wreck a proposal by simply rising in his place and saying "I object." Later this principle was still further extended, and the right was acknowledged of any deputy to dissolve the Diet itself. It is easy to see what would be the fate of a parliament which depended for its very existence on the whim of the least honourable of its members.

It is significant of the utter want of the constitutional sense in the Polish "people" that this *liberum veto* was cherished as the most valuable of their liberties. Sigismund III, who, as the first of the three kings of the Swedish house of Vasa, succeeded Stephen Batóry in 1587, tried in vain to introduce the principle of decision by majority. The attempt led to a formidable insurrection; and, though the king succeeded in putting this down, the continued agitation forced him, in 1609, to proclaim a general amnesty in terms which destroyed all hope of constitutional reform. The worst abuses of the existing system had, indeed, not as yet appeared. Religious zeal, born of the Catholic revival in the sixteenth century, did something to inspire the Poles with a sentiment of union in a common cause, and did much to prevent a too unscrupulous use

of their legalized licence. During the first half of the seventeenth century, under Sigismund III and his son Wladyslaw, Poland was still a great Power, the arbiter of the destinies of Central Europe, the stronghold of the Catholic reaction in the north, and, in alliance with the House of Habsburg, the champion of Christendom against the Turks. But with the decay of religious principle that in all Europe followed the Thirty Years' War this influence was greatly weakened, and full play was given to all the selfish instincts of Polish individualism. The great lords, whose vast wealth enabled them to maintain in their castles the state of independent princes, did not hesitate to take advantage of the country being engaged in foreign war to use against the crown their right of insurrection. Nicholas Zebrzydowski, the wealthy palatine of Cracow, had invoked the assistance of the prince of Transylvania in his armed opposition to the reform projects of Sigismund III. It was a rebellion headed by the wealthy and powerful Prince Lubomirski that forced King John II Casimir, just when he was at the high tide of success, to conclude with Russia, in 1667, the disastrous "truce" of Andrussowo which marked the beginning of the downfall of Poland and of the ascendancy of Russia over her.

From the middle of the seventeenth century onward, too, the right of the *liberum veto* was used to organize within the Diet systematized obstruction. The paid retainers of the great lords, returned to the *sejm* by bribed or intimidated electoral dietines, vetoed any proceedings of which their masters disapproved. Nor was it only Polish paymasters who controlled the Diet. Bribery and corruption had become powerful weapons in the armoury of the unscrupulous statecraft of the seventeenth century, and the Polish Diet was a most promising field for their exercise. From the middle of the century onwards the ambassadors of foreign Powers not only openly influenced the elections to the Diet, but by keeping groups of deputies in their pay they were able to control its activities as the interests of their countries dictated. In brief, the Polish parliament was effective only for harm. It was not difficult to secure the passage of measures of which the sole object was to increase the power and privileges of the only class represented—to whittle away for their benefit the prerogatives of the crown, to exclude the towns from representation, and to transfer to them and to the unhappy peasants the whole burden of taxation. However obvious and urgent the need, it was impossible to make any reforms by which the privileges of

the nobles would have been in the slightest degree curtailed. Thus the legislative assembly, having paralysed the power of the executive, was in its turn paralysed. The wonder is not that Poland collapsed, but that, with such a system, it survived so long.

If we analyse the causes that led to the downfall of Poland, we shall find that the chief of them was the spirit of conquest and domination by which the Polish State was from first to last informed. This was the inspiration of the nobles who formed the body politic, the proud tradition of ascendancy which prevented the rise of a middle class to bridge the gulf between them and the peasantry whom they oppressed. This was also the inspiration of their kings, who consistently subordinated the interests of internal order to a policy of aggression abroad. It was fatal for Poland that these tendencies reached their strongest development early in the seventeenth century, dissolving the very foundations of the Republic just at the time when the other States of Europe were building up strongly centralized governments on the ruins of the feudal system. Amid powerfully organized and progressive States, Poland, with all the organs of her life atrophied, could not survive. There was one more moment of glory for her when in 1683 her

King John Sobieski led the Polish chivalry to the relief of Vienna, and so saved Europe from the Turkish flood; but this was the last flicker of the expiring flame of her life. Sobieski, brave warrior as he was, was not the man to breathe new life into these dry bones, and when he died Poland too was dead. At the outset of the eighteenth century she lay, an amorphous mass, between the vigorous young monarchy of Prussia and the Russia of Peter the Great—a nuisance to them by reason of her backward economic development, and a temptation by reason of her weakness. In the end, as we shall see, she was not conquered, but partitioned—divided up among her neighbours like a thing ownerless and dead.

CHAPTER V

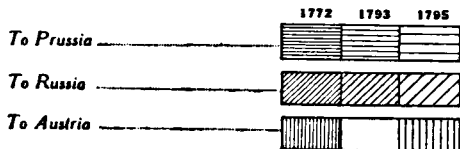
THE FIRST PARTITION

WITH Peter the Great began a new era in the relations of Russia and Poland. Up to his time the foreign policy of Muscovy had been under the influence of the clergy, and its chief inspiration the idea of reuniting with the Empire of the new Constantine the Orthodox world beyond its borders. With Peter the government of Russia passed to a



Boundary of Poland at the Union of Lublin, 1569

The Partition of Poland, 1772-1795.



bureaucracy, borrowed from the West, whose function was to re-establish those relations with Western civilization which had been severed by the effects of the Mongol invasions and by the backward and obscurantist character of Orthodox Christianity. The conquest of Livonia from Sweden and the foundation of Petersburg gave an outlet to the West; the introduction of foreign savants, artisans and soldiers, together with the imitation of West European State institutions, laid the foundations of a new development for Russia. But these channels of communication were not enough. It was necessary for the perfection of the plans which Peter the Great left as a legacy to his successors that Muscovy should be brought into closer physical contact with the West.

There was but one way in which this could be done—by the incorporation of Poland in Russia, and the gradual dissolution under Russian influence of the Polish State. For Poland, politically, morally and economically decadent, formed a barrier between Russia and the progressive civilization of Western Europe which had to be broken down if Russia was to be brought into full contact with this civilization. The aim which Peter the Great had in view was the ultimate absorption of all Poland, including the present Prussian provinces of Posen and West

Prussia, which would have given Russia the command of the whole Eastern sea-board of the Baltic from Danzig to Uleaborg. In the event, Catherine II, as the executor of his policy, had in the ultimate partition of Poland to be content with less than this, for reasons which will be pointed out. But the partition was not, and could not be, the final settlement, if only because by assigning Danzig to Prussia it cut off Russian Poland from its natural outlet to the sea.

The election to the throne of Poland in 1697 of the Elector Augustus of Saxony marked a fresh step in the decay of Poland. Augustus II was one of eighteen candidates for the crown, and he owed his success purely to the fact that he arrived in the field with a full purse when the funds of his rivals were exhausted. Two years later the Peace of Karlowitz, by which Poland recovered Podolia and the Ukraine from Turkey, gave a touch of prestige to his rule. But this was but the aftermath of John Sobieski's victories. Augustus himself cared nothing for Poland, save in so far as he could make it an instrument for the aggrandizement of the Saxon dynasty. His efforts to do so involved Poland in the great Northern War, which lasted from 1700 to 1720, and left the country not only morally but materially ruined. His object was, by forming a combination

against the young Charles XII, to wrest from him Livonia, which had been ceded to Sweden under the Treaty of Oliva in 1660. For twenty years Poland was the battle-ground of Saxons, Swedes and Russians. Inside the kingdom itself allegiance was divided. The Lithuanians, through hatred of the Swedes, supported the Russians. Of the Poles, some held to Augustus, while others maintained the cause of Stanislaus Leszczyński, whom Charles, after his initial victories, had placed and kept on the throne from 1704 to 1709. In the end the only solid gains were reaped by Peter the Great, who annexed all the Swedish coast lands from Riga to Viborg, and so established the Russian power firmly on the Baltic.

The exhaustion of Poland was now so complete that its absorption by one or more of the neighbouring Powers could only be a question of time. Augustus himself, to his eternal shame, was the first to propose a partition, in the hope of obtaining a compact share as an hereditary kingdom for the Saxon house. His death, in 1733, nipped the plot in the bud, but it may be doubted whether Russia would have agreed to divide a prize which she had reason to believe would, when the time was ripe, fall wholly to herself. For the present the better policy seemed to her to be that of holding Poland in

diplomatic subjection. The opportunity for this at once presented itself. On the 26th of August, Stanislaus Leszczyński was once more elected king; but he was not acceptable to a minority of the Poles, and more especially to the Lithuanians. These appealed to Russia, which at once responded. In October a phantom Diet, assembled at Warsaw in the presence of a Russian army, elected Augustus III, son of the late king, to the Polish throne. Then followed the War of the Polish Succession, but in June 1735 the failure of the French attempt to relieve him forced Stanislaus to surrender his last stronghold, Danzig, and take refuge in France, where he received from Louis XV, his son-in-law, the Duchy of Lorraine and Bar for life.

The sole interest of the reign of Augustus III lies in the fact that it witnessed the first serious attempt of the Poles themselves to reform their constitution. The king himself, an indolent voluptuary, continued to live in Saxony and left all affairs to his favourite and minister Count Brühl. The latter, in his turn, was content to entrust the government of Poland to the powerful family of Czartoryski, descendants of the Jagiello, which was destined to play a conspicuous part in Polish history during the next hundred years. Prince Frederick Michael Czartoryski was Grand Chancellor of Lithuania;

his brother Augustus, who had gained a great reputation in the Turkish wars, had acquired fabulous wealth by his marriage with Sophia Sieniawska. These two determined to use their vast influence to save the republic, and they recognized that the essential condition for this was the abolition of the *liberum veto* and the establishment of a standing army. All their efforts, however, were wrecked on the old rock of partisan jealousy. Their pretensions were resented by the other great families, notably by the Potockis, who held vast estates in South Poland and the Ukraine, and the Radziwills, who were equally powerful in Lithuania. These and others combined to make all change impossible, and during the whole reign every Diet in turn was dissolved by their dependents.

In despair, the Czartoryskis at last took the fateful step of appealing to Russia through Stanislaus Poniatowski, who in 1755 had gone to St. Peterburg as the representative of Saxony. The death of Augustus III intervened on the 5th of October, 1763, and Poland once more fell into the chaos of an interregnum. In these circumstances the Radziwills and their allies tried to come to terms with the Czartoryskis; but the latter, rather than yield anything to their hated rivals, formally invited the assistance of a

Russian army corps to help them to reform the country.

Catherine II, the masterful German princess who had mounted the throne of the Romanovs over the body of her murdered husband, now ruled Russia. Her ambition was boundless. She aimed not only at realizing the ideals of Peter the Great in the north, which involved the ultimate absorption of the whole of Poland, but also at expelling the Turks from Europe and re-establishing under Russian auspices the Orthodox Eastern Empire at Constantinople. It was by the interaction of these two facts that the Russian attitude towards the Polish Question was ultimately determined. For the present, at any rate, the last thing she desired was a strong Poland. In this respect her views were shared by Frederick II of Prussia, who was equally interested in keeping his Polish neighbours weak, partly on general principles, partly because the acquisition of West Prussia and the Netze district was eminently desirable in order to link up East Prussia with the rest of his dominions. The result of this unanimity of views was the signature on the 22nd of April, 1764, at St. Petersburg, of a treaty by which the sovereigns of Russia and Prussia agreed that the actual condition of things in Poland must be maintained.

Thus was initiated that understanding between the courts of Berlin and St. Petersburg in the matter of Poland which was to prove the ruin of Polish independence and was to stand in the way of Polish regeneration till the very eve of the present war.

Having signed the treaty, Catherine accepted the mission of becoming the regenerator of Poland. The throne being vacant, she had suggested to Frederick that it should be filled by Stanislaus Poniatowski, as "the individual most convenient for our common interests." Stanislaus, a handsome fine gentleman, fonder of the trappings than of the reality of power, had been one of Catherine's many lovers, and he was likely to prove a pliant tool. The ground was prepared for him by the march of 20,000 Russians on Warsaw. The great lords of the opposition fled the country; their dependents were scattered; and under the protection of Russian bayonets the Czartoryskis pressed through the Diet the reforms which were to create a strong government in Poland. These measures having been passed, Stanislaus Poniatowski was elected king on the 7th of September, 1764, and took the oath to the amended Constitution.

No one but the Poles was deceived by this *coup de théâtre*, and their deception did not last long. Catherine had carried out her

of the partition had awakened the Poles to a sense of their position, and the existence of a stable government gave them the opportunity of setting their house in order and of initiating that process of national education which was to bear fruit in the work of the Four Years' Diet and the Constitution of 1791.

CHAPTER VI

THE FINAL PARTITIONS

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Poles, growing conscious of the fact that the condition of their country must lead to its ruin, had begun to discuss the means by which this ruin might be averted. The outcome of these discussions was the definition of two distinct schools of thought, which, from the middle of the century onwards, expressed their views in a lively literary controversy. The Monarchical school, of which Archbishop Naruszewicz was a representative, discovered the prime cause of Poland's decay in the undermining of the original autocratic power of the crown, and in the consequent supremacy of the turbulent *szlachta*. The Republican school maintained that in this very spirit of "liberty" had lain the secret of Poland's former greatness, which would only be restored if the

“people,” *i. e.* the *szlachta*, were restored to their due place in the Constitution. The discussions to which these views gave rise were purely theoretical, distant echoes for the most part of the abstract conversations of the Parisian salons, and based on but an imperfect knowledge whether of history or of the living world. A new force was, however, given to them by the disastrous events of 1772, which destroyed the prestige of the oligarchy of territorial magnates and led to a strong reaction against them. The leader of this movement, which was at once national and democratic, was Hugo Kollontaj, who in 1775 had returned from Rome on his appointment to a canonry in the cathedral of Cracow. Kollontaj realized that Poland could not be saved by a mere revival of old institutions, and that in order to be effective any reform of the Polish system must be not only constitutional but social and economic. His first care was to labour for the reform of the Polish system of education, which, ever since the Catholic reaction in the sixteenth century, had been entirely in the hands of the Jesuits. The suppression of the Society by Pope Clement XIV in 1773 gave him his opportunity, and, though he encountered vigorous clerical opposition, he was able, as rector of the university of Cracow from 1782 to 1785, to lay the foundations of a more enlightened system. His

fame rests, however, mainly on his work during the Four Years' Diet, between 1788 and 1792, and his share in framing and carrying the ill-fated Constitution of May 3, 1791. Before dealing with this it is necessary to say something about the change in the international situation which gave the Poles for a time the opportunity for trying new constitutional experiments.

Two main factors contributed to this change : first, the breach of the Russo-Prussian alliance, due to the *rapprochement* which took place between Russia and Austria from 1780 onward with a view to concerted action against Turkey; and second, the outbreak in 1787 of war between Russia and Turkey, in which Gustavus III of Sweden at once joined as the ally of Turkey, and Austria in the following year as the ally of Russia. It is not necessary for our present purpose to attempt to trace all the ramifications of the complicated diplomatic intrigues and international readjustments that followed. A new and acute stage had been opened up of what was later to be known as the Eastern Question, of which the question of Poland was only a part, though an important one, and in this question all the great Powers of Europe were interested. For the moment it is sufficient to realize that the drawing apart of Russia and Austria relieved Poland from the pressure of these two Powers,

which, while they had acted in concert, had held her as in a vice. With the division of Europe into two groups, one—to which Prussia adhered—championing the integrity of Turkey, the other—namely, Austria and Russia—combined for her overthrow, Poland not only found herself free, but courted by both sides, and therefore, for the time being, in a position to make terms.

The Empress Catherine began by asking King Stanislaus and the Polish Council for the assistance of a Polish army against the Turks, offering in return a fresh solemn guarantee of the integrity of Poland. King Frederick William II of Prussia saw that this guarantee could only be against himself, and he at once proceeded to outbid Catherine by offering to sign a similar guarantee, and also to support substantial measures of constitutional reform in Poland, with a view to strengthening the monarchy against Russia.

Such was the situation when, on October 6, 1788, the Four Years' Diet met. The majority of the deputies, under the leadership of Kol-lontaj, Stanislaus Malachowski and Ignatius Potocki, were in favour of throwing off the influence of Russia and carrying a drastic reform of the Constitution. The Diet, in order to avoid the paralysing effect of the *liberum veto*, constituted itself a Confederation, and in this the powerful influence of the Potockis,

backed by Prussia, was able to make anti-Russian views prevail. The permanent Council, which had been the instrument of the Empress Catherine's will, was dissolved, and a demand was formally made for the withdrawal of the Russian troops, which, in view of the Turkish war, Russia had no choice but to concede. In April 1789 the Marquis Lucchesini arrived in Warsaw as Frederick William's representative, and the negotiations were begun which led, on March 29, 1790, to the signature of a treaty of defensive alliance between Prussia and Poland, under the terms of which Frederick William solemnly guaranteed the integrity and the free Constitution of Poland. He had suggested that the cession of Danzig and Thorn to Prussia would be a graceful acknowledgment by Poland of benefits received, but on this, in view of his need for Polish support for his plans, he did not insist.

Meanwhile the Diet was discussing the reforms of the Constitution with more display of long-winded oratory than practical common sense. It was the age of the French Revolution—the Bastille fell on July 14, 1789—and many of the Poles were disciples of Rousseau, who had himself, in 1772, contributed to their debates with an essay on "The Government of Poland and its Projected Reform." But in the end it was not the views of Rousseau but

those of Montesquieu and Mably—the champions of monarchy on an aristocratic basis—that prevailed. Kollontaj, the most influential of the leaders, was himself a theoretical Republican; but he realized the futility of setting up the principle of the sovereignty of the people—which in Poland could mean only the sovereignty of the *szlachta*, and a relapse into the old anarchy—and he laboured vigorously for the establishment of a strong hereditary monarchy, with a Constitution based on the balance of power between the constituent elements of the body politic. It was only, however, by taking advantage of the chance absence of the Opposition that these views in the end prevailed. On the 3rd of May, 1791, the new Constitution was presented *en bloc* to the Diet by King Stanislaus in person, and was passed at once by a vast majority of those present.

Under this new Polish Constitution, Catholicism was declared the State religion, but all faiths were to be tolerated. The *szlachta* retained their privileges; but the burgesses were restored to their civil rights, and the peasants were not only placed under the protection of the law, but were to be allowed to purchase their freedom by private agreements with their lords. The Diet was to consist of a Senate and Chamber of Deputies, in which the legislative power was vested, the *liberum*

veto and the right of confederation being abolished. The executive power was vested in the king, who was to be advised by a Cabinet of ministers responsible to the Diet. The crown was made hereditary, but the family in which it was heritable was to be elected. It was at the same time laid down that the succession was, after the death of Stanislaus Poniatowski, to pass to the house of Saxony. Finally, it was arranged that a constituent Diet was to be summoned every twenty-five years to carry out any necessary constitutional reforms.

This new Constitution, which seemed to promise at last the realization of the regeneration of Poland, was destined to be very short-lived. From the first its chances of success depended upon the attitude of the Powers, and this attitude, from a variety of causes, was undergoing a rapid transformation. This was due partly to the progress of the Russian arms against Turkey, partly to the developments of the Revolution in France. The Turkish campaign of 1790 had been highly favourable to Russia, the war with Sweden had been closed by the Treaty of Verela in August of the same year, and in the spring of 1791 the negotiations were already in progress which led in August to the signature of the preliminaries of peace between Russia and Turkey. The Empress Catherine was

thus able once more to turn her attention to Poland. She determined to intervene; but before she could do so with safety, it was necessary to guarantee herself against any interference on the part of Austria and Prussia. The opportunity for this was given by the increasing aggressiveness of revolutionary France, especially by the violation of the rights of the German princes in Alsace and the consequent increasing pressure upon Prussia and Austria to intervene, not only to support the principle of monarchy in the person of Louis XVI, but also to assert the rights of the Germanic Empire. This pressure Catherine II did her best to encourage. "I rack my brains," she said, "to push the courts of Vienna and Berlin to mix themselves up in the affairs of France. I want to engage them in these affairs so as to have elbow-room. I have plenty of enterprises still unfinished, and I wish these two courts to be occupied, so that they may not hamper me."

The omens at first were not propitious. The Emperor Leopold was not eager to embark on a royalist crusade against France; he saw through the designs of the Empress Catherine, and he was determined to uphold the traditional Austrian policy of maintaining Poland as a State too weak for offence, but at the same time too strong to be easily absorbed by her neighbours. The menace of France

brought him into close relation with Prussia, but the first-fruits of this *rapprochement* was the treaty signed on the 25th of July, 1791, by which Austria and Prussia agreed to guarantee the integrity and the free Constitution of Poland. This agreement was ~~revised~~ at Pillnitz in September, simultaneously with the issue of the first manifesto of the Powers against the Revolution. For the present it was clear that the two German Powers had no intention of leaving Russia a free hand in Poland, and the Empress Catherine had to possess her soul in patience.

But early in 1792 happened a series of events which profoundly modified the situation. On the 9th of January the definitive peace was signed between Russia and Turkey at Jassy, and Catherine's hands were thus absolutely freed. On the 1st of March the Emperor Leopold died, and was succeeded by Francis II, a young prince whose warlike temper would probably have shattered the results of the old Emperor's diplomacy, even had his own candidature for the Empire not forced him to secure the goodwill of the Electors by a stronger attitude towards France. Finally, the decision was taken out of the hands of the German Powers, when, on the 30th of April, Louis XVI, under pressure of the violent majority of the Legislative Assembly, himself declared war on Austria.

Meanwhile Catherine had been working hard to make the best use of the situation whenever it should arise. The plentiful causes of dissension between Austria and Prussia had been increased by the lapse to the House of Hohenzollern of the principality of Anspach-Bayreuth, for Austria had no desire to see Prussia established in South Germany; and evidence of the new rift between them was given when on the 7th of February the preliminary treaty of the 25th of July, 1791, was converted into the definitive Treaty of Berlin. The Treaty of Vienna had guaranteed *the* free Constitution of Poland; by the Treaty of Berlin Prussia only undertook to guarantee *a* free Constitution of Poland. The truth is that Prussia, under the changed circumstances, had no longer any need of the Polish alliance, and, annoyed by the refusal to give up to her the fortresses of Danzig and Thorn, was beginning to revert to the idea of a further partition. Catherine, for her part, did her best to encourage this change of heart. Realizing that Austria and Prussia would never allow themselves to become involved with France so long as the position of Poland remained uncertain, she had already made up her mind to forego the complete carrying out of her original plan, and to share the spoils. She pointed out that if the Elector of Saxony were to become hereditary king of Poland under the Constitution

of 1791, Saxony would be raised to the position of a first-class Power, and would be far more of a menace to Prussia than to Austria. Frederick William was impressed by reasoning which harmonized so perfectly with his own ideas and seemed to justify his contemplated breach with Poland. When, in March, Austria proposed a renewal of the Treaty guaranteeing the integrity of Poland and the Constitution of 1791, he refused to take a course which he declared would be "political suicide," and stated his intention of listening to the proposals of Russia.

With Prussia in this mood and Austria involved in war with France, Catherine could venture to take action, and in April two great Russian armies were set in motion towards the Polish frontier. At the same time the Elector of Saxony, under pressure from Russia and Prussia, announced that his acceptance of the crown of Poland must be conditional on the approval of the Powers—which was tantamount to a refusal. The catastrophe was hastened, as usual, by the action of the malcontent minority in Poland itself. On the 14th of May they met at Targowica and formed a Confederation with the object of restoring the old Constitution. Their object was to set up once more all the worst abuses of feudal privilege; their language was that of the orators of the French Revolution.

“Tyranny,” they cried, “is forging chains for Poland,” and at the prospect of slavery “the sensitive heart of the citizen has palpitated with grief!” They ended by invoking the assistance of the magnanimous sovereign of Russia in safeguarding their liberties. The answer of the Empress was already on the way. On the 16th the Russian ambassador announced her support for the Confederation. On the 19th the Russians invaded Lithuania and Poland in overwhelming force.

In this crisis of their fate the Poles appealed to Prussia for the assistance promised under the treaty of alliance signed only two years before. But Frederick William did not feel inclined to allow this, or any other scrap of paper signed by him since, to interfere with his new plans. His ambassador Lucchesini was instructed to inform King Stanislaus that the King of Prussia did not feel himself bound by the treaty, which was dated the 29th of March, 1790, to defend by arms the hereditary monarchy established by the Constitution of the 3rd of May, 1791. The defection of Prussia was followed by that of Austria. Francis II was less convinced than Leopold of the necessity of maintaining Poland strong; he was anxious to secure the consent of Prussia to his project of arranging with the Duke of Zweibrücken, heir-presumptive to

the Bavarian Electorate, an exchange of the Austrian Netherlands for Bavaria; above all, in view of the French war, he could not afford to break with his Prussian ally. Russia, to whom the Bavarian exchange was a matter of complete indifference, enthusiastically pressed this method of "compensating" Austria. Prussia, though more nearly affected, agreed on condition that Austria should leave her a free hand in Poland. Thus the Poles, deserted by their last friend, were left once more to face the bandit Powers alone.

There could be no doubt as to the result. But little had been done towards creating the new Polish army, and against 100,000 Russians—veterans of the Swedish and Turkish wars—the Poles could only put into the field some 50,000 ill-disciplined and ill-equipped troops. Though, under the leadership of Prince Joseph Poniatowski and of Thaddeus Kościuszko, they fought with their accustomed bravery, and for a while victoriously, by the middle of the year it was clear that their resistance was hopeless. In June Stanislaus made a last bid for the support of Russia for the new Constitution by offering the hereditary crown of Poland to the Grand Duke Constantine, the Empress Catherine's grandson. Catherine's reply was to order him to adhere to the Confederation of Targowica, which he did on the 22nd of July.

Of the authors of the Constitution of 1791, some followed his example, as the only way of preventing a fresh partition, others fled into exile.

Both Austria and Prussia had recently guaranteed the integrity of Poland and the Constitution of 1791. In order to avoid misunderstanding, Catherine now signed fresh treaties with both Powers, under which they agreed to the restoration of the old Constitution. The subject of a partition was not mentioned in these instruments, though every one knew that it was under discussion. Catherine was satisfied for the moment with an arrangement which tightened her grip on Poland, and was content to wait until the increasingly strained relations between the German allies should give her a favourable opportunity for carrying out her plans in their entirety. As for Austria, she felt that she had been hoodwinked. Her affairs in the Netherlands were going badly; the conquests of the French revolutionary troops under Dumouriez made the idea of the Bavarian exchange a fond thing vainly imagined; and for this shadow she was expected to barter her consent to a great increase of Prussian power at the expense of Poland! It needed, however, only the threat of Prussia to withdraw from her alliance, to bring her to terms, and on the 19th of December she signed a

treaty giving the Prussians a free hand in Poland, merely reserving her right to demand a share of the spoils later.

The time was now ripe for Catherine to mature her plot. The Russian armies advanced into East Poland, and on the 14th of January, 1793, the Prussians invaded Great Poland in force, meeting with but a feeble resistance. On the 23rd the two Powers signed the second treaty of partition. Russia took as her share all the eastern provinces of Poland from Livonia in the north to the frontier of Moldavia. To Prussia were assigned Dobrzyn, Kujavia and the larger part of Great Poland, together with the cities of Danzig and Thorn. It remained to cover the robbery with a show of juridical right. On the 17th of June a Diet was assembled at Grodno in Lithuania for the purpose of coming to "an amiable understanding" with the partitioning Powers. This assembly displayed an unexpected spirit of independence, for even the Confederates of Targowica had by this time realized the enormity of their offence against their country. But a Russian army corps was present to help them to come to a decision. On the 16th of July the Russian ambassador announced that the troops of Her Imperial Majesty would enter into military occupation of the lands of those deputies who opposed the "will of the nation," and on the 23rd the

gloomy silence of the assembly gave consent to the passing of the treaty with Russia. As to that with Prussia, whose conduct in the eyes of the Poles had been infinitely more nefarious than that of Russia, the Diet resisted its terms with double obstinacy, sustained by the hope that Russia in this matter must be secretly in sympathy with them. But Catherine had her own reasons for keeping faith with her accomplice. Here, too, Russian pressure was effectively applied, and on the 22nd of September the Prussian treaty was also agreed to in silence. On the 23rd of November the Diet of Grodno, after obediently repealing the Constitution of 1791, was dissolved.

As the result of this second partition Poland was reduced to a third of its original size, with a population of under four millions, and its final extinction was only a matter of time. The time was hastened by the pardonable rashness of the more patriotic of the Poles themselves. In Warsaw King Stanislaus still nominally reigned over a kingdom which had already become a mere appanage of Russia, but the centre of what remained of the national life had been transferred to Leipzig, where, under the friendly shadow of the Saxon Electorate, Kościuszko, Kol-lontaj, Ignatius Potocki and other Polish patriots were planning the liberation and

restoration of their country. Their plans were precipitated by the mutiny, in the spring of 1794, of certain Polish regiments at Warsaw. The insurgents, who had marched to Cracow, invited Kościuszko to place himself at their head. At first he hesitated, well realizing the futility of an insufficiently organized revolt. But on learning that the Russians were concentrating troops against the insurgents, he threw prudence to the winds, hurried to Cracow, and on the 23rd of March, 1794, allowed himself to be proclaimed commander of the Polish national forces with dictatorial powers.

In the war that followed, the Poles yet again proved their quality as fighting men. In battle after battle they drove the Russians back, until they had recovered three-quarters of their ancient territories, freeing Warsaw, the capital of Poland, and Vilna, the ancient capital of Lithuania. Unhappily, when successful, they displayed also their old qualities of lawlessness and insubordination, with the result that they quickly lost all that they had won. With Kościuszko's defeat on the bloody field of Praga, on the 29th of October, perished the last hope of Poland.

There is no need to go into the history of the negotiations that followed. The insurrection had proved to the partitioning Powers that the continued existence of an independent

Poland was inconsistent with their safety, and the only question was that of the proportions in which the still surviving fragment should be divided among them. The justice of the Austrian claim to a share was this time admitted by Russia; the tact of the Empress Catherine smoothed over the differences of opinion between the Courts of Berlin and Vienna which at one moment seemed to be about to lead to war; and on the 10th of October, 1795, the three Powers executed the treaty by which the name of Poland was wiped from the map of Europe. Under this agreement Austria acquired West Galicia and southern Masovia, Prussia occupied Podlachia and the rest of Masovia, while Russia took all the rest. Thus ended independent Poland.

CHAPTER VII

THE GRAND DUCHY OF WARSAW

THE crowning disaster of 1795 at last inspired the Poles with a common purpose. Aristocrats and Democrats, Conservatives and Liberals, Monarchists and Republicans, whatever the abiding differences of their principles and methods, henceforward had only one aim—the restoration and independence of their country. It was clear, however,

that this restoration could not be accomplished without foreign help, and it was fateful for the future of Poland that the Polish patriots—who at this time, it must be remembered, included only the nobles—looked for this help in two different directions, some pinning their faith on Russia, while the majority looked to France as the ancient ally of Poland. This divergence of policies, which led to their paralyzing each other, determined the whole development of the Polish Question up to the insurrection of 1863. In order to understand this development it is necessary to know something of the history of the twenty years between the final partition and the establishment of the “Congress Kingdom” in 1815.

It was natural that the Poles should turn to France for aid. French princes had reigned in Poland; ever since the time of Louis XIV the diplomatic relations between the two countries had been intimate; and though the French Monarchy had fallen, the Republic was carrying on the tradition of its foreign policy. The special circumstances of the time, moreover, pointed to France as the natural ally of Poland. The partitioning Powers had loudly declared their fundamental antagonism to the principles of the French Revolution, and it was the fact that two of them were at war with France that had given

Catherine II "elbow room" in 1793 for her designs on Poland. The preoccupation of all three Powers with the partition enabled the armed Revolution to gather headway, and the Poles were quick to seize the opportunity thus offered. There could not, indeed, be much sympathy between the Polish nobles and the dominant party in France, and in 1794, when Kościuszko and his friends appealed for aid to the Committee of Public Safety in Paris, the French Republicans had refused their assistance to "aristocrats." But after the final partition revolutionary views gained strength in Poland and notably among the Polish exiles, even the classes naturally most conservative accommodating their principles to a propaganda which seemed to promise the best chance of obtaining their supreme object. On the 6th of January, 1796, the French party in Poland, at the head of which were the Generals Dombrowski and Książewicz, organized themselves at Cracow into a Confederation and declared the committee of Polish exiles in Paris, over which Kościuszko presided, to be the governing body of the Polish nation. In the following year Dombrowski formed a "Polish Legion" as the nucleus of a new national army, and negotiations were opened with Napoleon Bonaparte, whose victorious advance from Italy seemed to promise the break-up of

the Habsburg empire and the possibility of the liberation of Galicia to form the nucleus of a restored Poland. But Napoleon, though he humoured the Poles with fair words, was not prepared to let any care for their interests interfere with his own plans, and in the Treaty of Campo Formio, which ended the war with Austria, the Poles were not mentioned. Three years later, when Napoleon concluded with the young Emperor Alexander I of Russia the treaty of the 8th of October, 1801, their case was deliberately sacrificed by a stipulation that each of the contracting Powers should take measures to prevent any agitation within its frontiers against the internal peace and order of the other. This effectively put a stop to the Polish propaganda in France.

Far more hopeful were the prospects of those Poles who had placed their trust in Russia; for at their head was no less a person than the heir-presumptive to the Russian throne, the Grand Duke Alexander. Alexander had early been indoctrinated by his Swiss tutor La Harpe with the principles of Rousseau, to which his impressionable and sentimental nature laid him singularly open. To his intimates he declared his detestation of the principles and policy of his grandmother, the Empress Catherine, announced himself a republican, and proclaimed

his intention of establishing the reign of liberty whenever he should come to the throne. His imagination had been particularly touched by the heroic resistance of the Poles in 1794, and the personality of Kościuszko, whom he had been taken to see in prison by his father Paul I, had made an indelible impression upon him. But the chief influence in determining his attitude as champion of the cause of the Poles was that of his boyhood's friend Prince Adam Czartoryski who, summoned in 1795 by Catherine to her Court as a hostage for the good behaviour of his family, had been appointed aide-de-camp to the young Grand Duke. He it was who inspired Alexander with his boyish dream of himself becoming the regenerator of Poland. To this idea of figuring as the king of a restored Poland Alexander clung with characteristic obstinacy after he came to the throne, a fact which does much to explain the whole subsequent development of Russo-Polish relations down to the present day.

On Alexander's accession to the throne in 1801 Czartoryski was at once summoned from Italy, where he had been on a diplomatic mission, to the young Tsar's side. In 1803 he was appointed Curator of the new University of Vilna, the ancient Lithuanian capital, which he made, with Alexander's approval

and encouragement, the centre of Polish culture and political propaganda in the Western Provinces of Russia. In the following year he became Minister-adjunct of Foreign Affairs, and was thus in a position to influence Russian policy. In his Memoirs, written after the final collapse of his plans to justify his activities to his countrymen, he makes no secret of his object—which was to use the military power of Russia in order to restore an independent Poland with the frontiers of 1772. The methods he used were naturally not direct, for to have mentioned the name of Poland would have been to raise up insurmountable obstacles both abroad and in Russia itself. There was no danger, however, in committing Alexander to the championship of the principle of nationality, and in enlarging on the wrongs of the Greeks and of the Slav peoples in Turkey in language attuned to the wishes and views of the Russians, “but by induction necessarily applicable also to the Poles.” In 1804, during the negotiations with Great Britain which led up to the third coalition against Napoleon in the following year, the Emperor Alexander proposed to Pitt that, in the event of the victory of the Alliance, the principle of nationality should be made the basis of the reconstruction of Europe—which would have involved the restoration of Poland. The same

idea underlay Czartoryski's memorandum on the reconstruction of Europe presented to the Tsar in 1805. But Alexander was too cautious, and too suspicious even of his most intimate friends, to commit himself rashly to the realization of his nebulous ideals. He refused to be drawn into a war with Prussia, which Czartoryski desired in order to recover for Poland, restored under Alexander's crown, the Prussian share of the spoils of the partition; and this refusal was not due solely to his close personal ties with the Court of Berlin. On his march through Poland he had had plenty of opportunity for gauging the true temper of the Poles, and their exuberant demonstrations of national sentiment, however gratifying to a prospective king of Poland, had been by no means reassuring to an Emperor of Russia.

The Tsar's misgivings were soon justified. On the 2nd of December, 1805, Napoleon crushed the allied Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz. War with Prussia followed, and on the 14th of October, 1806, the tradition of Prussian invincibility was shattered on the heights of Jena. The Poles at once threw off all disguise. Their hopes from Alexander had been destroyed by his alliance with Prussia, and they now openly showed that they expected to receive in full from Napoleon what an Emperor of Russia could

only have given them with onerous reservations. The whole Polish nobility, Adam Czartoryski among them, joined in this change of front. Within three weeks of Jena all Poland had flamed into rebellion, and when, on the 15th of December, Napoleon entered Warsaw he was welcomed and fêted as the national deliverer. But for Napoleon the Polish Question was but one factor, and that a subsidiary one, in the vast combinations forming in his mind, which embraced not Europe only, but the conquest of the East and of the road to India. It suited him for the moment to encourage the highest hopes of the Poles, because he needed their assistance in bringing Alexander to reason. In short, he flattered them with fair words, he even supplied them with arms, but he promised them nothing. To their deputations he said that he desired the restoration of the Republic, but that the possibility of this depended upon themselves; they must compose their differences and earn their freedom by fighting—for him.

For a moment, at Berlin, he dreamed of a Poland regenerated according to his own views, but the idea was dismissed almost as soon as conceived. It was based on the assumption of a necessary antagonism between the Russian and French Empires, and circumstances were rapidly leading to the

changing of this antagonism into a close alliance. The bloody and indecisive battle of Eylau, on the 8th of February, 1807, which had all but ended in a French disaster, opened Napoleon's eyes to the risks of a prolonged struggle with Russia; and when, on the 14th of June, his victory at Friedland had at last broken the stubborn temper of the Tsar, he decided to give up his plan of contesting with Russia the empire of the East and to come to an arrangement with Alexander for dividing with him the hegemony of the world. Influential opinion at St. Petersburg had long been in favour of a Franco-Russian understanding, and it needed only the personal fascination of Napoleon to convert Alexander to his views. The two Emperors met at Tilsit in July, on a barge moored in the mid-stream of the Niemen, and in a single prolonged interview the basis of their agreement was established. This involved once more the dashing of the high hopes of the Poles. Alexander had already made it clear that the encouragement of these hopes would be an absolute bar to an understanding, for a Poland restored under his own auspices would have been one thing, a regenerated Poland under French protection quite another. "The world is not large enough," he had said to Napoleon's envoy Caulaincourt after Eylau, "for us to come to an agreement on the

affairs of Poland, if it be a question of a restoration under any form whatever." This being Alexander's attitude, Napoleon had no hesitation in purchasing his alliance by abandoning the cause of Poland as well as that of Turkey. He began by the surprising offer to incorporate all the Polish provinces of Prussia in the Russian Empire. This Alexander rejected, not only because it would have involved him in an unhealable quarrel with both Prussia and Austria, but because it would have had incalculable consequences for Russia itself; for Napoleon, true to his pose as the champion of the Revolution, would have insisted on the emancipation of the serfs and the grant of a Constitution on the French model, which would have had to be extended to all the former provinces of Poland-Lithuania under the Russian crown. As it was, by the terms of the Treaty of Tilsit, signed on the 11th of July 1807, Prussia was deprived of all her Polish provinces except West Prussia. Danzig was reserved for France, and the district of Bialystok in the east was added to Russia. The rest—to which in 1809 Cracow and West Galicia were added—was formed, at Alexander's suggestion, into the new Grand Duchy of Warsaw for Napoleon's faithful ally, the newly created King of Saxony.

The new Constitution for the Grand Duchy

of Warsaw was issued by Napoleon on the 22nd of July at Dresden, the capital of the kingdom of Saxony. It was a miniature of the Imperial Constitution of France, in which the reality of absolute power was thinly veiled under the shadowy forms of free institutions. There was a national representation in two Chambers, but the deputies had no right of initiating legislation or even of discussing the laws presented to them, except in committees, and their right of rejecting such laws was strictly limited. In effect their function was merely to give the appearance of a national sanction to Napoleon's constant demands for recruits and subsidies. Yet this Constitution did bestow upon Poland some of the greatest gains of the French Revolution. Serfdom was abolished, and the principles of equality before the law and complete religious toleration were established. Last, but not least, the Code Napoléon, that magnificent systematization of French law compiled by the great French jurists of the Revolution, was substituted for the antiquated, and chaotic Polish legal system, and has remained in force, through all the changes of fortune that have befallen the Polish provinces forming the Grand Duchy, until the present day.

For the rest, the independence even of this fragment of Poland was quite illusory. The

Grand Duchy was included by Napoleon among the dependent States forming his Confederation of the Rhine, and it was really governed by his agents. Its abiding interest, from the point of view of the Polish Question generally, lies in the fact that it greatly promoted that influence of French ideas which had been traditional in Poland, and that it increased the tendency of the Poles to look to Paris for help in the realization of their aspirations. As for Napoleon, the Grand Duchy had no interest for him save as a magnificent recruiting-ground for his armies, as a bastion for the defence of the eastern frontiers of his Empire, or as an asset to be exchanged for value received. He continued, however, to dangle before the Poles the prospect of the ultimate restoration of their country and so kept them loyal to his cause.

This loyalty was conspicuously displayed in 1812, when after the uneasy Franco-Russian alliance had ended in an open breach, a Polish contingent of 70,000 men formed part of the Grand Army with which Napoleon invaded Russia. In throwing in their lot with the French the Poles had made their motive clear enough. On the 22nd of June an extraordinary session of the Diet was held at Warsaw under the presidency of old Prince Adam Czartoryski, the father of

Alexander's minister and friend, and on the 26th this constituted itself a Confederation of the Polish nation, declared the kingdom of Poland reconstituted, and recalled all the Polish officers in the Russian service. But the disastrous retreat of the Grand Army from Moscow in the autumn of the same year not only dashed these high hopes, but involved the downfall of the Grand Duchy itself. On the 13th of February, 1813, the Russians were in occupation of Warsaw, and they had soon overrun the whole country, which they were not destined again to leave. Of the Poles who had flocked to Napoleon's standards large numbers had perished on Russian battlefields or amid the horrors of the great retreat; those who survived followed Napoleon westwards and shared the fortunes of his campaigns of 1813 and 1814. They had, indeed, reason to fear Russian vengeance, for they had distinguished themselves not only in battle, but in the ruthless sacking of Russian towns, notably Smolensk and Moscow. That this vengeance was not exacted when the Russians occupied Poland was due to the magnanimous attitude of the Emperor Alexander and the tenacity with which he clung to his early ideals.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONGRESS KINGDOM

DURING the years immediately following the signature of the Treaty of Tilsit Alexander had to all appearance forgotten his promises with regard to Poland. Czartoryski had been removed from office as Minister-adjunct for Foreign Affairs in January 1807, and the Tsar appeared to have fallen under the influence of the old Russian party, whose views may be summed up in the words of the Chancellor Rumyantsev: "The Poles are mad; it is necessary to sober them." The very names of Poland and the Poles were, by agreement with the French Emperor, to be no longer used in diplomatic intercourse, and in 1810 a treaty was signed pledging both Powers against the restoration of the kingdom. But already the rift between the two Emperors was widening. Napoleon, to make merit with the Poles, ostentatiously refused to ratify the treaty, and Alexander, in order to counter his intrigues, equally ostentatiously revived his Polish plans. In the autumn of 1810 the Polish propaganda in the University of Vilna was continued with fresh vigour by Count Michael Oginski; negotiations were begun for the creation of a Grand Duchy of Lithuania as the nucleus of

a kingdom of Poland, and plans were prepared for a future Polish Constitution.

It would have been natural if Alexander's enthusiasm for the cause of the Poles had been entirely destroyed by their attitude in 1812. The greatness of his victory, however, which he ascribed to the direct intervention of God, had exalted his mood; at all times he piqued himself on his magnanimity; and at this supreme hour, when he had been called by Providence to become the liberator of Europe, he would not allow any petty motives of revenge or mere selfish considerations of policy to interfere with the realization of a dream which he had never abandoned. When, therefore, Czartoryski, who knew his character well, wrote to him in December 1812, praying him not to treat the Poles as a conquered people, but to reconcile them with Russia by carrying out his long-cherished scheme for their national regeneration, he sent a favourable reply. Nothing, he said, had altered his sentiments and intentions toward the Poles, and as soon as he should be in a position to do so he would realize their aspirations.

Alexander well knew that in order to fulfil his promise he would have to overcome not only the jealous opposition of the Powers, but that of his own people, whose hatred of the Poles had been increased tenfold by

their conduct during the war. During the campaigns of 1813 and 1814 he dissembled his purpose, in order not prematurely to throw an apple of discord into the councils of the Allies. At Kalisch and at Reichenbach he even signed treaties with Prussia and with Austria, of which special clauses laid down the principle of the ultimate redivision of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw among the partitioning Powers. But as the Allies' victorious progress continued, his attitude became more and more equivocal, and the Polish Question was recognized as the most perilous that would face the Powers during the final settlement. Until Napoleon was overthrown it was by general consent ignored, no mention being made of it either in the Treaty of Chaumont, which established the future relations of the Grand Alliance, or in the first Treaty of Paris. It was not until the autumn of 1814, at the Congress of Vienna, that Alexander revealed his intentions. The Grand Duchy of Warsaw was occupied by his troops; already the Russians had established a provisional administration and the Grand Duke Constantine was busy, with the help of a military committee of Poles, organizing the new Polish army. Under these circumstances the Emperor Alexander frankly stated his intention to keep the Grand Duchy in his own hands, and to

convert it into a Constitutional Kingdom under the personal rule of himself and his successors on the Russian throne. Prussia had been won over to the support of this plan by the Tsar's promise to back her claim to the reversion of the whole of Saxony, forfeited by the too faithful adherence of the Saxon king to the cause of Napoleon. It was strenuously opposed by the three other Great Powers: England, Austria and France. It is not necessary to describe the debates that followed. The Emperor Alexander's obstinate determination was not to be shaken by argument; at one moment it seemed that war between the two groups of Powers was inevitable and, on the 3rd of January, 1815, a secret offensive and defensive alliance was concluded between Great Britain, Austria and France. Under this pressure the Tsar yielded somewhat, and the result was a compromise. The province of Posen was restored to Prussia, which had to be content with only a portion of Saxony. The rest of the Grand Duchy, with some added strips of territory, was to be erected into a Constitutional Kingdom with the Russian Emperor as King (Tsar). The necessary arrangements were perfected in treaties concluded by Russia with Prussia and Austria respectively on the 3rd of May. These treaties, which contained a provision for the granting by

the Powers of "a representation and national institutions" in their respective Polish territories, were included in the General Treaty of the Congress of Vienna signed on the 9th of June. Thus the "Congress Kingdom" of Poland was established under the ægis of Europe.

It was of fateful significance that the Emperor Alexander had been guided throughout these negotiations, not by his Russian advisers, but by his friend Adam Czartoryski. The Russians, indeed, were grievously offended; for they not only regarded the grant of quasi-independence to Poland as seriously weakening the Russian State, but they felt keenly the insult implied in the concession to alien subjects of the Constitutional liberties still denied to themselves. As for the Poles, Lord Castlereagh had pointed out to the Tsar the probable effects of their "partial restoration" under the Russian crown. Great Britain, he said, would be in favour of the complete independence of Poland; she was wholly opposed to half measures which would leave the whole Polish Question as an open sore. For if the Poles were content "under their measure of liberty," those under Austrian and Prussian rule would be discontented, and Russia would have at her back, not only the 10,000,000 Polish subjects, but 5,000,000 others nominally foreign. In his opinion, however,

they would not be content, and he prophesied that the system which Alexander proposed to establish would not last, but would probably "either be deliberately destroyed or perish at the hands of his successor." Seldom has a political forecast been more speedily or more thoroughly justified by events.

On the 27th of November, 1815, the Emperor Alexander signed the new Constitution of Poland at Warsaw. In framing this great care had been taken to preserve Polish traditions and Polish forms, and in many respects it was the most liberal at that time in Europe. The Diet was divided into two houses: a Senate, consisting of the princes of the Imperial family, the eight Roman Catholic bishops, and senators nominated for life with the old Polish titles of palatine and castellan; and a Lower House consisting of a hundred members elected by the country *szlachta* and sixty deputies chosen by the freeholders and chief citizens of the towns. This Diet had the right of amending and rejecting, but not of initiating, legislation, and it was to sit for thirty days every two years. For the rest, the Constitution guaranteed the liberty of the Press, freedom from arbitrary arrest, and the employment of Poles only in the administration of the country. The financial arrangements were particularly favourable to Poland, since Russia not only

guaranteed the Polish debt, but undertook the whole cost of the Polish army.

There were, however, certain fatal elements of weakness in this Constitution. In the first place, in strict accordance with Polish tradition, only the nobles had any part in it; the peasants and the middle classes of the towns were alike excluded. In the eight palatinates into which the kingdom was divided the nobles alone had any share in the civil and judicial administration. Secondly, though the executive power was constitutionally vested in a Polish Council of State, a Russian Imperial Commissioner was appointed to watch over Russian interests, and this official, though he had no right to sit in the Council, soon gained access to it—with the results which might have been expected. Thirdly, the new Polish army, of which the organization, begun in January 1815, was completed in 1823, was placed under the supreme command of the Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich, the Emperor's brother, whose authority in Poland—since he was responsible to the Tsar alone—came in time to overshadow all others. The position of viceroy, from the point of view of the Poles one of vast importance, had been assigned by all the world to Prince Adam Czartoryski; but, at the last moment before leaving Warsaw, Alexander appointed to this

great post General Zajonczech, an aged veteran of the Napoleonic wars, and socially and politically a complete nullity.

In this settlement there were no elements of permanence. The Poles were dissatisfied with it, because they would be content with nothing short of that complete restoration of their country for which Alexander had so often led them to hope. The Russians hated it because they saw in the Polish army a danger that this hope might be realized at their expense, and that the Western Provinces, which they regarded as integral parts of Holy Russia rightly restored to her, might again be torn away. Alexander himself regarded the Polish Constitution as no more than an experiment, and reserved to himself the right to revoke the whole or any part of what he had granted, should this seem to him necessary in the interests of peace and good order. Finally, the most influential of the Poles, the great nobles, refused to take any effective share in a system of government which wounded their pride of birth by giving an undue position to the mere *szlachta*. Rather than attend the Court of a viceroy who belonged to this despised class, they deserted Warsaw and made Kremenec the social centre, while they refused to serve in an army officered by *szlachta* many of whom had held menial positions in their own house-

holds. It was one of Constantine's miscalculations that he believed that the honourable position given to the petty gentry in the army would cement their loyalty to himself and to the Russian connection.

In spite of these elements of failure, the constitutional experiment seemed at first to promise success. The personal charm of the Emperor Alexander captivated the impressionable hearts of the Poles, and when, on the 15th of March, 1818, he opened the first Diet of the new kingdom, his attitude seemed once more to guarantee the realization of their hopes. A phrase in which he promised to reunite once more to the kingdom of Poland "the provinces formerly incorporated in its Empire" was, indeed, cut out by his cautious minister Capo d'Istria; he spoke of the existence of Poland as indissolubly bound up with the fate of Russia; but he stated his intention of extending liberal institutions to all the countries under his rule, and adjured the Poles to justify this resolution by their conduct. But in private conversations he reiterated his intention to restore greater Poland, and a further earnest of the seriousness of this purpose was given when, by an *ukaz* of the 29th of June, 1819, he made the Grand Duke Constantine commander-in-chief in all the formerly Polish provinces of Western Russia, the regiments in which were mainly

manned and wholly officered by Poles. For Constantine, in spite of the violence and the occasional unconstitutional arbitrariness of his conduct, was devoted to the Polish army, and had thoroughly identified himself with his brother's plans for Poland, an attitude strengthened in 1820 by his marriage with the beautiful Pole Jeannette Grudzinska.

It was not long, however, before an estrangement began between the Tsar and the Poles, the outcome of mutual disillusionment. Alexander, whose devotion to liberal principles was purely sentimental, looked upon all opposition to his will as a sign of ingratitude, or of a factious spirit due to revolutionary propaganda. When the Diet of 1820 threw out two of the measures brought before it, he was deeply offended, and this, together with the revelation that Polish finances were in a serious state, led him to meditate suspending the Constitution. This extreme step was not taken, but the Diet was not again summoned till 1825. Meanwhile Poland was governed with a not too pedantic regard for constitutional limitations. The result was not wholly bad, even from the Polish point of view. Prince Xavier Lubecki, appointed Minister of Finance in 1821, succeeded, largely by unconstitutional means, in raising the financial condition of the kingdom to a high state of prosperity, while the Grand Duke

Constantine, to whom by an *ukaz* of July 1822 the powers, but not the title, of the viceroy were transferred, used his authority to override the Constitution solely with a view to creating an efficient Polish army.

The Poles, on the other hand, conscious of being tricked, and disappointed by the postponement of their hopes, once more took to their traditional method of secret agitation and organization. The impulse came from the Poles in the Prussian province of Posen, and from 1819 onwards the freemasons' lodges were used as the nuclei of a conspiracy which, under the name of the National Patriotic Association, had soon spread over the whole of Poland as it had existed in 1772. The Russian commissioner Novosiltsov, who, as one of the Emperor Alexander's Committee of Reform, had originally favoured the Polish cause, but had now become bitterly opposed to it, devoted himself to tracking down the conspiracy, and in 1822 its organization was broken up and its ringleaders punished. It was promptly organized in another form, and the attitude of Constantine, who in spite of Novosiltsov's evidence persisted in believing in the loyalty of the Poles of the Kingdom, allowed it to strike deep root in the army. Not even the discovery in 1824 of a plot to murder him, hatched by the students of the lyceum of Kaydani near

Vilna, and of a ramification of secret societies in Vilna itself, would persuade him or the Emperor Alexander of the true state of affairs. Czartoryski, indeed, was finally dismissed from his position as Curator of the University, and by an *ukaz* of the 8th of January, 1825, Novosiltsov was given fresh powers over the whole educational system in Poland and Western Russia. An appearance of peace and order resulted, and Alexander took advantage of this to open the third Polish Diet on the 1/13th of May, 1825. His attitude on this occasion was significant of his double consciousness as Russian autocrat and Polish sympathizer. On the one hand he abolished the publicity of the debates of the Diet, on the other hand he continued in private to reiterate his intention of restoring the Western Provinces of Russia to Poland, and, as a sign of this intention, ordered the Lithuanian army to change the facings of its uniforms to the Polish colours.

Whatever hopes the Poles might have continued to cherish because of, or in spite of, Alexander's equivocal attitude were dashed by his premature death in December of this same year. The succession to the crown had, at Constantine's own request, been settled on his younger brother Nicholas, the circumstances surrounding whose accession were not calculated to weaken his native dislike for

the constitutional and national aspirations of the Poles. A want of clearness in proclaiming his title to the throne had been the pretext for the outbreak in December of a formidable military rising in Moscow, nominally in favour of Constantine, but of which the real object was to overthrow the Autocracy and establish Constitutional government in Russia. The mutiny had with difficulty been suppressed, largely owing to the personal courage of Nicholas himself, and the subsequent investigations revealed the fact that the "Dekabrist" conspirators had been in close touch with the organized Polish malcontents. The Polish conspirators in Russia itself were tried with the others and duly condemned. Those arrested in Poland were arraigned before the Senate, converted into a High Court for the purpose. The judgment of this body, delivered in June 1828, was virtually a defiance of Russia, for the verdict of "not guilty" was justified by the plea that the Emperor Alexander had violated the Constitution, and that the Poles were only bound by their oath of allegiance so long as the Constitution was observed. The reply of the Tsar was to transfer the prisoners for trial before a special commission at St. Petersburg, by which, in March 1829, they were found guilty and sentenced to various not very severe punishments.

In these earlier years of his reign the

attitude of the Emperor Nicholas towards Poland was largely determined by his deference to the views of his elder brother Constantine, who persisted in his belief in the general loyalty of the Poles and in ascribing the revolutionary agitation solely to the machinations of those beyond the frontiers. It was in deference to Constantine, who did not want his beautiful army to be spoilt by rough contact with a ferocious enemy, that he did not, when hard pressed during the Turkish campaign of 1828, insist on the Polish forces being sent to his assistance, thus missing a unique opportunity of cementing the Russo-Polish union by the sentiment of brotherhood in arms. On the other hand, he did not carry this deference so far as to agree to Constantine's urgent desire for the reunion of Lithuania with Poland. From the first, indeed, his whole attitude towards the Poles was one of suspicion and reserve. He would maintain the Constitution because he had sworn to maintain it and was a man of his word, but he did not disguise his dislike for this and for all constitutions. He consented to be crowned, or rather to crown himself, King of Poland, but the ceremony of the coronation, on the 24th of May, 1829, at Warsaw, symbolized his attitude; for it took place not in the cathedral, but in the Hall of Ceremonies of the Senate, the part

played by the Catholic clergy was as far as possible subordinated, and the crown itself was not the old crown of Poland, but a new one sent from St. Petersburg for the occasion.

Clearly, it needed but an excuse to salve his conscience for Nicholas to sweep away the Polish Constitution with all that it implied, and the excuse was soon provided by the Poles themselves. There had been yet another military conspiracy hatched in 1828, during the Russo-Turkish War, but its outbreak was postponed until a favourable opportunity had been lost owing to the final victory of the Russians in September 1829. But the successful revolution in Paris, which in July 1830 placed Louis Philippe on the throne of France, roused the Poles to action. Revolutionary France was once more proclaiming her mission of liberating the enslaved nations; she had helped the Poles before, and they believed that she would help them again. Their resolution was determined by a report that the Emperor Nicholas was about to head a new Holy Alliance against the Revolution, to march into Poland Russian troops destined for the invasion of France, and to carry the Polish army with him on this unholy mission. A military insurrection broke out in Warsaw on the night of the 29th of November, and the Grand Duke Constantine, taken utterly by

surprise, with difficulty escaped from the city with the remnant of troops that remained faithful to him. Hated by the Poles and accused by the Russians of being the main cause of the insurrection, he wandered from place to place until he was mercifully carried off by the cholera in June of the following year, mourned by no single soul save his faithful Polish wife.

The only chance for the Poles meanwhile was to use the advantage which they possessed in the well trained and admirably equipped army, with which Constantine had provided them, to strike at once and to strike hard. But they were hampered as usual by divided counsels. The majority of the Council of State, indeed, at once accepted the situation and constituted themselves a Provisional Government; but at its head was Prince Adam Czartoryski, who clung to the Russian connection and laboured for a compromise, while the supreme command of the army was left in the hands of General Joseph Chlopicki, a Napoleonic veteran, whose similar views were strengthened by his sense of the military allegiance which he had sworn to the Emperor Nicholas. To counter the effect of the agitation of the extremist clubs and of the revolutionary newspapers, which had sprung up like mushrooms in a night, the Provisional Government summoned the Diet

to meet on the 18th of December. This measure proving ineffective in restoring order, Chlopicki, with the approval of the educated classes, suspended the Provisional Government and proclaimed himself dictator. Negotiations were now opened with St. Petersburg with a view to a compromise. It was but to waste invaluable time, for on neither side was there a disposition to yield anything. Of the Poles both the conservative "Whites," whose chief representatives were Prince Adam Czartoryski and the Finance Minister, Prince Lubecki, and the revolutionary "Reds," organized in the new Patriotic Club under the leadership of the historian Lelewel and Count Ladislaus Ostrowski, demanded from the Emperor-King a complete amnesty, the maintenance of the Constitution, and above all the reunion with Poland of Lithuania and the "annexed provinces," *i. e.* Podolia, Volhynia and the Ukraine. These demands Prince Lubecki was charged by the dictator Chlopicki to carry to St. Petersburg and lay before the Emperor. The mission was from the first foredoomed to failure; but, even had the temper of the Tsar inclined him to compromise, all hope of this would have been blasted by the action of the Polish Diet which, ten days before Lubecki was received in audience, had met and unanimously approved the "national revolution" of the 29th of

November. The reply of the Emperor was to issue a proclamation denouncing the "odious crime" of the revolution and summoning the Poles to unconditional submission. At the same time a Russian army of 120,000 men, under General Diebitsch, the victor of Adrianople, marched into Lithuania.

Chlopicki, realizing the hopelessness of an armed struggle with Russia, now declared that peace must be preserved at all costs and proposed inviting the good offices of the King of Prussia in order to secure it. He soon found, however, that public opinion was against him. On the 17th of January, in order to put a stop to the agitation for war, he ordered the arrest of the most conspicuous of the Reds, including Lelewel and Count Ostrowski, but this produced so furious an outcry that he was compelled to release them on the following day. Thereupon, after some further negotiations, he definitively resigned his positions as dictator and commander-in-chief. On the 20th the Diet was formally opened, and on the same day, at Chlopicki's suggestion, chose as his successor in the command of the army Prince Michael Radziwill, whose name it was believed would guarantee to all the world the conservative character of the revolution. On the 25th, amid tumultuous scenes, the Diet declared the throne of Poland vacant and proclaimed

the right of the Poles, as an independent people, to bestow it upon whom they pleased. This was a declaration of war against Russia, and on the 5th of February 200,000 Russians crossed the Polish frontier.

In this unequal contest the best, indeed the only hope of the Poles, lay in the intervention of outside Powers in their favour, and there seemed to be every chance of such intervention. Public opinion both in France and in England loudly championed the Polish cause, and in Paris there was a clamour for intervention. But King Louis Philippe was too cautious to do anything without the co-operation of England, and though Palmerston, taking his stand on the treaties, was willing to join France in a protest against Russia's violation of the liberties guaranteed to Poland by the Congress of Vienna, he refused to be a party to a breach of the treaty by helping to make Poland independent.

This attitude, as might have been expected, served only to irritate the Tsar. He met the protests of the Powers by a dignified counter-protest against their claim to intervene, in violation of their own oft-proclaimed principles, in the internal affairs of a friendly State; and there the matter ended. The weak attitude of the Western Powers decided that of Austria. Metternich was inclined to favour the establishment of an independent

Poland under a prince of the House of Habsburg, and in alliance with France and Great Britain he might have risked a war for this purpose. Without them the adventure would have been too hazardous. On the other hand, though the contagious example of a national uprising close to her borders was calculated to inspire Austria with misgiving, public opinion in her dominions was too deeply stirred in favour of the Poles to make it safe for her to aid Russia in her work of repression. Austria thus decided on a policy of strict neutrality, and the Poles, deprived of all hope of help from outside, were left to carry on the unequal struggle alone.

During the war the Poles displayed once more all the qualities of heroism and lack of discipline that, throughout their history, had been their glory and their ruin. At the outset they had some striking successes, such as the utter rout of General Geismar's brigade on the 14th of February at Stoczek by the forces under General Dwernicki. But their whole army only numbered 40,000 men; Radziwill was no match for Diebitsch as a commander; and the Poles were quickly pressed back to the line of the Vistula. On the 25th the main forces met on the plain of Grochow, at the very gates of Praga, the suburb of Warsaw on the right bank of the river. The bloody battle that followed ended

in a Polish defeat, but the Poles were able to withdraw in tolerable order into the city, while Diebitsch, whose troops had suffered severely, did not follow up his victory. That defeat had not been more fatal was due to the fact that Chlopicki, who was serving in the army as a volunteer attached to the staff, had been placed in virtual command by Radziwill, who was well aware of his own incompetence. Radziwill was now superseded by General Skrzynecki, who took advantage of Diebitsch's withdrawal into winter quarters to reorganize the Polish army. Leaving Warsaw with his new forces at the end of March, he inflicted a series of minor defeats on the Russians, culminating in the rout of General Rosen's corps at Iganie on the 10th of April. The advance of Diebitsch at the head of overwhelming forces, however, forced him once more to retire to the capital.

At this point the operations were interrupted by the outbreak, for the first time in Europe, of Asiatic cholera, which had been carried in the train of the Russian armies returning from Turkey and was by them communicated to the Poles. For the moment this terrible scourge seemed to favour the Polish cause. The Russian army, decimated by disease, was cut off from its base by the outbreak of fresh insurrections in Lithuania, Podolia, Volhynia and the Ukraine, where

the Polish troops, organized by the Emperor Alexander I, now made common cause with their countrymen in the kingdom. But the very widespread nature of the movement favoured its collapse, since it led the Poles to scatter their slender forces, and enabled the Russians to defeat them in detail. The crowning disaster came on the 26th of May, when Diebitsch inflicted upon them a crushing defeat at Ostrolenka and prepared to lay siege to Warsaw. Before a month had passed, however, he died of cholera, and the siege was not begun by his successor, General Paskievich, until the beginning of September. The Poles were in no condition to resist. Skrzynecki had already resigned his office of dictator, and on the 7th of September his successor Kruckowiecki, in order to save the city from being taken by assault, sent to the Russian commander an offer of the unconditional surrender of Poland.

The fate of Poland could not be doubtful. The Emperor Nicholas had never borne willingly the constitutional restrictions he had inherited from his brother. In his opinion insurrection had proved once for all the futility of Alexander's experiment, while the treason of the Poles had released him from the binding obligation of his oath to maintain their Constitution. His personal prejudices would have led him to deprive the Poles

ostentatiously of every vestige of their liberties, for he resented their action as an insult to himself and made no secret of his hatred and contempt for them. But his resentment was kept within bounds by the necessity for doing something to conciliate the Governments of France and Great Britain, which continued to make representations on behalf of the Poles. On the 26th of February, 1832, accordingly, there was issued an "Organic Statute" for Poland, to take the place of the abolished Constitution of Alexander I. It started with the declaration that the Tsardom of Poland was for ever united with the Russian Empire, of which it formed an integral part, and for the elected Diet it substituted a nominated Council of State. But in other respects its provisions were surprisingly liberal. Poland was to have a separate administrative and judicial system; freedom from arbitrary arrest and a reasonable liberty of opinion were guaranteed; the Catholic clergy was confirmed in their essential privileges; and the old system of local government, whether in the towns or the country, was to remain undisturbed.

The liberal spirit displayed in this instrument was, however, more apparent than real, and its provisions were never destined to be applied. The true temper of the Emperor Nicholas was revealed in the disciplinary

measures which he thought it necessary to apply in order to discourage any future efforts at rebellion. An amnesty was, indeed, proclaimed, but the list of the names excepted from it was more remarkable than that of the names included. The soldiers who had taken part in the insurrection were drafted into Russian regiments in distant parts of the Empire; the male children of condemned rebels and of those who had left the country were torn from their mothers and carried, under military escorts, into Russia to be brought up in Russian military schools; the Polish universities and schools were closed, and, in order that everything calculated to distract the attention of the people from the duty of obedience might be removed, the collections in the museums and picture galleries of Warsaw were carried away to St. Petersburg and Moscow. The willing instrument of these severities was Field-Marshal Paskievich, who in 1832 succeeded the conciliatory Count Witte as viceroy.

As for the Organic Statute, it was from the first a dead letter. The effective government of Poland was carried on, not from Warsaw, but from St. Petersburg, where Paskievich continued mainly to reside, and its central organ was not the Council of State, but the new Department for the Affairs of the Tsardom of Poland which had

been set up on the same day in the Russian capital. Of this department Novosiltsov, the old enemy of Poland, was a member, and though among his colleagues there were five Poles, including Prince Lubecki, these were regarded by their countrymen as renegades. Under these auspices there was little hope for liberty in Poland, and what hope there was, was soon destroyed by the folly of the Polish extremists. Everywhere in Europe the exiles were plotting fresh revolts, and in 1833 a series of sporadic risings in various parts of Poland, easily suppressed, gave Paskievich and his satellites the best of excuses for abandoning all pretence of governing in accordance with the Organic Statute. This continued in nominal existence until 1847 when, under the influence of the risings of 1846 and of the revolutionary agitation in Europe generally, it was finally abolished by Imperial *ukaz*.

CHAPTER IX

THE INSURRECTION OF 1863

UNDER the rigorous despotism of Nicholas I there was little opportunity for any open motions towards the independence of Poland, and Polish patriotism, driven underground,

once more found expression in revolutionary agitation and intrigue. The Poles, moreover, now had against them not only the force of the Russian Government, but the growing sentiment of the dominant influences in Russian intellectual society. Before the insurrection of 1830 there had been intimate intercourse between the Polish and Russian Liberals, as the revelations of the Dekabrist conspiracy had proved. The close connection between constitutional reform in Russia and the Polish Question had been recognized, and Liberalizing Russians, with the Emperor Alexander at their head, had been favourable to the Polish national claims. The best way of securing constitutional liberty seemed to them to be by the methods of decentralization and autonomy, and they were willing to sacrifice the Russian inheritance in Lithuania and Little Russia if by doing so they could secure a Constitution for Russia. But in course of time Alexander's postponement of reforms in Russia, together with his Polonizing policy in the Western Provinces, led to the suspicion that he was betraying Russia for the sake of the Poles, and a reaction set in. Of this anti-Polish and Russian nationalist reaction the chief spokesmen were the poet Zhukovski and the historian Karamzin, who, against the conception of the Russian Empire as a federation of autonomous nationalities,

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set up, the Slavophil ideal of the Muscovite monarchy as the divinely appointed centre of an empire solidly unified and purely Slav.

It is one of the ironies of history that the Pan-Slav idea, against which Germanism is now ostensibly in arms, was itself the creation of German scholarship and German philosophy. It was Herder's comparative study of the Slavonic languages that first revealed the common origin of the scattered Slav races; it was, as Mr. Louis Levine puts it, "a peculiar combination of Schelling's mysticism with the politics of Hegel and with a deficient interpretation of Russian history" that gave birth to the vision of the Slavophiles. This vision involved the idealization of "Holy Russia," as embodying a spiritual and political conception in complete antithesis to that of Western Europe. The civilization of the latter was conceived as based on a narrow rationalism and on the principle of "might is right" derived from Roman Imperialism, and to this was ascribed the break-up of its spiritual unity and those political and class struggles which have made its so-called progress one long record of revolts and of concessions under threat of force. This chaos of the West contained no principle capable of evolving a higher order, and if the world was to be saved, this could only be through

the underlying principles of Slavdom. For in their Orthodox faith the Slavs had always preserved a strong sense of spiritual unity; they had never been a conquering race, and their ideas and institutions had never experienced the corrupting influence of the Roman tradition. For these reasons they had always been free from those political and class struggles which had characterized the West, and had preserved unimpaired in their village communities the true principles of democracy and justice. Finally, it was in the character and institutions of the Russian people that the basic principles of the Slav world found their truest expression, and therefore it was the mission of the Russian people to regenerate the world by establishing a new and glorious Slav civilization on the "Slav triunity of Orthodoxy, popular sentiment and Autocracy."

This Slavophil idea was, of course, in itself arrant nonsense; it was based on an utter perversion of history; and its apostles were, as Mr. Levine well says, "a dreamy lot of landowners who kept in serfdom the peasant in whose bosom palpitated the heart of a world to be born." But it was destined to exercise a vast influence in Russia, and far beyond. It underwent many modifications, and ultimately assumed a strongly democratic tinge, but its underlying idea remained the

same—the community of interests of all the Slavs against the Europe of the West. As for the Poles, as Slavs they would, of course, be welcomed into this Pan-Slav commonwealth, but only on condition of losing their national identity. As the Russian poet Pushkin put it—

Whether the Slav rivers will unite in the
Russian ocean
Or this will dry up, that is the question.

The Poles, too, had early begun to make capital out of the new Slav idea. In 1806 Prince Adam Czartoryski had urged the Emperor Alexander to place himself at the head of a Slav confederation, and the Polish national poet Adam Mickiewicz, during his stay in Russia, had won the favour of the circles of Karamzin and Pushkin owing to his Pan-Slav pose as much as to his poetic genius. But however much the Poles might accommodate themselves to each situation as it arose, in secret they kept their hopes and their ambitions unimpaired. Their accommodation, indeed, was glorified into a patriotic duty by Mickiewicz. Before leaving Russia in 1829 he published his *Konrad Wallenrod*, a poem of which the subject was the vengeance taken by the Lithuanians on their Teutonic oppressors, and in this he idealized treachery

and deceit as the legitimate weapons of the weak—

Slaves are ye, and the slave's one weapon is betrayal.

The poem had been hailed in Russian literary circles as a work of genius. Its inner meaning was revealed by the insurrection of 1830, when Czartoryski placed himself at the head of the Polish Provisional Government and Mickiewicz, from his place of exile, stirred his countrymen to action with burning words.

For some ten years after the revelation of this irreconcilable spirit all intercourse between intellectual circles in Russia and Poland practically ceased. As for Lithuania and Little Russia, Karamzin and his school had brought historical proof enough to persuade the doubtful that they belonged of right to Russia, and the Slavophiles were at one with the Government in resisting any idea of restoring them to Poland. No attempt was made, however, to arrest the process of spreading Polish culture which, under the powerful influence of the wealthy Polish aristocracy, continued to be carried on, and with increasing success, in these countries. The suppression of the Polish university at Vilna, and of the Academy at Kremenez, and the foundation, in 1834, of the Russian

University of Kiev, were attempts to counteract this process, but there was too little in common between the Emperor Nicholas and the Russian intellectuals to allow them to co-operate in this propaganda, which met the usual fate of culture imposed by police regulations. The oppression of the Tsar's iron rule had, in fact, been preparing the way for a fresh understanding between the progressive elements in Russia and the Poles. All the various political groups in Russia had gradually been absorbed into the Pan-Slav idea, associated now with the belief in the necessity for Liberal reforms and above all for the emancipation of the serfs. To all of them reconciliation with the Poles seemed once more a thing desirable and attainable. The Zapadniki (Westerners), whose aim was to complete the westernizing policy of Peter the Great on Liberal lines, and the Constitutionalists hoped to strengthen by means of the Poles the West European elements in Russia, while the Slavophiles sought their aid against Austria, which was beginning to conciliate the sentiment of its Slav populations with a view to its organization against Russia. During the revolutionary year 1848 a considerable impetus was given to the friendly feeling of the Russian Liberals for the Poles by the Pan-Slav Congress assembled at Prague. It was helped, too, by the new

Polish propaganda, associated with the name of the Marquis Wielopolski, in favour of a compromise with Russia.

That this should have been the case is characteristic of the confusion of motives which determined the attitude of the various sections of opinion towards the Polish Question, for Wielopolski's programme was inspired neither by love of Russia nor enthusiasm for popular liberties. During the insurrection of 1830-31 he had attached himself to the aristocratic party of the extreme Right, of which Prince Adam Czartoryski was the head, among his associates being Count Andrew Zamojski and Count Alexander Walewski, both of whom were destined to play an important part in Polish affairs, the former as founder of the Agricultural Society, which under Alexander II was to become the chief focus of the national movement leading up to the insurrection of 1863, the latter—who was a natural son of Napoleon I—as Minister of State and adviser on Polish affairs of the Emperor Napoleon III. In 1832 Wielopolski had retired to Cracow and later, having lost his fortune in a law-suit, he spent some time at Berlin as assistant in a book-shop. Here his high conservative principles were strengthened by his admiration for King Frederick William IV, who admitted him to his Court, and he earned the gratitude of the king by

using his influence to stiffen the opposition of the Polish nobles of the Grand Duchy of Posen to the revolutionary efforts to reform the Estates in a democratic sense. His attitude towards the Western Powers changed, however, after the rising of 1846 in Galicia. That the Austrian authorities incited the Ruthene peasants to rise against the insurgent Polish nobles there can be no doubt. Wielopolski, in an open letter to Prince Metternich, accused the Austrian Government of having deliberately organized the hideous massacres that followed, and declared that henceforth the only hope for Poland lay in an understanding with Russia. "Our enmity," he said, "must be extinguished in the recognition of Slav unity. Half the blame for the severity with which Russia oppresses us rests with us."

This manifesto had its effect in Russia, where it encouraged the movement in favour of reconciliation with the Poles. Among the Poles themselves its welcome was more equivocal. Some of them, indeed, like the influential Galician publicist Sigismund Helcel, under the influence of the terrible events of 1846, professed to see in "a genuine, honest and faithful alliance with Russia" the surest means of saving the Poles from that absorption into Germanism which had already been the fate of so many millions of Slavs. By the majority, however, and notably those

who were plotting in exile the liberation of their country, it was regarded as a betrayal. The events of 1848 modified the views of Wielopolski and Helcel themselves, and it was precisely their influence which determined the Galician Poles to support the Habsburg Monarchy against the revolution, in the hope of securing for Polish Galicia the position of an autonomous State in a preponderantly Slav federation. These changes revealed the true inwardness of Wielopolski's attitude, which was wholly opportunist from the Polish aristocratic point of view. In the end it was to lead him to accept the principle of "troj-loyalism," that is to say, the acceptance by the Poles of their position as subjects of the three partitioning Powers in order to secure more readily the means for developing, strengthening and securing their national culture. Having carried this policy a stage further in Galicia in 1848, Wielopolski established himself at Warsaw, where owing to his interest in agrarian reform he got into close touch with the leaders of the Polish aristocracy and the heads of the Russian administration. Needless to say, his principle of compromise with Russia, though it rendered him suspect to the mass of Polish patriots, brought him under the favourable notice of the Russian Government.

The spirit of this Government underwent

a change, during the Crimean War, with the death of the Emperor Nicholas I and the accession of Alexander II, which promised to open a new era in the relations of Russia and Poland. The Poles, in spite of the exhortations of Mickiewicz—who now thought the opportunity had come to strike—had remained quiet during the crisis of the war, and the time seemed to have come for a policy of conciliation. The lines on which this policy should proceed had been suggested in a memorandum drawn up by M. P. Pogodin and laid by him before the Tsar. Poland, he argued, should be made the means of restoring the shattered international position of Russia. To reconcile the Poles would be to reconcile the whole Slav world and that European public opinion which the oppression of the Poles had alienated. Let Poland have a Constitution of her own, and as for the limits of the autonomous State to be created, “where Polish is spoken there let Poland be, where Russian there Russia.” The Russians were to give up the “tsardom of Poland”—the Congress Kingdom—and in return the Poles were to renounce their claims to their former dominions in the western provinces of Russia. This was less than the Russian Liberalism of the days of Alexander I had been willing to concede, and it is significant that even the most conciliatory Russian

opinion no longer admitted the idea of placing Lithuania and Little Russia under Polish rule. To the strict Slavophiles, moreover, even the proposal to erect an autonomous Poland seemed a betrayal, and the aged Karamzin besought the Emperor not to grant any national privileges to the Poles.

To the Emperor Alexander II, however, the proposal to conciliate the Poles made a special appeal, as well to his fears as to his native generosity of character. He disliked and distrusted Pan-Slavism, with its democratic undercurrents; he feared above all things the growth of the revolutionary spirit in Europe; and he saw in the principle of aristocracy, for which there was no room in the Slavophil utopia, the strongest buttress of the autocracy. It seemed to him, therefore, good policy to conciliate the nobles, whether the Germans of the Baltic provinces or the Poles, and attach them to his throne. In May 1856, accordingly, he had himself crowned King of Poland in the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Warsaw, and seized the occasion to relax the rigour of the system of Nicholas I. The political exiles were allowed to return, and in September 1857, the Government authorized the establishment of an Agricultural Society, which, under the presidency of Count Andrew Zamojski, not only did excellent work in its proper sphere but

soon assumed the character of a political organization. Against further concessions the viceroy, Prince Gorchakov, protested, on the ground that they would only be interpreted as signs of weakness, and for four years nothing further was done.

There was, indeed, cause enough for misgiving. The returned exiles had soon covered the whole country with a network of conspiracy. The secret organization of the democratic "Reds" aimed at an immediate national insurrection; the aristocratic "Whites," whose centre was the Agricultural Society, held to the more cautious policy of first securing the assistance of a foreign Power. But their ends were the same, and, as usual, the pace was forced by the more violent elements. A meeting of the Emperors of Russia and Austria and of the King of Prussia in Warsaw, in October 1860, was made the occasion of hostile demonstrations, and from this time on a series of mass meetings were held, beginning with one to celebrate the anniversary of the insurrection of November 1830, and culminating with a monster demonstration on the 27th of February, 1861. On this last occasion an attempt to scatter the crowd led to rioting and the intervention of the military. Several of the crowd were killed, and the resentment of the people rose to fever heat.

Gorchakov, now old and infirm, was power-

less to deal with a movement which had spread to every class of the population. He could think of nothing better than to consult Zamojski as to what he should do, only to receive the famous answer "Clear out!" (*Allez vous en!*), and he weakly allowed the Polish leaders to nominate a Delegation of twenty-four members to take over temporarily the government of the city. The very first act of this body was to formulate further demands—permission to hold a public funeral of the victims of the "massacre," the appointment of the Garibaldian Marquis Paulucci as head of the police, permission for the Delegation to go to St. Petersburg to present an address to the Emperor, the release of all those arrested on the 27th of February. These demands were presented to the viceroy by a deputation, headed by Zamojski, and with one exception were all conceded. Gorchakov refused to allow the Delegation to proceed to St. Petersburg, but on the following day he himself forwarded their address, which formulated the national demands of the Poles. Pending the arrival of the answer Warsaw continued under the rule of the Delegation, while similar bodies were set up in the other towns of the Kingdom. "National mourning" was decreed for the "martyrs," and on the 2nd of March their public funeral was celebrated with immense pomp.

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In view of this utter breakdown of "strong government" in Poland, the Emperor Alexander once more decided on a policy of conciliation, and on the 13th of March the viceroy announced to the Delegation that it had been decided to endow Poland with liberal institutions, and on the 26th an Imperial *ukaz* directed projects of law to be prepared with this object. The laws, as speedily formulated, were as follows. The Polish Council of State, set up in 1832 and abolished by Nicholas I in 1841, was re-established, together with the Commission for the regulation of religious affairs and education, suppressed in 1839. The various branches of the Polish administration were made independent of those in Russia, and in the Kingdom the military was separated from the civil administration, to which officials of Polish birth were to be appointed. The administration was to be decentralized, and local government was to be carried on by elected councils in the towns and rural districts. A liberal system of education was to be organized, the University of Warsaw to be restored, and Polish to be made the medium of instruction in the schools.

The Emperor chose as his instrument for carrying out this policy of reform the Marquis Wielopolski, whose acquaintance he had made at Warsaw the year before, and whom he now

appointed Minister of Religion and Education. But he over-estimated Wielopolski's influence over Polish opinion, and the result of his experiment was destined to be only one proof more of the futility of "half measures." Wielopolski himself, gifted, eloquent and masterful, believed in his own capacity to lead his countrymen, but his position was from the first impossible. In the words of Stanislaus Koźmian, who took part in, and has left a narrative of the events of 1863, he was the only sober man amid a people intoxicated with hopes exaggerated beyond measure by their easy success, and of all the Poles he alone realized the necessity for compromise. He well knew that any continuance of the chauvinist agitation would merely play into the hands of the Russian party of repression, which was by no means dead and whose views were represented by the new viceroy, General Sukhotsanet. Wielopolski's influence at St. Petersburg gained him the victory over the latter, and the appointment in July of the conciliatory General Lambert to the viceroyalty marked the triumph of the policy of reform.

The triumph was short-lived. The "red" extremists had no intention of being content with anything short of a complete revolution, and the weakness of the viceroys played into their hands. In November 1860, Lambert

was succeeded by General Lüders, who was in his turn displaced in the following June by the Grand Duke Constantine. This prince was charged with the congenial mission of reconciling the Poles, and the attempt, all but successful, made on his life the day after his arrival did not deflect him from this purpose. The prospect of success, however, had now become all but hopeless. Wielopolski, indeed, had been appointed in December vice-president of the new Council of State and, as head of the civil administration, he was now nominally all-powerful. But he was wholly out of touch with the dominant sentiment of his countrymen, and this led him into fatal errors. His very first act as Minister of Religion had been to proclaim the principle of religious equality. This, though it conciliated the powerful Jewish financial element by securing for the Jews in Poland the exceptional liberties which they have since enjoyed, alienated from him the Roman Catholic clergy, who even after 1830 had retained their privileged position, and laid him under the suspicion among the Poles generally of favouring this hated cause of Russian Orthodoxy. This was his first capital error. His second had been his attempt to win over Zamojski, the most implacable opponent of the policy of compromise, by offering him high office in the new Government. The sole

result had been to increase Zamojski's prestige by giving him the opportunity of publicly refusing to have anything to do with a Russophil Minister. Wielopolski had replied on the 6th of April by dissolving the Agricultural Society, announcing that he would tolerate no such rival government. The result of this was that such moderating influence as it had possessed was destroyed, and that the direction of the national movement was given over wholly to the secret organizations. As for Wielopolski, he was left with only the nominal support of a fraction of the Whites, while the rest either held aloof or threw themselves into the revolutionary agitation for national independence.

That this agitation had gained so great an impetus was due to the fact that a Napoleon was once more seated upon the throne of France. Napoleon III had proclaimed himself the champion of the principle of nationality; he had given proof of the sincerity of his professions by the part played by his armies in the liberation of Italy in 1859; and the fact that Count Alexander Walewski was his Minister of State and adviser in Polish affairs seemed an earnest of his intention to translate his expressed sympathy with the cause of Poland into action. Encouraged by this attitude of Napoleon, the Whites, with Zamojski at their head, took a fateful step.

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In October a great demonstration was held at Horodlo to celebrate the anniversary of the Union of Lublin, and under pressure of the public excitement they issued a manifesto demanding the separation of Lithuania, Podolia and Volhynia from Russia and their restoration to Poland. The effect on Wielopolski's plans was disastrous. In Russia the opponents of the policy of conciliation could now point to the manifesto as proof of the hopelessness of reconciling the Poles. The Tsar, who had no wish to incur the suspicions which had fallen upon Alexander I, yielded to the Pan-Slav clamour and withdrew his support of Wielopolski's policy. Zamojski was sent into banishment, the aristocratic revolutionary party of the "Whites" was dissolved into its elements, and the field was left clear for the agitation of the ultra-democratic and nationalist "Reds." So matters went from bad to worse in Poland, until the Russian Government, with Wielopolski's approval, attempted to suppress the ferment by a characteristically Russian method. In the spring of 1863 the authorities in Poland were supplied with lists of political suspects and directed to enrol them in Russian regiments scattered in various parts of the empire. This set the spark to the powder. The threatened men took refuge in the forests, and soon the whole country had blazed into

revolt. It was not now, however, a regular war between organized armies, as in 1830, but a sporadic rising of the people which, if no foreign Power intervened, could have but one ending.

The only Power to intervene effectively was Prussia, which had everything to fear from a successful rising of the Poles. The latter, with characteristic recklessness, had done nothing to obviate this danger. On the contrary, the "Reds." publicly laid claim to Posen, West Prussia and even Pomerania as far as the Oder, as formerly parts of the Kingdom of Poland, and active recruiting for the insurgents was carried on in the Prussian provinces. Under these circumstances Bismarck declared that the suppression of the insurrection was for Prussia too "a matter of life and death"; he welcomed also the opportunity for breaking the Franco-Russian entente and substituting a close alliance between the Courts of Berlin and St. Petersburg; and on the 8th of February Count Alvensleben signed, on behalf of the Prussian Government, a Convention at St. Petersburg, under which Russia and Prussia undertook to act in complete concert in the affairs of Poland and to allow the free movement of the troops of either Power across the frontier. This Convention was, indeed, soon afterwards annulled in consequence of an overwhelmingly adverse vote in the Prussian Parliament; but

in spirit, it was maintained, and the establishment of a strong cordon of Prussian troops along the Polish frontier effectively prevented any participation of the Prussian Poles in the insurrection.

Meanwhile the news of the conclusion of the Convention had awakened in the French, already alarmed at the growing power of Prussia, their old sympathy with the Poles, which had been damped by their failure to take action during the Crimean War, and Napoleon, fearing to lose prestige by failing to take action—as Louis Philippe had done in 1830—made efforts to secure an effective alliance against Russia. The occasion was so far propitious that public opinion in Great Britain was strongly stirred in favour of the Poles, while Austria, in order to embarrass Russia, was prepared for almost any concession to Polish sentiment. He accordingly appealed to these Powers, as signatories of the General Treaty of Vienna, to join with him in protesting against the Alvensleben Convention, as a violation of this treaty, and in demanding of Russia the fulfilment of her obligations under the treaty. His sudden appearance as the champion of the “treaties” was, however, more calculated to astonish than to impress Europe. The Liberal Government in England suspected Napoleon of a design to use the excuse of the Polish Question

for a war of which the object would be to reconquer for France the Rhine frontier; intent on preserving at all costs the peace of Europe, it temporized, and Lord John Russell, while consenting to join in protests against the action of both Prussia and Russia, insisted that they should be so worded as not to provoke war. Napoleon, despairing of an effective Triple Alliance, turned to Austria in the hope of securing at least her alliance against Russia and Prussia. He proposed that, in the event of the success of their joint arms, Poland should be enlarged by the acquisition of Posen and Galicia and erected into an independent kingdom under an Austrian archduke, Austria obtaining compensation at the cost of Prussia in Silesia. The Austrian Government, however, though not averse from the idea of an independent Poland, refused to consider the cession of Galicia in return for merely problematic gains; it was offended, moreover, by Napoleon raising the Venetian Question at the same time, and the whole proposal therefore fell through. The sorry result of weeks of negotiation was the presentation, first to Prussia and finally to Russia, of colourless protests which these Powers could afford to treat with contempt. As in 1830, the Poles were left to their fate.

The sole result of the futile intervention of the Powers was, indeed, to make this fate

infinitely worse than it would otherwise have been. The more moderate elements among the Polish nationalists were at first opposed to taking part in the insurrection, which rightly appeared to them hopeless without the certainty of foreign intervention. The "Whites" had nothing, save their nationalism, in common with the Central Committee of the "Reds" at Warsaw, which, under the influence of Mieroslawski and other revolutionary adventurers, constituted itself the secret National Government and assumed the direction of the war. But Napoleon pointed out to Prince Ladislaus Czartoryski, the chief of the group of aristocratic exiles in Paris known as the "Hotel Lambert," that his intervention would depend on the insurrection losing its revolutionary, and assuming a "national" character, and the Whites thereupon decided to throw themselves into the movement; Archbishop Filenski and the other members of the Council of State resigned, their example was followed by all the Polish members of the local councils and corporations, and Wielopolski's whole structure of modified autonomy came toppling to the ground. Wielopolski himself was dismissed on the 28th of June, and the appointment in his place of General Berg heralded a policy of drastic repression.

The issue of the unequal struggle that

followed could not be in doubt, yet it was a year before it was decided. Barely a week after the outbreak of the rebellion, indeed, the army which the Poles had succeeded in gathering was utterly routed by the Russians at Grokowska after a three days' battle, and General Langiewicz, who had been elected dictator and commander-in-chief, had fled over the border into Galicia. But the direction of the war now passed into the hands of the secret National Government at Warsaw, which pressed it and extended it with fanatical ardour. The penalty for those who dared to disobey the commands of this self-constituted body was assassination, and the reign of terror it established proved effective in keeping the insurrection alive. In vain the Emperor Alexander issued, on the 1st of April, a proclamation promising, on certain conditions, not only a general amnesty, but the preservation and elaboration of the reforms carried out under Wielopolski. Not a Pole dared to submit, and indeed even those who had from the first despaired of success saw in this apparent weakening of the Russian Government the first-fruits of the intervention of the Powers on which they based their hopes, and were the more encouraged to persevere. So the war continued, spreading beyond the borders of the kingdom into Lithuania, where it was suppressed by General

Muraviev with a cruelty that has become legendary. It was not, as in 1830, a war of regular tactics and of pitched battles, but of raids and surprises, of ambushades and massacres, and it was characterized by frightful barbarity on both sides. Stamped out in one place, the fires of insurrection blazed up in another. It was not till the end of March 1864, that the conflagration was finally quenched. For a whole year terror had reigned in Poland—the terror of war, the terror of the secret Government, and the terror of the Russian repression, and as the outcome there was nothing but the revelation, to the best of those who had taken part in the insurrection, of the tragic folly of their actions. “The insurrection of 1863,” wrote Stanislaus Kozmian, “helped the greatest enemy of Poland and the Polish cause to success. On the ruins of the Polish Revolution rose the work of Bismarck and the system of Russification in the Empire of the Tsars.”

CHAPTER X

THE RUSSIFICATION OF POLAND

THE insurrection of 1863 had naturally shaken the confidence of the Emperor Alexander II in the Polish nobles and discredited

Wielopolski's policy of administrative reform based on a limited autonomy. So far as autonomy was concerned, this was now definitely abandoned. Though the Russian Emperor continued to bear the title of King of Poland and was still for a while represented in his Polish provinces by a viceroy, these provinces were incorporated in the Russian Empire and were henceforth officially referred to, not under their legal style of the Tsardom of Poland, but as the ten Governments of the Vistula. The efforts of the Russian Government were now devoted to making this incorporation organic by a ruthless process of Russification. Poland was governed by its military governors-general once more as a conquered country, and in course of time not only did the administration become Russian, but Russian was made the language of all the organs of public life, including the universities and the schools. On the other hand, Wielopolski's policy of administrative reform was not at once reversed. It received, however, under the new viceroy, Nicholas Alexeyevich Milyutin, a fundamentally new direction.

Milyutin had been conspicuously associated with the democratic Slav movement in St. Petersburg, and the policy which he set out to apply in Poland was at once Russian nationalist and democratic, as opposed to the

traditional aristocratic nationalism of the Poles. Russia had in vain attempted to conciliate the nobles and gentry; she would now make her appeal to the peasants, the true representatives of Slavdom, and with their aid overwhelm the corrupting elements of Polish Western culture and Roman ecclesiasticism. In short, Milyutin's idea was to create in Poland a new people, antagonistic to the Poles and bound by ties of gratitude to Russia, by emancipating the serfs, providing the mass of landless men with land, and, by giving them a separate organization in purely peasant communities, withdrawing them from the influence of the Polish landowners and the Roman Catholic clergy, and so absorbing them in the spiritual body of Holy Russia.

The great agrarian reform embodying this policy was carried out by the *ukazes* of the 19th of February, 1864, by which all the peasants, whatever the tenure by which they held their lands, were turned into freeholders, while retaining their right of free access to the forests and pastures of the lords. The landlords received compensation, but were compelled to take this in four per cent. Treasury bonds, which it was believed would keep them quiet by giving them an interest in maintaining the credit of the Government. The result of these decrees was the creation of a body

of 1,340,000 peasant proprietors, only some 200,000 men in all Poland remaining unprovided with land. Further laws established a new administrative system for the countryside, the object of which was to segregate this new nation of peasants from the rest of the community. The basis of this organization was the peasant commune (*gromada*), with its elected assembly and mayor (*soltys* = German *Schültheiss*). The assembly of the *gromada*, which was responsible for the regulation of all the affairs of the village community and of its relations with the Government, consisted entirely of peasants; not only the large landowners and the clergy were excluded from it, but also the *szlachta*, though these were often economically indistinguishable from peasants. The peasant communes thus constituted were grouped under the organization of the district (*gmin*), for which there was also an elected council with an elected *vojt* or bailiff (the German *Vogt*, from Latin *advocatus*). In the council of the *gmin* all landowners were represented, but there was no representation of the country towns.

The effect of this legislation was to replace the system set up by Wielopolski, which had made the local assemblies representative of all classes, by one which deliberately stereotyped class divisions. The intention was to

keep the happy peasant pure and undefiled by contact with the elements most hostile to Russia; the effect was to deliver him body and soul to the petty tyranny of the local representatives of Russian majesty. The law, indeed, forbade any Russian official to enter the local assemblies; but the peasants, deprived of the guidance of their natural leaders, were helpless when left to themselves; the local *chinovniks*, with the connivance of their superiors, simply ignored the law forbidding them to meddle in the affairs of the self-governing communities, which were soon entirely under their thumb. The consequent oppression had its natural effect. So far from remaining water-tight compartments impervious to outside influences, it was precisely the peasant communes which became, some thirty years later, the most effective centres of the Polish educational movement; and when, in 1905-6, the peasants rose in rebellion against the intolerable abuses of the Russian bureaucracy, it was in the name of Polish nationality that they did so.

Catholicism being the backbone of Polish nationalism, and the clergy having made themselves conspicuous in the agitation leading up to the late insurrection, Milyutin proceeded to deprive the Roman Catholic Church of the privileged position which it had continued to enjoy even under the rule of Nicholas I,

the ecclesiastical lands being confiscated, most of the monasteries suppressed, and, above all, the concordat with Rome abrogated. But if these drastic reforms made Milyutin unpopular with the Polish clergy and aristocratic classes, his experiments in peasant democracy were hardly less offensive and alarming to conservative opinion in Russia, and Poles and Russians soon combined to undermine his position. They were helped by the profound change in the European system resulting from the overwhelming victory of Prussia over Austria in 1866, which led the Emperor Alexander once more to believe in the necessity for conciliating the Polish aristocracy. In 1867, accordingly, Milyutin was recalled, and though he continued, as president of the Imperial Chancery for the Tsardom of Poland, to direct the work of agrarian reorganization, his general policy was not further developed.

There was, in fact, henceforth no consistent Russian policy in Poland, the character of the government depending very much at any particular moment on the international situation of Russia, or even on the temper and views of the governor-general for the time being. Milyutin's successor was Count Berg, one of the numerous German noblemen in Russian service, whose mission was to make himself as pleasant as possible to the Polish aristocrats. With him began that policy of

social conciliation combined with political repression¹ which was to become the normal type of the Russian administration. All those Poles who had taken part in the movements of the last few years, including the supporters of the policy of Wielopolski, were banished, and any motions towards an independent political activity were rigorously suppressed. On the other hand, great efforts were made to keep those who were content to refrain from politics well amused. The social life of Warsaw was encouraged in every way; large sums were spent by the Government on the opera and the theatre, on the encouragement of the fine arts, in short, on anything calculated to distract the minds of the Poles from the memory of their national wrongs; and the Polish capital rapidly developed into a cosmopolitan city of pleasure, the Paris of Eastern Europe.

Meanwhile the repressive policy was not consistently nor universally applied; it was not, for instance, until 1876 that Poles began to be replaced by Russians in the courts of justice. There was, moreover, after 1867 a strong feeling among the higher Russian officials in favour of reverting to the standpoint of Wielopolski; and this conciliatory spirit, which had the personal sympathy of the Emperor Alexander, was more or less in evidence during the period, from 1867 to

1883, covered by the viceroyalty of Count Berg and the governor-generalships of Count Feodor Kotzebue and Peter Pavlovich Albedinski. The process of Russification, indeed, went on, in the administration, in the law courts and in the universities and schools; but the governors-general did much to mitigate its rigour and co-operated in a sympathetic spirit with the Poles in the economic and industrial development of the country.

During the latter years of the reign of the Emperor Alexander II the inspiration of the Russian discipline in Poland had been largely derived from Prussia, which was interested in discouraging nationalist aspirations in the Congress Kingdom which might react upon her own Polish provinces, while Bismarck's astute diplomacy, especially during the crisis of the Russo-Turkish War of 1876, had gained her great influence at the Court of St. Petersburg. A new influence, however, became paramount in 1881 when the Emperor Alexander III succeeded his murdered father on the Russian throne. The old dreamy Slavophil movement had given place in the 'seventies to a Slavophil, or Pan-Slav, propaganda more effective because its programme was at once more practical and more narrowly Russian; and of this national Gospel the new Tsar was a professed disciple. He was strongly averse from the Westernizing and Liberalizing ten-

dencies of his predecessor; he was deeply convinced of the divine sanction of Orthodoxy and Autocracy as the foundations of Russian nationality, which he conceived as conterminous with the Russian Empire; and he was from the first determined to give to this Empire an exclusively Russian character. Under a sovereign who substituted Russian for the traditional French as the language of the Russian Court and Foreign Office, and who lost no opportunity of showing his predilection for all things natively Russian, it was not to be expected that there would be any relaxation of the process of Russification in Poland. Under General Gurko, who was governor-general from 1883 to 1894, the Poles were, in fact, subjected to a draconian discipline with the object of crushing out their nationality. His successor, Count Shuvalov, recognizing the folly of this policy, relaxed the severity of the administration, and Prince Imeretinsky, who became governor-general in 1896, advised certain concessions to the Poles, but in vain. The result of the perseverance in the policy of repression was disastrous failure. The exclusion of the Poles from official posts, which was ultimately made absolute by Count Cherkov, governor-general from 1900-5, merely led to the utter degradation of the Russian bureaucracy in Poland, since none but the worst class of minor officials

would accept office there; while the drastic enforcement of the language ordinances succeeded only in making the Poles combine for the protection and extension of their native tongue, with results that will be described later.

No less unsuccessful was the long-sustained effort of the Russian authorities under the direction of the Holy Synod, which had throughout been given a free hand, to force the Uniats of Poland and the "annexed provinces" into the Orthodox Church. In Lithuania, as a result of the reaction against the Polish propaganda of which Prince Adam Czartoryski had made the University of Vilna the centre, this effort had continued ever since the accession of the Emperor Nicholas I. It had received a great impulse, during and after the insurrection of 1863, under the reign of terror established by General Muraviev, and by persuasion or bribery or force large numbers of Uniats had been absorbed into Orthodoxy. In Poland there had been a similar persecution, but with less success. In 1875, however, the Uniat bishop of Cholm transferred himself and his flock to the Orthodox Church. The affair was a scandal, for the bishop—a Galician priest named Martell Popiel—had notoriously been thrust into the see for this very purpose, and there had been no pretence of consulting his

people. From this time onward a struggle, more and more embittered, continued between the Roman Catholic clergy and the Russian Government for religious domination in the border provinces. The simple Uniat peasants, threatened by the Russian authorities with temporal pains and with eternal pains by the Catholic priests, were in a difficult predicament. The mass of them followed the line of least resistance and became Orthodox, which involved in practice no more than the deposition of certain Latin saints in favour of Greeks. A large minority, however, resisted all official persecution, and being given a choice of damnations, elected to dispense with the rites of religion altogether rather than to receive them from the hands of any but a Catholic priest. This state of affairs, intolerable from any religious point of view, continued so long as the fanatical Pobyedonostsev was procurator of the Holy Synod. Its failure was proclaimed when, on the 17th of April, 1905, the Emperor Nicholas II established the principle of religious liberty. In Poland some 200,000 Uniats at once joined the Roman Catholic Church, thus formally advertising their Polish nationality. In the Russian south-western provinces, Podolia and Volhynia, a large number of nominally Orthodox Little Russians equally promptly transferred themselves to the Uniat Church.

For the Little Russians, or Ruthenes, had also meanwhile developed a national consciousness of their own, antagonistic alike to the Muscovites and the Poles. The Ukrainophil movement had its origin in the university of Kharkov, founded in 1805 by the Emperor Alexander I, and first became articulate about the middle of the last century. It was then that the Ruthene scholar Kostomarov published his researches into the history of the Little Russians and the conclusions he had drawn from these. The expressions "Great Russians" and "Little Russians," he maintained, were in themselves utterly unhistorical and misleading. The very name of "Russia" had merely been invented by Peter the Great to symbolize the ambition of the tsars of Muscovy to establish their empire over all the lands once dominated by the Scandinavian *Ros*. With it and all that it connoted — stereotyped Orthodoxy and Autocracy—the free peoples of the Ukraine had nothing in common; their national spirit had found its proper expression in the Cossack republics of the seventeenth century, and their aspiration must be to throw off the yoke which the Muscovites had imposed upon them and re-establish an independent national existence on democratic foundations. The arguments derived from this somewhat fanciful reconstruction of the past were reinforced by the

philological researches of Kulish, who set up the claim of the Ruthene language to be more than a mere dialect of Russian, while the poet and painter Taras Shevchenko—an emancipated serf—interpreted and idealized the spirit of the Ukraine people.

The Ukrainophil movement thus began, like most modern nationalist movements, under a purely intellectual impulse. Its great popular impetus, however, was derived from economic forces; for its real strength lay, not in its protest against Russian centralization and autocracy, but in the discontent of the peasants with the oppressive rule of their Russian and Polish landlords. The Poles thus realized that the Ukrainophil agitation was a threat to their own dominant economic and social position, and on the very eve of their own insurrection they joined in urging the Russian Government to stamp it out. In 1862, accordingly, the Ukrainophil journal *Osnova* was suppressed, and the little group of Ruthene scholars at St. Petersburg, of which it had been the mouthpiece, was dispersed. The Ukrainophil movement none the less persisted, and ultimately became, as will be explained later, one of the most important factors determining the situation that led up to the present war.

Meanwhile, during the half-century that has passed since the insurrection of 1863, a pro-

found change has taken place in the character of Poland and the Polish people. The Poland of 1863 was still in the main what it had been in 1772, a country of nobles and priests and serfs, the cities being still in a backward state of development and mainly inhabited by Jews and Germans. The Poland of to-day is, so far as it has survived the ruin of the war, a thickly populated country, dotted with great and flourishing industrial centres. The social and economic evolution of the Polish nation, of which this is the result, dates from the emancipation of the serfs. It was the *ukazes* of 1864 which began the process of splitting up the great estates, and this process has continued ever since, owing to the desire of the peasants to acquire more land and the willingness of the landowners to sell for the high prices which the thrifty cultivators are able to offer. But though more than half the land is now held by small freeholders, peasants or *szlachta*, their increase has not kept pace with that of the total population, which has more than doubled since 1864. The surplus has been absorbed by the industrial development of the cities. On the one hand, the sons of the *szlachta*, who compose the mass of the Polish artisans, have formed a new middle class. On the other hand, the landless children of the peasants have gone to swell the numbers of the city proletariat,

of which the Jews, driven into the comparative security of Poland by persecutions in Russia and in the countries of the West, still form the most miserable element.

This industrialization of Poland is a factor of first-rate importance in the modern Polish Question. Opposition to the Russian regime, as it existed before the war, was as fierce among the Polish middle class, which inherits the uncompromising nationalism of the *szlachta*, as ever it had been among the nobles and the Catholic clergy. On the other hand, the development of her industrial life has bound Poland to Russia by ties stronger than any Pan-Slav dreams, namely those of self-interest. For economically Poland has become dependent upon Russia, which is the great outlet for her manufactures, notably for the produce of her cotton mills. The independence of Poland would be dearly bought were she to be cut off by a high tariff wall from her Russian markets. An autonomous Poland, embraced in a Russian customs union, would run no such risk of ruin.

These considerations have had their effect in modifying the attitude of Polish nationalism. The dream of independence had, indeed, been dissipated by the collapse of the insurrection of 1863. "The nation," says M. Dmowski, the leader of the Polish party in the first and second Dumas, "gave up the struggle; it re-

solved to resign itself to the situation, to its incorporation in three foreign States, and took for its aim to work for the preservation of its national individuality and the development of its civilization." This aim was unconsciously furthered by the very rigour of the Russian repressive system, which prevented the Poles from wasting their energies in useless political agitation. There was, indeed, after 1863 a sharp reaction against the political idealism which had so often led them astray in pursuit of wandering fires. The great nobles, many of whom had in any case disapproved of the insurrection, adopted the principles of Wielopolski and attempted by a display of loyalty to acquire influence at the three Courts; and not without result, as events in Galicia were soon to prove. The rapidly growing middle class, on the other hand, introduced a wholly new element into Polish life and thought which was soon to have a determining influence upon them. This was apparent in the character of the intellectual revival in Poland when once the numbing effect of the disaster of 1864 had worn off. The old romanticism was dead; the young Poles ceased to write poetry and to seek in the legends of the past, as Lelewel and Mickiewicz had done, the inspiration of their patriotic activities, but turned to the problems of the present and sought, by what they termed

“organic work,” to build up the social and economic structure of the nation on the foundation laid by the emancipation edict of 1864. The fashion had been to idealize the Poland that had perished. The new school of “Warsaw Positivists” submitted it to a pitiless criticism, attacked its traditions of aristocracy and clericalism as responsible for all the nation’s woes, and even went so far as to attack religion itself in the name of free thought, modern science, progress and democratic principles.

This apparent absorption of all that was intelligent in Poland in the task of raising the economic condition of the country was not displeasing to the Russian Government, and at the outset Count Berg, the viceroy, did much to encourage it. But the very success of the movement was bound sooner or later to give to it a political direction, and this first became apparent with the growth of Socialism in the towns and the foundation in 1878 of the Polish Socialist Party. The earliest inspiration of this was international, derived from the revolutionary and terrorist groups in the Russian universities and the Paris “Reds,” and this influence continued to exercise great power, notably in the widespread organization of the Polish Revolutionary Socialist Proletariat Party, established in 1882, and ruthlessly crushed in 1885.

Polish Socialism, however, perhaps owing to the fact that the capitalist class was preponderantly Jewish or German, had from the first a strong element in it of nationalist feeling. It declared war, indeed, on the "national traditions" as aristocratic, and condemned the earlier patriotic movements because they "killed the class-consciousness of the labouring classes," but its vision was that of an independent Poland restored on the broad basis of economic and social reform. The Socialist Club of the Children of the Fatherland made nationalism the main plank in its programme, but in all the Socialist groups, including the formidable Polish Socialist Party founded in 1893, the sentiment of Polish nationality was present. This sentiment received a great impulse from the movement which was to culminate, towards the close of the century, in the powerful organization of the National Democratic Party.

This movement began in an organized effort to counteract the attempts of the Government to Russify the peasants. The main instrument of this Russification was the system of elementary education. According to the law the popular schools were to be founded and maintained by the communes, but their control was reserved to the Government. Private schools were forbidden, and heavy fines were imposed on any one daring to teach

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reading and writing without official authorization. *In the communal schools Russian was the medium of instruction; the teachers were paid agents of the Government, and were ordered to denounce any one guilty of teaching in secret. Under these circumstances the communes, resentful as they were of official tutelage, neglected to establish schools, and education was given for the most part clandestinely in private houses. Before long this system had received an elaborate organization and acquired a definitely political character. It was recognized that the people were the most important factor in the national life, and that if the process of denationalization was to be arrested, this could only be done by awakening in the peasants a consciousness of the superiority of Polish culture. To achieve this was the object of the organization founded in 1886 and known first as the Polish League (*Liga polska*) and, after its reorganization in 1895, as the National League (*Liga narodowa*). Its founders, Count Potocki and the publicist M. Poplawski, had been joined by M. Ramon Dmowski, who had been expelled from the University of Warsaw for celebrating the centenary of the Constitution of 1791. This gentleman, who took up his residence in Galicia, became the recognized head of the League and inspired all its subsequent developments.

For ten years this League had remained a secret society and, with the aid of the younger generation of landed proprietors, had carried on an active educational propaganda among the peasants. In 1897, however, its work had so far progressed that it came out into the open as the National Democratic Party, under the leadership of M. Dmowski, and entered on a campaign against the whole repressive policy of the Government. It was significant that the principal arenas of the conflict that ensued were those very peasant communes which, according to Milyutin's programme, were to have been centres of Russian influence. The peasants, educated now into a sense of their Polish nationality, began more and more frequently to protest against the arbitrary violation of the rights granted to the communes by their original constitution, and to refuse to obey the illegal orders of the bureaucracy.

This movement, in spite of the efforts of the Government to repress it, gathered headway until it reached its climax during the Russo-Japanese War and the internal crisis that followed in Russia. During this crisis it was the peasants who formed the mainstay of the National Democratic Party in its opposition to revolutionary anarchism on the one side and the policy of the Government on the other. It was they who, to use the words of

M. Dmowski, formed "as it were the army of the national movement," demanding the Polonization of the communes and the schools, claiming the right of autonomy for the Kingdom of Poland, and protesting in a hundred meetings their loyalty to the national idea. That this programme was that which appealed to the mass of the Polish people was proved by the result of the elections to the first Duma. The Russian revolutionary elements, under the influence of the Pan-Slav idea, affected to treat Poland as an integral part of Russia; they had stirred up a Socialist and Jewish agitation in the Kingdom, while the Constitutionalists, with the aid of the Progressives of Warsaw, had tried to draw the Poles into the Russian movement. To counter these efforts the National Democrats organized a strong Polish national agitation throughout the country, taking as the chief plank in their programme the demand for Polish autonomy, which the Russian Government in vain attempted to check by the proclamation of martial law. Their triumph was complete. In the country constituencies the aristocratic party which favoured Wielopolski's views as to an *entente* with Russia, discouraged by the recent victory of democratic principles in Galicia, made but a feeble resistance. In the cities the opposition of the Progressives, supported by the Jewish masses, was more

strenuous, but in the end the result was the same. The Polish representation in the first Russian Duma consisted of none but National Democrats.

In the Duma the Polish deputies, like the Irish in the House of Commons, refused to attach themselves to any political party, and formed a group apart. They did not make any formal proposal for Polish autonomy, but contented themselves with putting in a protest against the violation of the rights guaranteed to Poland by the Congress of Vienna. For the rest, they acted usually with the Constitutional Democratic Party, known as the "Cadets," because this supported the idea of Pan-Slav federalism and was therefore favourable to the grant of Polish autonomy. After the dissolution of the Duma the Poles, who had studied to make their attitude towards the Government thoroughly correct, took no part in the ill-advised protest of the deputies assembled at Viborg.

In the second Duma the Polish party numbered 46, including 27 of the 36 deputies from Poland and 12 Poles returned from the "annexed provinces." It chanced that the even balance of the other parties gave to this group the same decisive power which the Irish party had obtained in the British House of Commons in 1886, and they determined to use it. The programme of reform an-

nounced by M. Stolypin was purely Russian and contained no reference to the claims of Poland. The Poles consequently decided to force the issue. To prove their loyalty to the Emperor-King they voted for the Government on the question of army reform, but they made their support of the budget conditional on the concession by the Government of Polish instruction and control in the State schools of the Kingdom. This the Government refused to consider, and the budget was thrown out by Polish votes.

The Russian Government now declared war on the Poles as well as on the revolutionists in Russia itself. The second Duma, which had refused to support the Government's proposal for the exclusion of the Socialists, was dissolved; and an *ukaz* issued on the 7th of June, 1907, established a complicated electoral system which effectively excluded from the future Duma all genuinely popular elements. At the same time the deputies to be returned from Poland were reduced from 36 to 12, while in the "annexed provinces" the governors were empowered to arrange the constituencies according to nationality, so as to ensure the return of good Russians. The result of this was that the Polish party in the third Duma numbered only 18, of whom 7 were from the "annexed provinces." All hope of obtaining Polish autonomy through

the Duma was now abandoned, and the Poles confined their parliamentary activities to the attempt, with the aid of the dominant "Octobrist" party, to secure the general reforms promised in the Imperial manifesto of the 30th of October, 1905.

Outside the Duma, however, an important step was taken in the summer of 1908 towards the reconciliation of the Russian and Polish points of view. A basis for this was found in the views of the "Neo-Slavs," which represented a reaction from the purely Pan-Russian attitude of the Slavophiles. Instead of a uniform, centralized system for Russia, the Neo-Slavs looked forward to the development of the Empire somewhat on the federal lines of British Imperialism, and they were therefore prepared to support the demand for complete Polish autonomy within the Empire. From 1902 onward, under the influence of M. Dmowski, the Polish National Democratic Party had been moving in the direction of a similar solution of the Polish Question. This development was the result of the change in the whole European situation. From the time of the partition of Poland up to the last insurrection in 1863 the Poles, in order to secure the help of the Western Powers for their cause, had united in proclaiming that only the restoration of the old Polish Kingdom could save Western civilization and the free-

dom of the European peoples from the menace of Russian aggression. After the Franco-German War, however, an increasingly powerful section of Polish opinion saw the chief peril to the peace and liberties of Europe, not in Russia, but in the new German Empire, of which the eastward pressure was a perpetual menace to the Slav world. It was argued that the Poles would be the first victims of any victorious advance of Germanism towards the East, and that, when once these had been overwhelmed, Russia would stand face to face with the German peril. A frank recognition of this fact by the Russians would be the best basis of a reconciliation with the Poles, since it would involve the restoration of a Poland, strengthened by the concession of free national institutions, as a bastion of Slavdom against aggressive Germanism. Since, moreover, the utter subservience of Austria to German policy had cut off from the Poles in Austria-Hungary and Germany any hope of the Habsburg Monarchy becoming the instrument of Polish regeneration, it was held that the Austrian and German Poles could look for the realization of their national aspirations only as the outcome of a reconciliation between the Poles and the Russians.

This programme was openly adopted, on behalf of the National Democratic Party, by

M. Dmowski at the Pan-Slav Congress which met at Prague in July 1908. This Congress, which was due to the initiative of the Czech leader, Dr. Kramarz, was specially notable as being the first of the kind to be attended by the Poles, who thus formally identified themselves with the Slav cause. Not only Russian Poles were present, but representatives of all the various Polish parties and groups in Galicia, a fact of which the significance will be discussed in a later chapter. Equally significant was the presence among the Russian representatives not only of the "Cadets," but of the Octobrists and Nationalists, among the latter being the Nationalist leader, Count Vladimir Bobrinsky, whose name was destined to become famous in connection with the Russian activities in Galicia. Thus the Congress, though the refusal of the Ruthene "Ukrainers" to attend it made it something less than œcumenical from the Slav point of view, contained all the elements of a reconciliation between Russian and Polish nationalism, and it is from this that was derived the vigorous impulse of the Neo-Slav movement which was to find its supreme expression, after the outbreak of the war, in the proclamation addressed to the Poles by the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolayevich, as Commander-in-Chief of the Russian armies.

The basis for a reconciliation had been

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found, but the reconciliation itself was postponed owing to a variety of causes. The Russian bureaucracy, recovering from the blows of the revolution of 1905, was by no means inclined to relax its grip on Poland. Martial law was, indeed, suspended in 1908, but the "ten Governments of the Vistula" continued under military rule, reinforced by additional powers necessitated by the "state of defence," and characterized by all the old follies and abuses. This was not calculated to heal the breach between the Poles and the Russians, which was still further widened in the autumn of 1908 by the action of the Polish Club in the Austrian *Reichsrath* in supporting the policy of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Habsburg Monarchy. This was in the highest degree offensive to Russian Pan-Slav sentiment; even the Constitutionals now deserted the cause of the Poles; and the policy of coercion in Poland seemed to be backed by the all but united opinion of the Russian people. All this tended to discredit the National Democratic Party in the eyes of the Poles. The party itself split up; its leader, Ramon Dmowski, the most conspicuous champion of the idea of reconciliation with Russia, failed to secure his re-election for Warsaw to the Duma; and a number of political groups, mainly Socialistic in character, but all hostile

to Russia, began to acquire a sinister influence. Of these groups some, like the national "fraction" of the Polish Socialist Party and the National Workmen's Party, already existed; others, like the "League of Active Resistance," were new. Among these groups the old irredentist ideals of Polish independence survived or were re-created. They found a spokesman in the Lithuanian Joseph Pilsudski, an old opponent of Dmowski, who proclaimed that, in the event of a European war, the best hope of Poland would lie in a victory of the Triple Alliance, since Germany would have to reconstitute an independent Poland as a buffer State between herself and the eternal menace of Russia. In this conviction Pilsudski not only agitated in favour of rallying the Poles to the side of Germany, but began, after the example of Dombrowski in 1796, to organize a Polish "army." Thus, when the war broke out it found the Poles by no means completely united as to the attitude they were to take up. Before touching on the new conditions resulting from the actual outbreak of the war, and the changed attitude of Russia which it revealed, a digression must be made, in order to sketch the fate of the Poles under the government of the other two partitioning Powers, Prussia and Austria.

CHAPTER XI

PRUSSIA AND THE POLES

THE key to the Polish Question, as between Russia and Prussia, is to be found in the line of the Vistula. For the Poles the great waterway has been one of the main arteries of their economic life, and the recovery of Danzig, which commands its outlet to the Baltic, a capital object of their aspirations. For Russia, ever in search for ice-free ports, the possession of Danzig has been, from the time of Peter the Great onward, a thing to be aimed at. For Prussia, on the other hand, which holds Danzig, it has been a scarcely veiled ambition to recover Warsaw and the upper course of the Vistula, assigned to her under the partition treaty of 1795 and lost to Russia under the settlement of 1815. The possession of the Vistula would not only strengthen Germany economically, it would constitute a very valuable rectification of her strategic frontier by cutting off the salient formed by Russian Poland, which, but for the lack of strategic railways, might have given Russia an immense advantage at the outset of the present war. The regeneration of Poland, whether as an independent kingdom or as an autonomous State under the Russian crown, would not only

be fatal to German ambitions in this direction, but would eat deep into the heart of Germany herself, tearing away the Polish provinces of Prussia and breaking up the strategic frontier laboriously constructed against the Slav peril from the East. This ambition and this fear explain why Prussia has been from first to last the most bitter enemy of Polish nationality, whether within or without her own borders. This is why the Prussian Government consistently used its great influence at the Court of St. Petersburg to encourage the repression of the Poles in Russia. This is why it embarked upon the policy of the systematic Germanization of the Poles in Prussia.

The Germans, or such of them as care to champion this policy, justify the efforts to impose German culture on the Polish provinces on the plea that this is in fact the traditional culture of Poland, the beginnings of whose civilization were due to her original dependence upon Germany. Duke Mieszko, they point out, had accepted not only Christianity from Germany but the overlordship of the German Emperor, which continued to be asserted, with varying success, until the close of the thirteenth century. Until, in 1000, the Emperor Otto III founded the metropolitan see the Gnęsen in honour of Adalbert of Prague, the martyred apostle of the Prus-

sians, the Polish bishops had been under the jurisdiction of the archbishops of Magdeburg. It was German immigrants who, from the thirteenth century onwards, reclaimed the waste lands of Poland, improved its agriculture, and founded its cities. For centuries, indeed, the cities remained purely German communities, in language, in customs and in law. It was not till the sixteenth century that this German influence was stamped out by the persecution of the Protestants that accompanied and followed the great Catholic reaction. But, though stamped out, it left a permanent mark on the culture of the country, and in endeavouring to re-establish it the Prussian Government, it is argued, is but repairing a broken tradition.

The Poles, on the other hand, maintain that the persecution of their nationality, and the attempt to impose upon them the German language and Prussian institutions, are not only a violation of natural justice, but a breach of the solemn obligations undertaken by Prussia under the treaties signed by the three partitioning Powers on the 3rd of May, 1815, and incorporated in the General Treaty of the Congress of Vienna. The very first article of the great Final Act of the Congress contained the following clause—

“The Poles, who are respective subjects

of Russia, Austria and Prussia, shall obtain a Representation and National Institutions, regulated according to the degree of political consideration that each of the Governments to which they belong shall judge expedient and proper to grant them."

This article, as German controversialists point out, contains no undertaking to preserve Polish national institutions. That it was intended to safeguard Polish liberties, however, is proved by the language of the proclamation issued by King Frederick William III to the Poles when, on the 15th of May, he took over the newly created Grand Duchy of Posen. The Poles were incorporated in the Prussian Monarchy, but without being forced to renounce their nationality; like the other provinces of the kingdom they were to have a provisional Constitution, and they were ultimately to be represented in a central Prussian Diet; their personal rights were to be respected, and their language was to be placed on an equality with German in all official transactions.

At the outset a genuine effort was made to conciliate Polish sentiment. The white eagle of Poland was impaled on the black eagle of Prussia as the arms of the Grand Duchy. Posen alone of the new provinces of Prussia received a viceroy, the Polish magnate Prince Anthony Radziwill, a de-

scendant of the royal house of Jagiello and closely related by marriage to the Hohenzollerns; and the first head of the civil administration (*Oberpräsident*), Zerboni di Sposetti, was known for his friendly sentiments towards the Poles. The work of reconstruction and reform was at once taken in hand with Prussian thoroughness and, on the whole, with singular regard for Polish susceptibilities. Much was done for economic and industrial development, and by 1840 the country, which had possessed no means of easy communication, was covered with a network of roads. In the local administration a large share was left to the Polish nobles, who even retained their seigniorial rights over the towns, and when, in 1824, the Diet of the province was established, the representatives of the nobles (*Ritterstand*) equalled those of the estates of burgesses and peasants put together. Less acceptable to the nobles was the extension to Posen of the plans of agrarian reform associated with the name of the Freiherr vom Stein. In 1811 the serfs in West Prussia had been emancipated. In 1823 a law was promulgated by which in Posen too the peasants' tenures were converted into freeholds, the lords receiving as "compensation" a third of the land—"their own land," as they bitterly complained—and by 1837 no less

than 21,344 such peasant freeholds had been created.

The emancipation of the serfs in Posen was not, like that of 1864 in Russian Poland, a deliberate attempt to win the sympathies of the masses for the dominant Power; it was no more than part of that general process of economic improvement which was conceived as the leading function of the Prussian State. There was indeed at this period as little Polish national sentiment among the "masses" in Polish Prussia as among those of Russian Poland. The towns, deprived of all communal life, had degenerated into mere communities of peasants with certain relics of municipal privilege; the country population was sunk in the depths of poverty and ignorance; and from these quarters the Prussian State seemed to have nothing to fear. It was otherwise with the *szlachta* and the Roman Catholic clergy, who maintained unimpaired their Polish national spirit and national aspirations, which they made no attempt to disguise. In the churches and the schools the priests carried on an active national propaganda among the peasants, and King Frederick William III, as Grand Duke of Posen, had the same disappointing experiences with his Diet as Alexander I. was having as King of Poland. The relations between the Polish nationalists

in the various parts of the partitioned country remained, indeed, and have continued to remain, intimate. The Poles in Posen were privy to the preparations for the great insurrection of 1830 in Poland, and, although there was no rising in Posen, 12,000 of them crossed the frontier to take part in the fight for national independence.

This fact convinced the Prussian government of the failure of the policy of conciliation, and from 1830 dates the policy of rigorous repression and Germanization which, save for comparatively short periods, has been pursued ever since. As a symbol of the complete absorption of Posen into Prussia, the viceroyalty was now abolished, while the conciliatory Zerboni was replaced as *Oberpräsident* by Eduard Heinrich von Flottwell, who declared the old system of "consideration and concessions" to be out of date, and proposed to treat the Polish nobility and clergy as the "sworn foes of Prussia." Ten years of strong government, as the Prussians understand it, followed. German was made the only language of official communications; in 1833 the religious houses, as centres of Polish propaganda, were suppressed; the nobles were deprived of their rights over the towns and of their powers over local administration, and in 1836 the complete system of Prussian administration

was introduced and given a military character by the appointment of officers and non-commissioned officers to official posts. Above all, a precedent was set, which was later to have fateful consequences, when it was decided to sell the estates confiscated for the share of their owners in the rising of 1830 only to German nobles. The suggestion of General von Grolmann that all the Polish nobles should be forcibly expropriated was not followed until nearly eighty years later.

The accession of King Frederick William IV in 1840 led to a partial reversal of this policy, and the modern German chauvinists ascribe to the "weakness" of this royal idealist all the misfortunes that followed. It may, indeed, be doubted whether at this period, when all Europe was simmering with the passions which were to boil over in 1848, any concessions would have satisfied the Poles, short of the complete restoration of the independent kingdom with the frontiers of 1772. As it was, the Germans assert that the concessions actually made—mainly in the matter of the use of the Polish language in the law-courts and the schools—merely encouraged the Poles to demand more. Political organizations were established under the disguise of "reading clubs," "agronomic societies" and the like, and in 1845 Mieroslawski, chief of the revolutionary "Reds"

who had their headquarters in Paris, arrived in Posen, to organize an insurrection. He was arrested on the 1st of February, but on the 22nd a Polish "National Government" was established at Cracow, the last remnant of independent Poland, and vigorous preparations were made for a general rising of the Poles in all the former territories of the Polish Republic.

So early as 1835, the partitioning Powers had already come to a secret agreement to abolish the Republic of Cracow, as a troublesome centre of Polish intrigue, and in 1836 their troops had been marched in to suppress the nationalist agitation there. Its independence had been preserved for another ten years, but the insurrection which now broke out, with Cracow as its focus, justified the misgivings of the Powers. The arrest of Mieroslowski, indeed, had nipped the movement in Posen in the bud. In Cracow, however, the democratic National Government proclaimed the independence of Poland, while in Galicia the Polish territorial nobles rose in revolt and, with characteristic blindness to the facts of the situation, called upon their Ruthene peasants to aid them in throwing off the Austrian yoke. The result of the insurrection, ill-conceived and vitiated by divided aims, was disastrous. In March Cracow was reduced by the Austrian

Colonel Benedek, whose brilliant career was twenty years later to suffer eclipse at Sadowa. The revolt in Galicia, which in the absence of any Austrian troops had seemed to have a reasonable chance of success, failed still more miserably. The Ruthene peasants, so far from responding to the summons of their lords, turned against them at the instigation of the Austrian authorities. Mobs of countrymen, brutalized by centuries of serfdom and inspired with a fury of hate, fell with scythes and pitchforks upon the unfortunate Polish gentlemen, before they could concentrate their forces; country houses were burnt and estates laid waste, while cartloads of heads were brought to the towns as proof to the Austrian officials that the stipulated rewards had been duly earned. Thus, in a ghastly orgy of blood and plunder, ended the Polish insurrection in Galicia. As for Cracow, in November it was formally absorbed into Austria with the consent of the other partitioning Powers.

Meanwhile, in Prussia, Mieroslawski and his associates had been brought to trial, and early in 1847 were condemned to death; but their punishment was commuted by the tender-hearted king into one of imprisonment. This did not last long. On the 18th of March, 1848, Berlin, following the example of the rest of Europe, broke into revolt.

The king yielded to the demands of the revolutionists, and Mieroslawski, who was released in consequence of the general amnesty proclaimed on the 20th, placed himself at the head of the Polish Committee formed in the Prussian capital. On the same day a Polish Provisional Government was set up in the town-hall of Posen, and a deputation was sent to Berlin to demand a national administration, a national Polish army, and national courts of justice. The demand was backed by the assembling of a Polish armed force of 25,000 men, for the purpose of organizing which Mieroslawski went to Posen. The king believed himself to be in no situation to resist, and General von Willisen, a *persona grata* to the Poles, was sent as royal commissioner to arrange terms with them. This he did on the 11th of April by practically conceding all their demands.

It is impossible to describe in any detail what followed. The *Oberpräsident* von Beurmann had from the first opposed the policy of concessions; in this he had the hearty sympathy of General von Colomb, who commanded 45,000 Prussian troops in the province; and these two determined to resist von Willisen's authority. They had the willing support of the German burghers and soldiers, and it was easy to create pretexts for using force. "Reports" of horrible

cruelties perpetrated by the Poles," says a contemporary English eye-witness, "were industriously circulated by the German newspapers." Imaginary outrages led to very real retaliation, and the war—if it can be called so—that followed assumed the ferocious character with which the world is now all too familiar. "All the rules and usages of civilized warfare were totally disregarded by the Prussians. Prisoners were slaughtered; the wounded in the hospitals were killed, and in one instance burnt to death, the hospital having been set on fire by the victorious party. Other prisoners were marked with vitriol on hands and ears." "I hear German officers and officials," wrote Christian Fischer, assessor of the High Court of Posen, "ask each other, with a feeling of horror, whether this barbarity of the infuriated, uncivilized Germans—whether this ferocious desire for murder, which delights in exterminating and tormenting even a conquered enemy, is inherent in the nature of the German."

Certainly this raging of the "Prussian wolf" was not approved by the prevailing Liberal sentiment of a Germany not yet Prussianized, which was loud in its expressions of sympathy—especially in the Frankfurt National Parliament—with the cause of the persecuted Poles. But the policy of "cruelty well applied" prevailed. By the

close of the stormy year 1849 German Liberalism had passed, with the dispersal of the rump of the German Parliament, into the limbo of lost causes; and when, in 1851, the old Federal Diet of the Confederation revived its futile existence, Bismarck was there to see that Prussia should have for the future a free hand in her Polish provinces. The Parliament had incorporated West Prussia and the German districts of Posen in the Confederation; they were now once more excluded and the *status quo* established in 1815 restored.

For the next twenty years or so the Polish provinces were governed in the spirit of conservative reaction, but with no particular severity. A "strong" policy was, indeed, impossible, owing to the fact that the Poles were now represented in the Prussian Diet, where they could not only ventilate their grievances, but, what was more important, where they had at least the tacit support of their German fellow-countrymen, who did not relish the conservative regime. In Posen itself, where the old aristocratic Estates had been set up again in 1853, the nationalist propaganda continued, and followed much the same lines as in the Congress Kingdom. In 1851 the Government declared illegal the Polish League founded at the close of 1848 for the protection of national freedom, the promotion of national

education, and the improvement of the material condition of the Poles. But the agitation, suppressed in one form, was always resumed in another. Movements really but not ostensibly nationalist even had the support of the Prussian authorities, and in this way, for instance, the "Society for the support of young students in the Grand Duchy of Posen," founded in 1842 by Dr. Marcinkowski, gained enormous influence and did much to create that educated Polish middle class which in the latter half of the century was to form the backbone of the national movement. Meanwhile, too, the priests were taking advantage of the privileges conceded to them under the Schools Law of 1842 not only to create a national sentiment among the Polish masses, but even to Polonize the Germans. Thus the children of the German settlers known as the "Bambergers," who had been established early in the eighteenth century in the neighbourhood of Posen, and up to 1850 had preserved their German language and customs, were from 1851 taught in Polish, with the result that they have now become completely absorbed in the Polish population.

The agitation which in the Congress kingdom was to lead to the insurrection of 1863 naturally had its reflex action on Posen. In 1861 an immense effect was created by an article

by the Provost Prusinowski, published in the *Catholic Weekly*, in which all things German were vigorously denounced and the claims of the Polish nationalists once more asserted. In the same year an Agricultural Society, on the model of that established by Zamojski in Poland, was founded, and all things seemed to point to a participation of the Poles in Posen in the great blow for freedom preparing over the border. But Bismarck was now at the helm of the Prussian State, and the Convention of the 8th of February with Russia, and the posting of Prussian army corps along the frontier, made all motions of revolt in Posen impossible.

During the years that followed, which saw the wars of 1864, 1866 and 1870-71, Bismarck was too preoccupied with other things to pay much attention to the Polish Question, and under the Liberal regime of the Prussian Minister of the Interior, Count Eulenburg, the Poles were allowed to continue the development of their national movement. In 1872, however, Bismarck's hands were free, Eulenburg was forced to resign, and the Iron Chancellor set to work to combat the Polish propaganda which, he declared, was "successfully undermining the foundations of the Prussian State." Recognizing in the power of the priesthood the main force of this propaganda, he seized the excuse of the definition

in 1870 of the dogma of papal infallibility to attack this power at its supposed source, and embarked on that war of religion, or *Kulturkampf*, which was to end, some ten years later, under the influence of the Socialist terror, in his somewhat humiliating "pilgrimage to Canossa." In this war the ultramontane forces were led by Cardinal Ledochowski, Archbishop of Gnesen-Posen, who marshalled all the forces of Polish nationalism in defence of the Roman Curia. The Cardinal was put into prison, and the Government opened the war against all things Polish, which has continued ever since, by an administrative order of October the 27th, 1873, making German the medium of instruction in all schools, except in the religious lessons. From 1875 onwards, too, attempts were made to forbid the use of the Polish language at public meetings, on the ground that the use of an alien tongue made police supervision impossible. These attempts broke down owing to the decision of the courts that "evil intent" must be proved in each case. It was not until ten years later that the Prussian Government finally decided to adopt in its Polish provinces, with the aid of fresh legislation, a "consistent and ruthless" policy of Germanization.

Before describing the developments of this policy it is necessary in justice to describe

the situation which, from the German point of view, has been held to justify it. The great industrial development of Prussia had led, as elsewhere, to the draining of the country population into the cities, and this in turn to a vast immigration of Polish labourers of both sexes in order to supply the deficiency thus created. This Polish immigration has been partly temporary, partly permanent. The permanent immigration, though it has borne no proportion to the great and growing mass of the Polish proletariat, and has been insignificant compared with the temporary immigration, has been enough to cause serious misgivings to the Prussian Government, as helping that process of Slavizing the eastern provinces of Germany, to which reference will be made later. Apart from the Polish colony, now estimated at some quarter of a million souls, established in the coalfields of Westphalia, there has been a constant infiltration of Poles into Silesia, East Prussia and Posen. In addition to this, a vast number of Polish peasants—known as *Sachsengänger* ("goers to Saxony")—have been accustomed to leave their holdings year by year in the spring to work on the farms in Germany, returning in the autumn. These represent the tides of the ocean of Slavdom which, in the years before the war, had visibly encroached on the domain of

German culture. The tide has ebbed and flowed, but the advance of the ocean itself has been steady and continuous.

The peril to Germanism thus created was increased by the profound change which had come over Polish nationalism. As has already been pointed out, the national movement in Posen had, during the first half of the century, been confined to the great nobles, the *szlachta* and the clergy. But in the latter half of the century the industrial and economic revolution, to which reference has already been made in the case of Poland, had introduced new factors into the situation. The break-up of the great estates on the one hand, and the development of industries on the other, rapidly created a Polish middle class and a Polish proletariat in the cities. Polish nationalism, confused in the minds of the masses with economic antagonism to the German capitalist class, thus became a popular movement and a greater menace to German ascendancy than the Polish nationalism of the nobles. To all this Bismarck's fatuous policy of the *Kulturkampf* added a passionate religious antagonism, which the priests well knew how to exploit in winning over the pious peasantry to the national cause. Moltke, writing in 1830, had said that by the agrarian reform of 1823 the Prussian State had "obtained at last a numerous and valuable class

of landowners, who because they are bound to it by interest, are faithful and trustworthy subjects."• The Prussian government of the Polish provinces would stand condemned• if only by the fact that, owing to its complete lack of sympathetic imagination, it has turned these faithful and trustworthy subjects into the most stubborn enemies of the Prussian State and of all things German.

There were, and are, Germans who recognized the true causes of this universal defection, and pleaded for a more sympathetic treatment of the Poles. The louder voices, however, clamoured for a policy of ruthlessness, and in 1885 Bismarck decided to take still stronger measures to counteract the Polish peril. The end of the *Kulturkampf* had freed him from the complications caused by the quarrel with Rome; Cardinal Ledochowski's resignation of the archbishopric of Gnesen gave him the opportunity of appointing a German, Dr. Dinder, to the Polish metropolitan see and so acquiring a powerful instrument for his attack on the Polish schools. In 1885 a law was passed in the Prussian Diet under which 30,000 Slav immigrants were expelled from the eastern provinces. In 1886 began the onslaught on the schools. By a series of laws the rights hitherto enjoyed by the Polish nobles and local authorities over the appointment of school teachers

were taken away and both the primary and continuation schools were placed under the immediate supervision of the State; by a royal ordinance of the 7th of September, 1887, the teaching of Polish in the schools was forbidden, and the time thus saved was to be devoted to the teaching of German. About two months later Archbishop Dinder ordered German to be made the medium of religious instruction in all the higher-class schools in his diocese, a decision which produced something like a religious schism, the Poles declaring that they would rather have no religion at all than one which was to be made the instrument of Germanization.

The most important effort made by the Government in 1886, however, was not in the domain of education but in that of economics. In April of this year the Prussian Parliament passed a bill establishing a Commission (*Ansiedelungs-Kommission*) empowered to buy land from Poles in Posen and West Prussia for the purpose of selling it again to German colonists. For this purpose a sum of 100,000,000 marks (£5,000,000) was voted, a similar amount being added ten years later. The Commission, whose offices were established at Posen, set vigorously to work, and in fifteen years some six hundred square miles of land in the two provinces had been transferred from Polish to German occupiers.

Yet the Polish element continued to grow at the expense of the German, and the reasons for this are instructive. All hope of foreign intervention in their favour having been destroyed by the result of the Franco-German War, the Poles had combined in the carrying out of a new policy. "We shall be masters in Poland," Count Raczynski had said in 1848, "when we are better, more educated, and richer than the Germans." To place themselves in this position was now the united purpose of the Poles, and their striking success, as the Germans bitterly complain, was largely due to the very efforts of the Prussian Government to improve their economic condition. The attempts now made to counteract this, by subsidizing and in every way favouring the German element, only in the long run put more money into the pockets of the Poles. The price of land soared upwards with the appearance of the Government as a purchaser; the Commission, in default of compulsory powers, had to buy poor land at fancy prices, and the fortunate sellers either invested the money thus obtained in purchasing better farms or used it to establish businesses in the towns, thus increasing the number of the Polish middle classes. As for the German settlers, they found life intolerable amid a population which rigorously boycotted them. Many sold

their holdings to Poles at a loss and migrated elsewhere; those who remained found it necessary, if they were to thrive, to become as Polish as their neighbours. Meanwhile the immigration of Poles over the frontier continued steadily.

During the chancellorship of Count Caprivi, from 1890 to 1894, the repressive policy of the Government was somewhat relaxed, owing to its need of the support of the Polish party in the *Reichstag* for its Army Bills. Thus, in 1891, Florian von Stablewski, who had never disguised his Polish nationalism, was made Archbishop of Gnesen, and in the same year Polish was once more permitted as the medium of religious instruction in the elementary schools. But with the accession to office of Prince Hohenlohe, in 1894, "ruthlessness" once more became the order of the day. In September of this year the Emperor William II took the occasion of a State visit to Posen to make his views perfectly clear. At a banquet in the Marienburg, the old headquarters of the Teutonic Knights in West Prussia, he pointed to the castle as a guarantee of that Germanism (*Deutschtum*) which was the sole legitimate bond of all the subjects of the Prussian crown. Only the frank acceptance of this principle, he told the citizens of Posen, would ensure to the Poles the same measure of Imperial favour as he

bestowed upon the Germans. "Remember," he said to them at parting, "what I said to you to-day, if you don't want me to become exceedingly unpleasant." Since the Poles were not convinced, he proceeded to be unpleasant.

The situation now rapidly developed into open social and economic war between the two nationalities, and both sides busily organized their forces. In 1894, under the inspiration of the new vigorous attitude of the Government, the Germans founded the "German Association of the Eastern Marches" (*Deutscher Ostmarken-Verein*), the object of which was to encourage Germanism in every way, notably by inculcating the principle of exclusive dealing with Germans in the "Ostmark." The reply of the Poles was to establish the *Straz* (Watch) Society, for the purpose of combining all classes and activities in resistance to this and to the work of the Land Settlement Commission. The issue of this mutual boycott could not be doubtful, for the Poles were in a great and growing majority. It was useless to make stirring appeals to the patriotism of the German traders; they had to become Polish or starve, and German travellers, revisiting the country after many years, have noted the same sinister change in the shop-signs as has taken place in Bohemia, Schulz having

become Sczulez, Schumann Sczumann, and Franz Franzisek. Before the 'nineties scarce a word of Polish was heard in the towns. Now Polish is spoken everywhere, and everywhere the Polish national costume is worn. As for the Land Commission, the Poles fought it with counter-organizations. Polish land-banks were established to advance money on easy terms to Poles for the purchase of farms, their funds being swelled not only by the patriotic contributions of the wealthy, but by the savings of the peasants and labourers, including those of the *Sachsen-gänger*. For the duty of patriotic saving has been inculcated by the priests, and innumerable friendly societies and unions have been established to facilitate their efforts. Thus the Poles were enabled more than to hold their own against the Germans in the economic sphere. In the sphere of education, in spite of the renewed efforts of the Government during the 'nineties to exclude Polish from the schools, they were equally successful.

Strong criticism of the Prussian policy in Poland was not lacking in Liberal Germany. "Before the 'nineties," said a writer in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, "the chivalrous attitude of the Poles made it easy for the immigrant German to feel at home, but the German national drum-beating of the Ostmarken-Verein has altered all that to hate." The

Prussians had set out "to shoot sparrows with cannon," and had roused up a dragon's brood. In 1902 the revelation in the Prussian Parliament of the fact that Polish school children had been flogged for refusing to say the Lord's Prayer in German led to a lively denunciation of the methods used by the Prussian Government in the attempt to Germanize the Poles. That this attempt had failed was admitted by Count Bülow in the speech, delivered on the 13th of January, 1903, in which he replied to the critics of the Government's policy. But the moral he drew was that the policy must be sharpened. Accordingly, in the following May, fresh laws were passed by the Prussian Parliament, another 250,000,000 marks being appropriated to the purposes of German colonization, and the colonists forbidden to sell their lands to Poles. So little success had these measures, however, that three years later the Prussian Minister of Finance, Herr von Rheinbaben, complained that in fifteen years the German population of East Prussia had diminished by 630,000, while in five years as many as 300,000 Polish immigrants had settled in the province. He confessed, too, that the Poles had largely increased their economic resources at the expense of the Germans. This report led the Parliament to vote a further sum of 2,000,000 marks

to be used to persuade German colonists to settle in the eastern provinces and those already settled not to leave.

In the autumn of 1906, in consequence of the re-introduction of German as the medium of religious instruction, some 400,000 Polish school children went on strike. The affair created an immense sensation in Germany and beyond. It was denounced as being wholly due to the machinations of the priests; the fury of the German chauvinists was increased by the consciousness that their policy of ruthlessness had not only failed, but had made them ridiculous, and they clamoured that the rod should not be spared in reducing the infant rebels to obedience. The rod was not spared; but the little martyrs of Polish nationalism held out for months against every sort of threat and violence. Their witness had advertised in a striking manner to all the world the wicked folly of the Prussian system, but the zealots of the Ostmarken-Verein saw in it only proof of the necessity of still more drastic measures. In speeches and in pamphlets they clamoured that the Government should at last adopt a really "strong policy" and wipe out every vestige of *Polentum* from the sacred soil of Germany. Under this impulse the Government bethought itself of the advice given long since by General von Grolmann,

and during the session of 1907 Prince Bülow introduced into the Prussian Parliament a Bill providing for the compulsory expropriation of Polish landowners in Posen and West Prussia, "the districts in which the safety of the endangered German element could only be ensured by additional allotments to German settlers." This Bill was passed into law during the session of 1908, in spite of the opposition of some of the most influential nobles of Prussia, who saw how dangerous to themselves was the precedent it set. In the same session was passed a Public Meetings Bill, which forbade the use of the Polish language at public meetings, other than international congresses and the like, except during general elections.

Thus the policy of Prussia since 1872 has been to Germanize Poland, by replacing the Polish occupiers by Germans, and by forcing German institutions and the German language—all in short that is meant by German *Kultur*—on the Polish people. That this policy has not had the support of the German people was shown in 1909 when a resolution condemning it was carried in the Reichstag. It has been criticized and condemned by leaders of Prussian thought, such as Professor Hans Delbrück, whose loyalty to the Government is unimpeachable. It was attacked, in the summer of 1911, in a brilliant series of

articles in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which pointed out how in spite of it, or rather because of it, the Slavonic element was everywhere pressing back the Germanic along the eastern marches of the Empire, in Silesia no less than in the Polish provinces. In the same paper it had earlier been pointed out that the Central and South Germans had reason to be perturbed by "the snarling of the Prussian wolf" (*die borussische Wolfsfratze*) at the Poles. "A humane, moral and liberal policy," said the writer, "would in the 135 years since the partition of Poland not have denationalized the Poles, but would have made them loyal subjects of the Prussian State. The Prussian State was not capable of pursuing any such large-hearted ethical policy, and could not disentangle itself from the military conceptions of uniformity. The result is actually a suppressed state of war, suppressed only by the iron hand, extending over wide territories and bringing with it for both sides all the demoralizing and barbarizing influences of war."

The Poles in Russia have suffered oppression, but the very inefficiency of the Russian administration tended to lighten this oppression by making it spasmodic and giving ready means of escape, if only by paying a moderate blackmail to officials. The rigid efficiency of the Prussian administrative machine gave no

such outlets, and the vexatious interference with the⁹ liberties of the Poles, which has increasingly touched every detail of their daily lives, has been enforced with Prussian official conscientiousness. In Russia, moreover, there has always been a strong element in sympathy with the Poles, and of late years a strong sense of the community of their Slav race has grown up between the two peoples, while the Russian oppression of Poland has been ascribed to those same German influences which have riveted upon Russia the yoke of the bureaucracy. If, then, the Poles at the outset of the war threw in their lot with Russia, it was because, whatever cause they may have to hate Russia, their reasons for hating Germany are infinitely stronger.

CHAPTER XII

AUSTRIA AND THE POLES

THE lot of the Poles who in the great partition fell to the share of the Habsburg Monarchy has been far more tolerable than that of their brethren under Russian and Prussian rule, and their attitude towards the Austrian Government has been marked by no irreconcilable hatred. The reason of this difference is easily explained. Both Russian Pan-

Slavism and German nationalism, as developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century, involved the extinction and absorption of all that was characteristic of Polish nationality. The Habsburg Monarchy was and is unnational, and the Poles brought into it under the final allotment of 1815 became merely one of the conglomerate of nations which it bound together. For half-a-century, indeed, the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria, to which in 1846 the Grand Duchy of Cracow was added, had little enough of the Polish character. So long as the Habsburg Monarchy retained its connection with Germany, it regarded itself as a German Power; the German element predominated in it, and the German language and culture were regarded as the great unifying forces in the heterogeneous State. It was not, then, nationalism but imperialist opportunism that led the Austrian Government to Germanize Galician institutions, and the same principle might at any time lead to a reversal of this policy.

The first impulse to such a reversal was given during the revolutionary years 1848-49. Constitutionalism and nationalism were closely identified in Germany, the Frankfurt Parliament being the effective symbol of their union, and it was the Germans in Austria who constituted the main force of the revolution. The army with which this revolution

was ultimately crushed was, indeed, commanded by a German, Prince Windischgrätz, but it was noted that it was composed almost wholly of Slavs—Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Ruthenes, Slovenes, Croats. It was natural, then, that among the Slav races the idea should grow up of a reconstruction of the Monarchy on a Slav basis. Among the Poles this idea was cultivated, as has already been mentioned, by the "Cracow Circle" associated with the names of Sigismund Helcel and Wielopolski, and Austrian Pan-Slavism began to be set up in opposition to Russian. This was the idea that underlay the Pan-Slav Congress which met at Prague in 1848. It was, however, still-born; for by the Convention of Olmütz in 1851 Austria recovered her position as the leading German Power, and the supremacy of Germanism was once more established in the Monarchy.

This condition of affairs did not last long. At the beginning of the 'sixties the relations between Austria and Prussia inside the German Confederation were again becoming critical, and in order to strengthen its position in view of the inevitable struggle the Austrian Government embarked on a far-reaching scheme of reforms for the Monarchy. The general principles on which these reforms were to proceed were laid down in an Imperial Diploma issued on the 20th of October, 1860.

By this instrument the existing variety of kingdoms and territories in the Empire was recognized, and the principle was admitted that these should be allowed to develop on their own lines, so far as this might be consistent with Imperial unity. There were particular reasons why this principle should be applied in the case of the Poles. Not only was there the menace of war with Prussia, but there was a growing antagonism between Austria and Russia in the Balkan peninsula, and, lastly, it was probable that Napoleon III, having for the time settled the affairs of Italy, would soon open up the whole Polish Question. Accordingly, in February 1861, the Emperor Francis Joseph granted to Galicia a Constitution, with a Diet and a considerable measure of autonomy.

The cordial relations between Lemberg and Vienna were broken for a while by Wielopolski's efforts to secure a *rapprochement* of the Poles with Russia, for Wielopolski had been in close touch with Cracow. They were resumed on the failure of these efforts. At the outset of the insurrection of 1863 the attitude of Austria was, as has already been pointed out, more than friendly to the Poles, and Galicia, with the connivance of the authorities, had been made a base for supplying the insurgents with arms and men. This attitude changed after the breakdown of Napoleon's

attempts at intervention, and when the activities of Polish refugees and others in Galicia threatened international complications the new Constitution was suspended. In February 1864, in consequence of an insane attempt of the terrorist National Government at Warsaw to foment an insurrection in Galicia itself, martial law was proclaimed and was enforced for more than a year with great severity. On the whole, however, the Austrian Poles suffered less than any others from the disastrous collapse of their national movement, and circumstances were soon to arise which put them in a position of exceptional privilege and power.

That they were prepared to avail themselves to the best advantage of these circumstances was due to a shifting of their point of view, the result of the bitter disillusionment of 1863. A new party arose out of the "Cracow Circle" and soon gained a preponderating influence, the programme of which involved the surrender of the old dream of restoring Poland with the frontiers of 1772, the attempt to realize which had proved so fatal, and the concentration of all efforts on the task, not of recovering political unity, but of preserving and strengthening national unity. To advocate this policy, which was in effect identical with that of Wielopolski, the *Polish Review* was founded in July 1866, with a

brilliant staff of collaborators, including Joseph Szujski, Count Stanislaus Tarnowski, Count Louis Wodzicki, Stanislaus Koźmian and Florian Ziemiałkowski. In a series of biting satirical articles, under the title of "Teka Stancyka" ("The Jester's Portfolio"), these writers attacked the weaknesses and follies of the Polish national character which had led to all the disasters of the past, and these articles gave their name to the whole group and to the political party that grew out of it, of which the watchwords were loyalty to the Habsburg Monarchy and the full development of Polish nationality within the Monarchy.

The outcome of the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 at once gave point and importance to the views of the Stancyk party. The severance of the connection of Austria with Germany weakened the German element in the Habsburg Monarchy; itself threatened, it looked for allies among the other nationalities, and thought to find such in the Poles. The common interest was fear of Russia, and the sense of this common interest had already found expression during the insurrection of 1863. In the Austrian Parliament it had been possible for a Polish deputy to justify the national uprising and to declare, amid the applause of the German Left: "On the day on which the Poles shall cease to wish

to be Poles, or despair of the restoration of Polish independence, on that day Pan-Slavism will be born and come fully armed into the world. Let Europe consider if the guest would be welcome to her." For Austria certainly Pan-Slavism was not a welcome guest, and if its advent could be checked by concessions to the Poles in Galicia, the respite would be cheaply bought.

The Poles themselves used the situation after the collapse of the Austrian power at the battle of Sadowa with great skill and in a spirit wholly opportunist. The principles of the October Diploma seemed now to have been brought within the range of practical politics, as having become applicable to the whole Empire, and an agitation arose for the reconstruction of the Monarchy on the basis of the recognition of the nationalities and the creation of a federal system. The German element, however, still favoured a centralized system, as the guarantee of their preponderance; they had the support of the Government at Vienna, and the aims of the Federalists were ultimately defeated by an alliance of the Germans with the Magyars, who were as averse as the Germans from any recognition of the rights of the nationalities subject to them in Hungary. The result was the Compromise of 1867, which created the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary.

The attitude of the Galician Poles during this crisis was of great interest. They were naturally opposed to a centralized system for the Monarchy, but they were equally opposed to a federal system; for, had they accepted this, they would have been bound in honour to the Habsburg Monarchy. "If my aim were to see His Majesty the Emperor crowned King of Poland," said Count Wodzicki in the Diet, "I would support the programme of the Federalists, but my aim is a far wider one." "We stand here," said the viceroy, Count Goluchowski, "as a part of Poland, and to create a federal organism would mean to bar for ever the way to our future, misty it is true, but not impossible." The object of the conservative Poles in power at Lemberg was, in short, to use their position to wring as many concessions as possible from the Crown in return for their support against the disruptive tendencies of the Federalists. They showed their hand immediately after the war. While the Czechs, intent on the restoration of the Kingdom of Bohemia, were preparing, as supporters of a federal system, for a fraternization of the Slavonic peoples in the spirit of Pan-Slavism, the Galician Diet unanimously voted an address to the Crown in which they expressed their unalterable determination to remain faithful to the Monarchy.

Their continued loyalty, however, was to be

bought at an increasing price. Count Beust had gained their support for the settlement of 1867 by considerable concessions to their national demands. In the Cabinet of the new Austrian Government there was to be a special Minister for Galicia; a separate board was set up for Galician education; Polish was to be the language of instruction in all secondary schools, and in the elementary schools Ruthene was only to be allowed under certain restrictions; Polish was substituted for German as the language of the administration and of the law courts. The Compromise of 1867, however, which left Galicia an integral part of the Austrian State, was not calculated to satisfy the Poles, and in 1868 the Galician Diet again presented an address to the Crown demanding the completest measure of autonomy and that the Galician deputies in the *Reichsrath* should vote only on those questions affecting Galicia in common with the other parts of the Monarchy. The demands were rejected as impracticable by the Austrian Government; for months violent debates continued on the question of whether or no the "Galician Resolution" should even be taken into consideration by the *Reichsrath*; and when the proposal was at last definitively thrown out, the Poles withdrew in a body from the House.

They had presented their maximum de-

mands, but they had taken the lessons of the past to heart and were no longer disposed to sacrifice the possible to the ideal. Their solid block of fifty-seven votes gave them often a decisive weight in the unstable balance of parties in the *Reichsrath*, and they were prepared to barter their support for partial concessions on the part of the Government. Thus, in 1868, Polish became the language of the University of Cracow; in the summer of 1869 numerous German officials in Galicia were replaced by Poles, and Poles alone were to be appointed as teachers in the Universities of Cracow and Lemberg. From 1870 onwards the process continued at an accelerated pace, and under the newly appointed Minister for Galicia, Casimir Grocholski, Galicia was rapidly Polonized at the expense of both the German and the Ruthene elements. Numerous Polish exiles, scattered after the collapse of the insurrection of 1863, now came to Galicia and made it the centre of a revolutionary propaganda, which culminated in August 1870, in the assembly at Lemberg of a Congress, representing all parts of undivided Poland, of which the object was to formulate a programme for the reunion of the kingdom. It ended in words; but it revealed to the startled Powers the fact that the aspirations of the Poles, though veiled under many disguises, remained unchanged.

The revelation was less alarming for Austria than for Russia. If the Galician Poles made no disguise of their ultimate aims, these aims were confessedly remote, and meanwhile they agreed that it was their duty to remain good Austrians. For this they had good reason. The Poles in Galicia, or at least those who carried political weight, were and are a dominant aristocracy, and their ideals could only be realized at the expense and in the teeth of the opposition of the mass of the Ruthenes, whose sympathies were naturally attracted to their brethren across the Russian border. To the Austrian Government their support has been invaluable, not only against the disruptive tendencies of the Federalists but also against the menace of Radicalism and Socialism. In 1877, especially, the Auersperg Ministry relied on the support of the Poles to overcome the resistance of the German Liberal majority in the *Reichsrath* to its policy in occupying Bosnia and Herzegovina and to the new fiscal arrangements with Hungary. From this time onward the "Polish Club" in the *Reichsrath* became a Government party, and used its influence to build up, piecemeal, the fabric of Polish autonomy in Galicia.

The programme of 1868 was never, indeed, legally realized, but its essential demands were conceded by a series of administrative

measures which made the Polish aristocracy supreme in Galicia. That they used their power altogether well cannot be said. It is true that the growth of Polish autonomy was accompanied by a revival of Polish culture, fostered by the Academy of Sciences founded in 1870 at Cracow, but there were no such economic reforms as changed the face of Russian and Prussian Poland. The peasants were kept, by the narrow policy of their landlords and of the Catholic clergy, in brutish ignorance; the interests of the towns were neglected, and the failure to create a Polish middle class left the chief influence in them to the Jewish plutocracy. Moreover, as so often happens, the ideals of one nationality could only be realized in Galicia at the expense of another. The Poles used the liberties won for themselves to attempt to impose their culture on the Ruthenes, the result being the development of a conflict which was destined to have a momentous influence on the causes and issues of the present world war.

The Ruthenes, though divided under the government of Austria and Russia, form a compact ethnic mass of some 30,000,000 souls, occupying the lands from the north-eastern districts of Hungary, across the Carpathians and East Galicia, and eastwards as far as the Dnieper. They are claimed by the Russians as a branch of their own race,

their language being officially treated in Russia as a dialect of the national tongue. Until comparatively recent years this claim was not seriously challenged, the mass of the Ruthene peasantry being on too low a level of culture to appreciate the niceties of national distinctions. It was about the middle of the last century that, as has already been pointed out, a small group of Ruthene scholars and writers asserted for the population of the Ukraine the right to a separate national existence. It was not, however, until thirty or forty years later that this Ukrainophil movement became a political factor seriously to be reckoned with. Its dangerous tendency had, indeed, been early recognized both by the Poles and the Russians; by the Poles, because it endangered the ascendancy of their culture in the "annexed provinces" Podolia and Volhynia, in East Galicia, and even in the south-eastern districts of the Congress Kingdom; by the Russians, because it not only represented a revolt against the Slavophil ideals of Orthodoxy and Autocracy, but because, in view of the great mass of Ruthenes living under Austrian rule, it threatened to become a serious peril to the integrity of the Empire. Poles and Russians thus were, and are, equally interested in suppressing the Ukrainophil agitation, and we have seen how, on the very eve of the insurrection of 1863,

it was the Poles who were most instant in urging the Russian Government to nip it in the bud.

Severely persecuted in Russia, the Ukraine movement none the less persisted, developing most strongly in Galicia, where it had a powerful rallying centre in the Greek Uniat Church, and was associated with the radical revolt against the predominance of the Polish territorial magnates and the agitation in favour of economic and political reform. This association naturally brought it into disfavour at Vienna, and the Poles had at the outset the cordial support of the Austrian Government in their efforts to suppress it. This support continued so long as the interests of the Habsburg Monarchy demanded a good understanding with Russia. The first indications of a change of attitude came at the end of the 'eighties, when the Austrian Foreign Minister, Count Kalnoky, came to an understanding with Bismarck as to the necessity of weakening the power of Russia. Bismarck recognized the importance of the Ukrainophil movement from this point of view, and in 1888 his friend Eduard Hartmann published in the *Gegenwart* an inspired article which pointed out that the peace of Europe could only be secured by a partition of Russia. The lines of such a partition were suggested: the Baltic provinces were to be erected into

a separate State under a German prince; Congress Poland was to become independent; and the Ukraine of the Dnieper was to be formed into a new Grand Principality of Kiev under Austrian guarantee and Austrian military command.

This idea was only adopted as a definite policy later, but meanwhile the Vienna Government set to work to encourage among the Ukrainers the idea of loyalty to the Habsburg Monarchy. To this end certain concessions were made to them, with the result that in 1891 a group of Ukrainophil deputies appeared for the first time in the *Reichsrath*, their policy being announced as that of the development of an Ukraine State inside the Monarchy. Four years later the full vigour of the Ukrainophil movement was revealed when the electors of the Ruthene *curia* returned none but Ukrainophil deputies to the Galician Diet.

Against the danger thus revealed the Poles, headed by David Abrahamowicz, Count Leo Pininski and Thaddeus Cienski, a large landowner in Podolia, proceeded to organize their forces. The continued importance to the Government of the "Polish Club" in the *Reichsrath* ensured their influence at Vienna, and they were helped under the Foreign Minister Count Agenor Goluchowski by the fresh *rapprochement* between Austria and

Russia, which had turned aside from the Balkans to pursue unhappy adventures in the Far East. Pininski was now made viceroy of Galicia, and he and his successor, Count Andrew Potocki, set to work to combat the Ukrainers. They gained the support of the Austrian Government by showing that the Ukraine movement was not really a national, but a revolutionary movement. Powerful as it undoubtedly was, it by no means appealed to all the Ruthenes, many of whom cherished the racial and religious ties which united them with the Russians, while the more conservative elements were alarmed by the revolutionary character of the Ukrainophil propaganda, the danger of which was revealed in the great peasant rising of 1902. The "Old Ruthenes," whose sympathies were with Russia, thus allied themselves with the Poles against the Ukrainers, and this alliance led in its turn to a *rapprochement* between the Poles and Russia. The process was helped by the attitude of the Polish National Democratic Party, under Ramon Dmowski's leadership, after the Russian revolution of 1905. From the Polish point of view it was better that the Ruthenes of Galicia should be absorbed into Russia than that a great Ukraine State should be set up at the expense of Poles and Russians alike, and it was this common danger that did as much as anything to lead

to the ultimate agreement between the Russian Poles and the Liberal elements in the Duma.

The danger became acute when, in October 1906, Baron von Beck's Government established the system of universal suffrage in the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy. The Poles, to save their threatened ascendancy in Galicia, now actively favoured the Russian propaganda among the Ruthenes, and used every means in their power to defeat the Ukrainians at the polls. Their efforts were so far successful that, in 1907, five Russophil Ruthenes were elected to the *Reichsrath*, while in 1908 a number of them were returned to the Galician Diet. Thus encouraged the propaganda received a more thorough organization. A great impulse was given to it by the agreement arrived at between the Polish National Democrats and the Russian Neo-Slavs at the Pan-Slav Congress at Prague in 1908. As already mentioned, the Neo-Slav programme was accepted at Prague by M. Dmowski on behalf of the Poles, who in return were to assist in combating the Ukrainophil agitation, which neither Russians nor Poles would consent to regard as a true national movement. This policy was endorsed by the Galician Poles present at the Congress, who represented all the various groups—the National Right (the organization of the West

Galician Conservatives), the Autonomist Club (the organization of the Podolians), the Polish Democratic Party, the National Democracy, the clerical Centre Party, the Catholic Democratic Party, and the People's Party. The new alliance with Russian nationalism was celebrated, after the close of the Prague Congress, by the enthusiastic welcome given by the Poles and Old Ruthenes to Count Vladimir Bobrinsky, president of the newly founded "Galician-Russian Society," when he visited Galicia on his way back to Russia.

In this same year the tension between the Governments of Vienna and St. Petersburg again began to become acute, owing to the revival of the Balkan problem, in consequence of the revolution in Turkey and, more especially, of the high-handed action of Austria in proclaiming the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Under these circumstances the Austrian Government could not but view with misgiving the tendency of affairs in Galicia, where, under the influence of the viceroy Count Andrew Potocki, the Conservative Poles had formed an alliance with the "Russian National Party" under Dr. Dudykiewicz, and had succeeded in obtaining a majority in the Diet of 1908. The pro-Russian propaganda in Galicia was in the main a reply to the Ukrainophil propaganda among the Orthodox Ruthenes in Podolia and

Volhynia, of which the moving spirit was Count Szeptycki, the Uniat Metropolitan of Lemberg. This propaganda, originally inspired by Germany and undoubtedly fomented by German agents, was now all but openly encouraged by the Austrian Government, and the contest between Russia and Austria assumed the form of missionary activity for the mutual conversion of the Ruthene subjects of either Power to Orthodoxy or the Uniat Church as the case might be.

The Poles, in virtue of their constitutional position and of their vast social and economic influence, were still supreme in Galicia, and they were able to counter the efforts of the Government to combat the Russophil propaganda among the Ruthenes. The assassination of Count Potocki in April 1908, immediately after the elections to the Diet, by the Ukrainophil student Siczynski, deprived them, indeed, of a powerful support. The Austrian Government marked the end of its alliance with the aristocratic Poles by appointing as his successor the Polish historian Dr. Bobrzynski, the first non-noble to be made viceroy of Galicia, whose task it was, starting from the old principle of loyalty to the House of Habsburg, to combat the Russophil agitation by effecting some sort of compromise between the warring groups and uniting them on the common basis of loyalty to the House

of Habsburg. But in vain he refused, in his address to the Diet, to recognize the distinction which the Pan-Poles had sought to draw between the "moderate" and "extreme" National Russians, and denounced the whole Russophil movement as treasonable. The disposition of the new viceroy to recognize the Ukrainers as a separate nationality only stiffened the attitude of the intransigent Polish parties, and the movement only gained a stronger impetus. Its true meaning was revealed in 1912, when the Balkan crisis threatened immediate war between Austria and Russia and the Galician Poles had to make up their minds on which side to stake their fortunes. It was the Ukraine peril that determined their sympathies. A victory of the Triple Alliance, said the *Slowo Polskie*, would not be in the interests of the Poles, and in September 1912 Thaddeus Cienski in the *Gazeta Narodowa* explained the reason why. It would be better, he argued, for Poland to come entire under Russian rule than for Germany to conquer and partition her and to set up a Ukraine State.

The Ukrainers naturally took advantage of the situation to strengthen their own influence at Vienna, and on the 7th of December a meeting of delegates of the various Ukraine groups was held at Lemberg, at which a resolution was passed declaring the intention

of the "Ukraine Nation" to side with Austria against Russia in the coming war. In view of this the Polish parties had also to make a declaration of loyalty, and on the 9th they met and proclaimed their intention of supporting Austria; but it was noted that they tactfully refrained from saying against whom. There was, indeed, no particular dissatisfaction among them with Austrian rule, under which they had prospered, and their coquetting with Russia was wholly due to their resentment at the Austrian encouragement of the Ukrainers. The Vienna Government, well aware of this, attempted to be conciliatory. In March 1913 matters came to a crisis owing to the attempt of the viceroy, Dr. Bobrzynski, to carry a bill for a reform of the elections to the Galician Diet based on a compromise with the Ukrainers. The bill was thrown out by the united efforts of the Podolian and Pan-Polish parties, and Dr. Bobrzynski thereupon resigned. He was succeeded by M. de Korytowski, a nobleman known to be in sympathy with Pan-Polish views, and whose appointment therefore showed a disposition on the part of the Austrian Government to reconcile the most powerful Polish groups in Galicia with Vienna.

This process was rendered increasingly difficult owing to the ever-tightening bonds of the Austro-German alliance. The Austrian

Poles naturally resented the ill-treatment by the Prussians of their kinsmen in the Polish provinces of Prussia; they were loud in their denunciations of the iniquitous Expropriation Act, for which they were inclined to make the Austrian Government, as Germany's ally, partly responsible. The Ukrainophil agitation, moreover, continued with ever-increasing vigour, and the suspicion of the Poles that this was being fomented and financed by Germany was converted into certainty, early in 1914, by the publication in the Polish Press of a series of documents purloined from the secret archives of the Ostmark-Verein. This revelation led to a formal protest made in the Galician Diet on the 1st of March by Count Stanislaus Tarnowski, the leader of the Conservatives and President of the Cracow Academy of Sciences, on behalf of all the Polish parties. For ten years, he said, the Ukraine party had been in close correspondence with the German Ostmark-Verein, a fact proved by the evidence of documents the genuineness of which was not denied. The Ostmark-Verein was not, indeed, the Prussian Government, but it was a powerful organization which exercised an immense influence on public opinion in Germany and even on the Government; and its avowed object was the utter destruction of everything Polish. He protested before

God and man against the outrage involved in this interference of such an organization in the affairs of a foreign State, to the detriment of one of the nationalities composing that State. "Man," he concluded, with an obvious reference to the Austrian Government, "would not hear this protest, or would pretend not to hear it, but God would place it upon his records." This episode illustrates the change that had come over the attitude of the Galician Poles and the causes of this change. For half a century they had been the very pillars of the Habsburg Monarchy, and if they were now inclined to turn against it, this was because the Monarchy had surrendered its free initiative to Germany and become the mere humble agent of the world-ambitions of the Emperor William II. This altered sentiment, hinted at rather than stated by Count Tarnowski, was clearly revealed in the result of the trials for high treason of certain Russophil Ruthene priests and others early in 1914. The trial held at Marmaros-Sziget in Hungary led to the conviction of some of the accused; that held at Lemberg resulted in the acquittal of all the prisoners by a jury consisting entirely of Poles and Polish Jews.

Thus we are brought to the very eve of the great war. Rightly or wrongly, the Poles ascribed the great impulse given in recent

years to the Ukrainophil movement to the attitude of the heir to the Austrian throne, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, who, under the influence of Berlin, supported the Ukrainers against the Poles. The Emperor William, it was said, had promised the crown of the new Ukraine State to the children of the Archduke's morganatic marriage with the Duchess of Hohenberg. If this be true, the plot was most tragically nipped in the bud. On the 29th of June, 1914, a great Ukrainophil demonstration was held at Lemberg. On the same day the Archduke and his wife were assassinated at Sarajevo in Bosnia. This tragic event, so pregnant with terrible issues for the world, excited but little regret in Austria, for reasons that are still a subject of rumour and surmise. By the Polish Press it was greeted with almost indecent satisfaction, as ridding the Poles of an enemy who, in alliance with Berlin, had plotted war with Russia in order to fasten the yoke of German domination on the Slav world.

CHAPTER XIII

THE POLES AND THE WAR

ONE of the most tragic features of the supreme tragedy of the war is that in this struggle between national ideals, waged ostensibly for national ends, members of the same nationality are often pitted against each other, sometimes owing to the mere accident of allegiance, but sometimes also because of a conflict of sympathies. In no case is this more so than in that of the Poles. "At this historical moment," said M. Jaronski, speaking on behalf of the Polish party in the Duma on the 9th of August, 1914, "in which Slavdom is entering united upon a war with the German world, at the head of which is our eternal enemy the Prussian, the situation of the Polish people is a tragic one, robbed as it is of its independence and of the power freely to express its will. The tragedy is all the greater, as our country will be chosen as the seat of war, with all the horrors connected with it, and because, divided as it is into three parts, its sons will be found in hostile camps fighting against each other."

The Poles, in fact, though the war had been long expected, seemed to be taken by surprise at its outbreak. They had made no plans for a concerted attitude, still less for concerted

action, and the opening of the war tended to emphasize their divisions. These divisions were not as to the ultimate end to be aimed at, namely the restoration and independence of Poland, but as to the means of attaining this end. As has been already pointed out, the Pan-Polish movement associated with the National Democratic Party, under the leadership of M. Dmowski, the object of which had been to unite all the Poles in an autonomous State under the Russian crown, had suffered a set-back owing to the uncompromising Russianism of the third Duma and the persistence of the Russian bureaucracy in their repressive methods in Poland. It was not until after the outbreak of the war that it received a sudden and dramatic impulse from the publication of the proclamation addressed to the Poles by the Russian Commander-in-Chief, the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolayevich, the language of which showed clearly that the Russian Government, under the influence of the German aggression, was at last sincerely determined to adopt a policy of reconciliation. The proclamation, which was published on the 2/15th of August in all the Russian papers, ran as follows :—

Poles !

The time has come when the dream of your fathers and forefathers will at length be realized.

A century and a half ago the living body of Poland was torn in pieces, but her soul has not perished. She lives in the hope that the time will come for the resurrection of the Polish nation and its fraternal union with all Russia.

The Russian armies bring you the glad tidings of this union. May the frontiers which have divided the Polish people be broken down. May it once more be united under the sceptre of the Russian Emperor. Under this sceptre Poland will come together, free in faith, in language, and in self-government.

One thing Russia expects of you: an equal consideration for the rights of those nations with which history has linked you.

With open heart, with hand fraternally outstretched, great Russia comes to you. She believes that the sword has not rusted which overthrew the foe at Tannenberg.

From the shores of the Pacific Ocean to the Polar Sea the Russian war-hosts are in motion. The morning star of a new life is rising for Poland.

May there shine resplendent in the dawn the sign of the Cross, the symbol of the Passion and Resurrection of nations.

The effect of this proclamation, though very great, was somewhat discounted by the delay

in its issue. It was, indeed, at once hailed, as marking the beginning of a true fraternal union between the Poles and the Russians, by the most conspicuous representatives of Polish opinion in Russia, among them some with names which are famous in the annals of Poland: M. Mickiewicz, President of the Polish Society "Ognisko" in Moscow, the famous novelist Henry Sienkiewicz, who issued a burning summons to the Poles in Austria and Prussia to take up arms for Russia, and Count Wielopolski, who as President of the Polish Club in the Duma has since been entrusted with the task of drawing up a new Constitution for Poland. By Ramon Dmowski, of course, the manifesto was welcomed as marking the triumph of his policy, and in Warsaw a loyal address in reply to the proclamation was signed by sixty-nine leading representatives of the four legally recognized political parties, the Realists, the Pan-Poles, and the two Progressive groups. Yet even in the Kingdom, though public opinion seemed overwhelmingly on the side of Russia, it was not absolutely united. The unrecognized democratic organizations, more or less secret, and smarting under the rod of the bureaucracy, kept sullenly apart. There was even a movement of revolt, though it assumed only insignificant proportions. On the 2nd of August Pilsudski had fled over the border,

on the 10th had placed himself at the head of a self-constituted "National Government," and had proceeded to organize the refugees from Russian Poland into a Polish Legion for service in the Austro-German armies. To the immense disgust of the Polish people this force attached itself to the similar volunteer legions raised in Galicia, in all some 6000 strong, and took part with them in the first German advance on Warsaw.

Whatever differences of opinion there may have been in Russian Poland, these were naturally far more deep-rooted in Galicia. Had the terms of the Grand Duke's proclamation been made known to them more promptly, it is possible that the attitude of the Galician Poles at the outset of the war might have been different. As it was, their joint policy was already decided upon before it reached them. Their position was indeed, as may easily be understood, one of extreme difficulty. Even had they been wholly hostile to the connection with Austria, they could hardly have declared in favour of Russia while the unbroken forces of the Habsburg Monarchy still held their country. They were, however, by no means disposed enthusiastically to exchange the certain advantages of the Austrian connection, under which they had enjoyed self-government and the protection of their culture, for the uncertain prospects held out to them by

the promises of Russia, of whose true intentions the Austrian Government was careful to propagate the most sinister rumours; and if they had in times of peace encouraged the Russophil propaganda among the Ruthenes, their motive had not been love of Russia, but fear and hatred of the Ukrainophil movement. On the other hand, the whole-hearted declaration of the General Ukraine National Council in Austria in favour of the German Powers could not but cause them serious misgivings. Under these circumstances their attitude was, at the outset, from the Austrian point of view, strictly correct. The viceroy, M. de Korytowski, at once made it clear to the Pan-Poles that they must stop their pro-Russian propaganda, and the Austrian Government for its part issued proclamations in which it stated its intention of restoring Poland in alliance with Germany.

These promises, though denounced as treacherous by the *Gazeta Warszawska* and other organs of Pan-Polish opinion at Warsaw, determined the attitude of the Galician Poles. On the 16th of August, the day after the publication of the Grand Duke's proclamation in the Russian papers, a conference was held at Cracow of all Polish groups in the Galician Diet and the Austrian *Reichsrath*, under the presidency of Dr. Leo, leader of the Polish Club. The outcome of this conference

was the passing of a formal resolution protesting the loyalty of the Galician Poles to the Monarchy, and the establishment of a Supreme National Committee of which the main business was to be the raising and equipping of volunteer "legions" to assist the Austrian arms. This Committee was divided into two sections, for West and East Galicia respectively; and, in spite of the apparent unanimity of the conference, it was noted that Thaddeus Cienski, the Podolian leader who had been conspicuous in encouraging the Russophil movement among the Ruthenes, was elected president of the East Galician Section, and that on its Committee the Podolians and Pan-Poles were largely represented. This fact the Ukrainers did not fail to point out, seeking to win the favour of the Austrian Government by contrasting their whole-hearted support of the German Powers with the equivocal proceedings of the Poles. The latter replied—if the reports of Ukrainophil writers may be trusted—by trying to confound the Ukrainers with the Galician "Russians" in a common accusation of treason, numerous arrests of Ukrainophil Ruthenes being carried out by the Galician authorities.

The progress of the Russian arms in Galicia so far justified the Ukrainophil contention that it revealed a sharp divergence of opinion in the Polish National Committee. The

chairman of the Military Commission appointed by the East Galician Section was Count Alexander Skarbek, who, in November 1912, had resigned his seat in the *Reichsrath* as a protest against the support given by the Polish Club, in voting for the budget, to the Austro-German Alliance. After the Russian occupation of Lemberg on the 3rd of September the Commission, on its own authority, disbanded the East Galician Legion, to which it transpired that the oath of allegiance prescribed by the National Committee had never been administered. This led to stormy debates, first in the East Galician Section, and finally, on the 21st of October, in a plenary session of the whole National Committee, of which a majority declared the action of the Military Commission to be *ultra vires* and one for which the Committee refused to accept responsibility. Upon this the Podolian and Pan-Pole members, including Cienski, Prince Witold Czartoryski, Count Skarbek and Dr. Vogel, editor of the *Gazeta Narodowa*, left the Committee. This was in effect a declaration of sympathy with the cause of Russia, whose occupation of Galicia had already been strongly approved, in an article published on the 17th of September, by the *Slowo Polskie*, the organ of the Pan-Poles.

The policy of the Russians in Galicia, after the initial victories had seemed to place

them in permanent occupation of the country, was in many respects calculated to conciliate rather than to alienate the dominant Polish opinion; for it was largely a continuation of that which, before the war, the Poles and Russians had pursued in common. Count Vladimir Bobrinsky, of whose triumphant reception in Galicia after the Pan-Slav Congress at Prague in 1908 mention has already been made, was installed at Lemberg—now officially styled Lvov—as governor of Galicia, and he used his authority to institute a drastic process of Russification, notably at the cost of the Ukrainers. Count Szeptycki, the Uniat Archbishop of Lemberg, was deported to Russia, and a wholesale “conversion” took place of Ruthene Greek Catholics to the Orthodox Church. As for the Poles, whatever their misgivings, they could not but welcome the relief from the doom implied in the creation of a Ukraine State, nor could they fail to be impressed by the change in the attitude of the Russian Government towards the Polish Question generally revealed in the Grand Duke’s proclamation. The effect of this double influence was to produce, as the war went on, a *rapprochement* between the leaders of Polish opinion at Cracow and Warsaw on the basis of grasping the hand which Russia, at last, held “fraternally outstretched.”

This *rapprochement* might, it would appear,

have been more rapid and more complete had the Russian authorities been more ready to conform their actions at once to the spirit of the proclamation. Count Bobrinsky himself, in his zeal to make all things Russian, seems not to have confined himself to attacking the Ukrainers, but to have threatened the position of Lemberg as one of the great traditional centres of Polish culture. The danger of such a course was pointed out late in October by M. Lubomirz Dymcza, deputy for Siedlce to the Duma. The Galician Poles, he said, had declared war on Russia, and whole regiments and divisions fought in the Austrian armies against their brother Poles; but this was because they did not see that they were playing Germany's game. "To-day," he continued, "all this misunderstanding is cleared away, and I hope that at no distant date the whole Polish nation will be united in the Slav camp and separate its political outlook from all German influences." But the way to encourage this tendency, he added significantly, was not "to change the existing religious conditions, to close the cultured Polish schools, and to restrain the activity of trading companies." A somewhat stronger protest was made in an open letter by M. Wojciech Baranowski. In view of the reconciliation between the Poles and Russians foreshadowed in the proclamation, he said,

the Russian policy following on the occupation of Lemberg required consideration. Lemberg, with its Polish institutions : university, polytechnic, theatre, museums, library and archives, had been a centre of Polish thought and influence—until the 3rd of September. “ We fear,” he said, “ the evil traditions of Russia, persisting in spite of the reforms of 1905, in spite of our joy at the Russian victory. At a moment when we are assailed by varied fears the Polish minority in Red Russia must not be treated as though they were ‘ invaders.’ ”

In Russian Poland, too, the first enthusiasm aroused by the Grand Duke’s proclamation was slightly damped when the Russian system showed no immediate signs of amelioration, and the dissatisfaction cautiously expressed in certain of the Warsaw papers faintly echoed the loud scepticism of the pro-German Press abroad. Appreciation was, indeed, expressed of the sympathetic attitude of the Russian people towards the sufferings of Poland, and gratitude for the large charity of the Petrograd Organizing Committee, in which this sympathy found practical expression. But, as M. Casimir Zycki put it in the *Nowa Gazeta* of the 29th of November, it was not charity that could produce “ the union of two sister nations,” and the historical reckoning between Poland and Russia could only be paid politically. “ In face of the greater evil—the Ger-

man invasion," wrote M. Kierski in the *Kurjer Warszawski* of the 1st of November, "the lesser evils of our position, arising from the ordinary conditions of the country, hid themselves humbly. As regards these lesser evils, all things continue as though there were no change in high places. Not only is it impossible to notice any change for the better, but we must testify to a systematic adoption of the former methods, everywhere and always. . . . Our sympathy towards the Russian community displays itself sincerely, our loyalty, founded on the Commander-in-Chief's proclamation, is sending down ever deeper roots, but our sense of the burdens imposed upon us by the old methods of government is all the stronger and more unbearable." "We accept the sympathy," said the *Dziennik Polski* on the 29th of October, "but not as a proof of our union with the Russian people. The whole Polish nation expects from Russia the resurrection of a free Poland."

In view of the record of the Russian bureaucracy in Poland such expressions of impatience and even their undercurrent of suspicion, were natural enough. But the event has proved that they were not justified, and this fact the Poles have freely acknowledged. The Russian political machine works very slowly; there was undoubtedly considerable opposition in influential quarters to any concessions

which would really satisfy the Poles; and it was only after much delay that the first reform, the use of the Polish language in the local administration, was introduced. Other concessions followed at intervals, but, as the Russian Prime Minister, M. Goremykin, pointed out in the Duma on the 1st of August, 1915, the amelioration of the internal life of Poland could not be realized till after the war. The Russian Government had, however, given an earnest of its intention to fulfil its promises, and if any doubts lingered among the Poles as to its sincerity, these were removed by the declaration of M. Goremykin that the future organization of the Polish people "was definitely and irrevocably decided upon by the manifesto of the Grand Duke Commander-in-Chief at the beginning of the war," and that he himself had been charged by the Emperor to announce to the Duma that His Majesty had ordered the Cabinet to elaborate bills granting to Poland after the war "the right freely to organize her national, social and economic life under the sceptre of the Emperors of Russia."¹ In its address to the Crown in reply the Duma expressed its entire concurrence with this policy of conciliating the Poles, which was also accepted with cordial expressions of loyalty by M. Jaronski on behalf of the Polish represent-

¹ *The Times*, August 2, 1915.

atives. It may be added that, some three weeks later, after Warsaw had fallen and the weight of the German onset had pushed the Russian line beyond the frontiers of Poland, the Polish leaders again met and affirmed their loyalty to Russia and their unshakable faith in her ultimate victory.

In making his announcement to the Duma M. Goremykin had said that the Polish people, for the fidelity of their attitude during the war, "deserved unlimited sympathy and respect." This fidelity has indeed been proved amid trials such as have fallen to the lot of few peoples, which, unhappily, are not yet at an end. The very severity of the test to which it has been put has increased the angry surprise of the Germans at a phenomenon so utterly unexpected by them. Herr George Cleinow, author of a work of singular erudition and insight on "the future of Poland," recently published in the *Grenzboten* and *Zukunft*—weekly papers of which he is the editor—articles in which he points out how great an opportunity the Poles have missed. The breach of the traditional friendship between Prussia and Russia, he argues, opened up a wholly new phase of the Polish Question, the situation having been changed by a regrouping of the Powers most favourable to a fundamental alteration of the political position of the Poles. This being so, many

German politicians had reckoned on insurrections against Russia both in Poland and Galicia, and on a cordial welcome to the disinterested offers of Germany. Instead of which, the Poles in Russia had rallied solidly to the Russian cause, while those in Galicia are at best divided in sympathy. He is inclined to draw the conclusion that the Poles are a feeble generation, incapable of seeing their great opportunity and grasping it.

There is a striking similarity between this German attitude towards the Poles and that adopted by them towards the South African Boers. There can, moreover, be little doubt that the expectations cherished in both cases were based upon similar foundations. The story of German intrigue in South Africa has now been fully disclosed; that of German intrigue among the Poles, it may be assumed, has followed similar lines. Of the German support given to the Ukrainophil movement in Galicia and the South-Western Provinces of Russia mention has already been made; there can be little doubt that similar support has, for many years past, been given to the anti-Russian organizations in Poland. In addition to the powerful German and Jewish element that has always existed in the cities, to which the anti-German and anti-Semitic tendency of the National Democrats has been opposed, there has been of late years a steady

development of German colonization in Russian Poland as well as in the Russian Ukraine; and, in view of the revelation of the relations of the *Ostmark-Verein* with the Ukrainophiles, it is not too much to assume that German money has been poured out to support many of those secret societies which, in recent years, have been plotting the realization of that dream of an independent Poland which it has been the work of German agents to revive—for German purposes.

The occupation of Russian Poland, as has already been explained, has long been an ambition of Prussian statesmen. So long ago as 1863 Bismarck told Herr Behrend, the vice-president of the Prussian Chamber of Deputies, that if Russia were driven out of Poland, Prussia would march in. "In three years," he said, "everything fundamental would be Germanized. As for the Poles, they could be satisfied with a personal union with Prussia, and the deputies from Posen would no longer go to Berlin but to Warsaw." This idea of Bismarck's is perhaps the inspiration of the present policy of Prussia towards the future of Poland. So far as this has been officially announced, indeed, it is studiously vague. It may be true, as reported, that the Emperor William—inspired, according to his own account, by a vision of Our Lady of Czenstochowa, the Patroness of Poland—

held up to the Poles at one moment the prospect of a restored kingdom of Poland under a prince of the House of Habsburg; and if the Archduke Charles Stephen was actually selected as the future king, the choice was undoubtedly an astute move, for of his daughters one, the Archduchess Renée-Maria, was married in 1909 to Prince Jerome Radziwill, and another, the Archduchess Mechtild-Maria, in 1913 to Prince Alexander Olgierd Czartoryski. In view of his close connection with two branches of the ancient Polish royal family, then, the coronation of the Archduke at Warsaw as King of Poland might well convince a large number of Poles of the beneficent intentions of the German Powers towards them; indeed, the recent demand of the Polish National Council in Galicia for the restoration of Poland under a prince of the House of Habsburg shows that this is a solution of the problem that the Galician Poles at least would be prepared to accept.

So far, however, the only official statement of the intentions of the Powers is that delivered by Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg in the *Reichstag* on the 19th of August last, and this carefully avoids any definite commitments whatever. The Chancellor, indeed, praises the patriotism of the Poles who have so long defended their "old Western civilization and love of independence" under the

severe sufferings inflicted on them by *das Russentum*, and he holds out to them the hope of "a development which will remove old antagonisms (*Gegensätze*) between Germans and Poles and will lead the country, liberated from the Russian yoke, to a happy future, so that it will be able to foster and develop the individuality of its national life." "The country occupied by us," he adds, "will be justly administered by us with the assistance of its own population." The value of this last undertaking may be gauged by the record of Prussian rule in Posen, that of the former by the attitude of the German Press towards the demand of the Galician National Committee for a restored Poland. From this last it is clear that the Germans, having regained Warsaw and the line of the Vistula, have no intention of willingly retiring from them. As to this no doubt is left by the language of the secret memorandum presented last August to the German Chancellor by the six most important economic organizations of Germany. "In order to reconstitute Eastern Prussia," it said, "it is absolutely necessary to reconstruct the frontier by including certain strips of territory. East Prussia, Posen and Silesia must no longer remain our outer marches, exposed as they are at present."¹ Beyond

¹ Published in *Le Temps*, August 12, 1915, and reproduced in *The Times*, August 14.

this new frontier of the Empire the Germans would be willing to tolerate a Poland restored and held under German tutelage to form, with an "independent" Lithuania and an Austrian Ukraine State, a barrier against the menace of the Slavs. But as for the power to be conceded to the Poles "to foster and develop the individuality of their national life," even if the whole record of the treatment by Germany of her subject peoples did not give the lie to this promise, it would be stultified by the authoritative utterances of the Germans themselves. The secret memorandum already cited lays down very explicitly the rule which, in the opinion of leading Germans, should determine the treatment of the peoples brought within the limits of the Empire. "These territorial increases," it says, "assume that the population of the annexed territories will not be able to obtain a political influence upon the destinies of the German Empire, and that all the sources of economic power in these territories, including properties large and small, will pass into German hands."

Thus through the poisonous haze of lies and false promises looms, gigantic and menacing, the German spirit of conquest. Already—so a well-informed writer in the *Sunday Times* of the 29th of August tells us—the idea of setting up a Polish kingdom has been aban-

done, owing to the difficulty of reconciling the views of the German and Austrian Governments on the subject. That is comprehensible in view of the determination of Germany to retain Warsaw and the Vistula line, for a Polish kingdom from which the very heart of Poland should be excluded would indeed be "a fond thing vainly invented." Therefore, if the German Powers are to have their way, there will be yet another partition of Poland, which will be divided between the two Powers approximately on the lines of the partition of 1795. As for the spirit in which these new provinces will be governed, there are already indications enough to show that it will be the spirit of—Germanism. Already the old *entente* between the Galician Poles and the House of Habsburg has been broken; the retreat of the Russians saw the downfall of the Polish hegemony and the end of Galician autonomy, symbolized by the retirement of the Polish viceroy, M. de Korytowski, and the appointment in his place of a German military governor, General von Colard. Galicia, it would seem, is given over to a regime of delation and brutal punishments, as in the palmy days of Metternich. As for Russian Poland, it would appear that some effort is being made by the German authorities to conciliate the Poles in the spirit of the Chancellor's declaration. But, with the object les-

son of the Prussian rule in German Poland, before them, the Poles are not likely to be impressed by such slight concessions as the appointment of a Polish nobleman to the presidency of the Warsaw Municipal Council, or the removal of the official ban on the Polish language. More significant of the true intentions of the Germans is an episode described by Mr. Commissioner Bailey in the *Fortnightly Review* for September 1915. In revenge for the refusal of the Poles to be impressed by the Emperor's vision of Our Lady of Czenstochowa, the Germans, when Czenstochowa fell into their hands, not only perpetrated "their usual outrages," but by their treatment of this holy place of Poland gave a very special proof of their attitude towards the Poles as well as of their peculiar sense of humour.

The church was desecrated, and its picture was wrenched from its frame and despatched to Germany. Finally, to the dazed horror of the citizens and all Poles, a vulgar portrait of the Kaiser in uniform was raised above the dismantled altar, lights were placed before it, and the wretched people were daily driven in by the brutal German soldiers to kneel before the picture of the man whom they regard as the Devil incarnate.

This episode is symbolical of the attitude of the Poles and the Germans towards each other.

For the truth is, that the grip of the mailed fist has closed upon the heart of Poland. Will it tighten, until the life-blood of this most unhappy nation has been pressed out to the last drop? Or will the blows of Russia, herself enlightened and redeemed by her trials, at length force it to relax its grasp, and Poland be restored to free and wholesome life? That is now the Polish Question. On the answer to it depends, as so often before, the fate of Europe. The world has by this time realized the force of Germany's "will to power." If Poland, once more dismembered and crushed, be absorbed into her system, there will be no power left in Europe strong enough to resist this will. For Russia's Allies, then, the liberation of Poland from the German hosts is an object as important as for Russia herself.

The French and English peoples have always sympathized with the cause of Poland. Their sympathy is now more practical, and their determination to persevere till the liberties of the Poles are assured will not be weakened by the consciousness that, if they were to leave them to their doom, the same doom would sooner or later fall upon themselves.

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