

PRO LITHUANIA

A MONTHLY REVIEW

PUBLISHED BY

THE LITHUANIAN INFORMATION BUREAU

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The censorship has become so severe that it is no longer possible to continue the publication of « Pro Lithuania » in Paris ; therefore, not without regret, we leave the hospitable land of France and its capital.

In transferring the editorial offices of our review to Lausanne, in Switzerland, we hope to find here the largest measure of hospitality, and at the same time gain the sympathy of the noble Swiss people, who have themselves given so many proofs of their love of liberty and independence.

Owing to these circumstances, there has been considerable delay in the publication of our review, which on this occasion appears as a double number.

We beg our readers to accept our apologies for the involuntary delay which has occurred.

THE EDITOR

Lithuania for the Lithuanians.

At the present time, Lithuania, having been the scene of desperate struggles ever since the beginning of the war, is almost entirely laid waste. After Kovna, its capital, Vilna, has fallen into the hands of the Germans. Half of the inhabitants, brutally dragged from their homes, driven from their native land by the retreating Russian troops, who have sacked everything in their path, have been dying

of hunger and fatigue on the road to exile, banished as they have been even as far as the Ural Mountains and Siberia. The entire male population, capable of bearing arms, was mobilised in the early days of the war and, thanks to its heroic courage, largely contributed during the first months of hostilities to the success of the Russian armies. Never has the Lithuanian people ceased to show loyalty to the Russian Government, notwithstanding the suffering a persecution of which, unjustly, it has been a victim for a century. The tremendous sacrifices made by Lithuanians on the occasion of the present war entitle all right-thinking people to ask themselves this question : Will those in authority know how to appreciate the full extent of those sacrifices when the time comes for the final settlement?

Lithuania has not had shed upon her the same glory of Belgium, which protected France with her own body, and yet she played the same rôle as regards Russia. Whereas Belgium is covered with immortal glory, Lithuania, who did every bit as much for Russia as Belgium did for France, has had to submit to seeing even her name suppressed by Russia for more than forty years past, and is still at present so unknown that her very name is persistently avoided in the majority of official reports.

Although the Russian Government has thought fit to make a "strategic" promise to Poland, it has failed to take into account both Lithuania and the other nationalities who have made quite as many sacrifices as Poland — if not more for the common cause of the Empire. The Lithuanian nation is certain that the Allies, whose statesmen have never ceased to declare that the sole object of the war is the liberation of all peoples, will give it the opportunity of developing itself in accordance with its own aspirations, and of choosing the form of government which suits it best.

The Lithuanian nation has never ceased to claim its independence. When, more than a century ago the rulers of the Lithuano-Polish State, piling fault upon fault, precipitated the downfall of that State, it was again a son of Lithuania, Tadeé Kosciuszko, who took up arms to defend

the honour of his country. Later, and on several occasions, Lithuania and Poland attempted to regain their independence. But if Lithuania fought side by side with Poland, it was not to serve the interests of the latter, but, as Lithuanian chiefs declared, for its own sake.

As soon as the Lithuanian revival had taken firm root in the second half of the nineteenth century and political parties were formed, all, without exception, placed at the head of their programme the demand of the people for independence. It is evident that this object cannot be attained by arms, for the Lithuanian people cannot aspire to measuring themselves with their oppressors. Their salvation must be the outcome of the evolution of international justice, which recognises the right of every nation to dispose of itself freely and to govern itself in accordance with its own tastes and needs.

The liberation movement of 1905 found the Lithuanian nation riper than any other nationality in Russia for an autonomy which it claimed with insistence and energy through the Lithuanian National Assembly held at Vilna on December 4, 1905, when all classes of society and all the communes were represented by more than 2000 delegates. This demonstration of the strength of national sentiment needs no commentary. It proves conclusively that the Lithuanian nation was already, ten years ago, firmly determined to demand the recognition of its rights to a broad national autonomy.

Although the demands of the Lithuanian people have not received complete satisfaction at the hands of the reactionary Russian government, this demonstration of its wishes nevertheless resulted in a few concessions which made it possible for it to enter on the work of its educational evolution. Numerous intellectual, scientific, artistic and economic societies, in addition to social organisations, were formed through the people's own resources. Notwithstanding the many obstacles placed in the way by the Government, which followed the rapid progress of national culture with distrust, the Lithuanian nation has overcome them all and affirmed its vitality more and more.

The present war, so unfortunate in itself, has destroyed the first fruits of this productive work. The Lithuanian nation, plunged into poverty, homeless, partly exiled from its native soil, and deprived of all its institutions, cannot be born again from its ruins unless it is granted complete liberty.

Exactly like Belgium and Poland, whose sacrifices are identical to its own, the Lithuanian nation looks to the equity of the Great Powers for just reparation and the recognition of its independence, with sufficient collective guarantees to enable it to devote itself in peace to the restoration of its national prosperity and the development of its culture.

“Le Temps” and the Lithuanian question.

Serious minded people who, as a rule, read with interest the articles on foreign politics in the great French newspaper “Le Temps” must have been struck recently by the jocular and almost *boulevardier* tone of an article entitled “On joue au roi”¹, in which the author mockingly referred to the question that has been raised by the German occupation of Lithuania.

It is not our intention to discuss whether faith is or is not to be placed in the offers of the Germans to establish a kingdom of Poland and a kingdom of Lithuania, or to enter into the question of the chances of pretenders to the throne. We are of the opinion that circumstances are not yet sufficiently clear to enable us to know whether the settlement of the question of nationalities in Europe will be sincerely taken in hand by one or other of the present two great military and political groups, — perhaps even by both in a certain measure, in accordance with their interests; or whether these nationalities, desirous of doing away once for all with oppression,

¹ “Le Temps”, August 17, 1915.

whatever form it may take, must come to the conclusion that they can only count on themselves and must unite against the great belligerent powers to demand from them an equitable settlement of their national claims.

It is quite certain that, after so long and cruel a war, the necessity for a durable peace will be felt more than ever in Europe. On the other hand, it is possible that the democracy, on whom falls the whole of the heavy burden of the war and the consequences of engagements secretly made by diplomatists, will manifest a desire to be consulted and listened to in matters concerning the settlement of the future lot of nations.

The present war is, in a way, a final outburst of revolt on the part of nationalities against tyrannical oppression and imperialism. It is the re-awakening of that nationalism of the various nations which caused so many sanguinary wars and political crises in Europe during more than a century past, for the wars of Napoleon merely intensified aspirations to liberty.

We are witnessing to-day one of the acts in that drama which opened at the great French Revolution with the proclamation of the Rights of Man and the Rights of Nations.

The evolution of the world is excessively slow; a stable political state in Europe can be formed only by successive revolutions, which mark a like number of stages in the path of progress. The Rights of Nations, proclaimed 116 years ago, has up to now been but a principle, — not a fact. The holding in servitude of one nation by another was a fact tolerated under cover of the laws. It raised no protest, whereas the violation of individual liberty was severely condemned. Abuse of power and strength still reigned in this old Europe of ours. But if we are to believe the official declarations of statesmen of the Quadruple Alliance, the sole object of the sanguinary struggle in which Europe is engaged is to assure the triumph of right over might and the liberation of oppressed nations.

It is therefore all the more surprising that it should be a representative of France, of that nation which alleges that it

is fighting not only to defend its own national existence, but also to safeguard the liberties of the world, who, in pitifully puerile terms, dares to laugh at the destiny of nations who, through centuries of suffering, have acquired a right not only to the good-will of their allies, but also to that of the civilised world.

Truly we do not know which surprises us the more: the author's ignorance in historical matters, or his disregard of the rights of nationalities.

It is not by means of a more or less abstract formula, even though it were enunciated by one of the greatest minds of the Great Century, that one can claim to fix a nation's destinies. Moreover, the formula in question shows a very unhappy choice. For not only has Lithuania a centre, it also possesses clearly defined boundaries. Unfortunately, too many Frenchmen are ignorant of this, whilst the Germans, with their positive mind, have not been frightened from facing this question, from studying it from and recognising its importance in the present war.

Must we remind the thoughtless author of the "Temps" article that, in the Middle Ages, Lithuania, stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea, was one of the most powerful of European States?

It was also these same Lithuanians who, after having saved Europe from the Tartar invasion, contributed, at Grünwald, in 1410, to the crushing of the Teutonic Knights.

Now, if the project to reconstitute a historic Lithuania may rightly be considered by serious people as a utopian dream, worthy of little attention, this is not so in the case of the national claims of the Lithuanian people, which rest on an ethnographical basis.

Ethnographical Lithuania, with Vilna as the capital, includes, in the case of that part of Lithuania which up to now has been annexed to the Russian Empire, the governments of Vilna, Kovna and Grodna.

The government of Suvalki, thoroughly Lithuanian, attached administratively by Napoleon (one is at a loss to say for what reason) to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, could not

in any way be incorporated with Poland, a fact which the Russian Government itself recognised at the time of the application of the new law relating to the autonomy of municipalities in the districts of Russian Poland and the use of the language in the administration. Besides, Prussian Poland includes the department of Gumbinnen, at present part of Eastern Prussia¹.

It is regrettable that Frenchmen, writing in a great journal like "Le Temps", should be so completely ignorant of these questions, even from the point of view of ethnography and geography. Happily for us, France possesses *savants* and men of culture whose language is different². And the English Press has recently been better informed in this question³.

Comparison with Albania is here quite out of place. The Lithuanian nation, apart from its culture, has a splendid historical past. True, its national revival dates back but a short time, but owing to its prosperity the nation already occupies one of the foremost positions in the Russian Empire. The Austro-German Press has for many months past devoted numerous fairly informative articles to Lithuania, its history, customs, culture, economic situation, etc., which proves that the Central Powers do not regard the Lithuanian people and their country as a "négligeable" quantity for the future. Catholic Austria herself is even looking into the matter!

However, the sympathy of Lithuanians was entirely for the cause of the Allies, as proved by the immense sacrifices made by this little nation in their common interest.

This country, formerly so flourishing, is now a veritable desert. Its inhabitants, dragged from their homes, have been banished, owing to "strategic necessities", to distant Russian provinces and even to Siberia; they have been dispossessed of all their property, dispersed and abandoned

¹ The headquarters of the German civil Governor of conquered Lithuania, Prince Fr. Joseph Ysenbourg-von Birnstein, is at present at Tilsit, in Prussian Lithuania.

² Articles by Professor Charles Seignobos and Professor A. Meillet, member of the Institute, in "Pro Lithuania", No. 1, July 1915; and other studies in "Les Annales des Nationalités".

³ Articles in the "Star", August 1915; the "British Review" for July and February 1915; the "Manchester Guardian" in July and August 1915; etc.

to their wretched lot; they are dying of hunger and privations on the hard road to exile. As a Russian journalist recently wrote, "one is pricked to the heart by the sight of these unfortunate people who, piously, come to kneel at the tombs of their ancestors and wish them a final farewell, after which they carry away, preciously, into exile a handful of the soil of their native land." And these are the people — reduced to the most tragic existence through their attachment to the cause of the Allies — whom certain Frenchmen dare to refuse to recognise and would blot from the map of the world! The French Press is full of praise for the skill of Russian military tacticians, part of whose work consists in making desert the non-Russian countries invaded by the German troops, in Courland and Lithuania, but up to the present it has rarely had words of sympathy for those wretched populations which have been sacrificed in the common interest of the Allies, thrown without pity into poverty and driven into exile without mercy. We are not of the opinion, however, that human misery is more or less worthy of commiseration according to the latitudes and the sacrifices of the non-Russian populations of the western frontiers of the Empire from the Baltic to the Roumanian frontier: Letts, Lithuanians, Poles, Jews and Ukrainians are all to us as heroic as the Belgians.

Was it not Sir Edward Grey who declared, in a memorable speech a few months ago, that "the object of the Allies was to assure the free existence of nations in accordance with the form of government they themselves choose, to aid those who had succumbed to *re-establish their fatherland*; and that this war had veritably been undertaken to assure the independence of nationalities?"

"The sacred egoism" behind which certain powers have sometimes been able to withdraw is contrary to French honour and tradition. During the sanguinary and anxious hours it is traversing, the French nation ought not to forget that the same sufferings are common to its Allies, great or small, weak or strong, and that the ideal for which they are all sacrificing themselves is summed up in three words: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, which, if they were res-

pected by the whole community, would themselves alone assure the peace of the world and the happiness of humanity.

Recently, in the Duma, deputies of various nationalities freely set forth the national grievances and demands of the countries they represented. French public opinion, more or less well informed, is unfortunately kept far too much in the dark concerning these events and will inevitably become encased in a form of egoism if left in ignorance of facts and especially of sufferings concerning its Allies and consequently the general cause. "France has charge of souls ; she owes it to her past, to her destiny, not to permit the slightest deviation from the sublime work of liberation to which the Allies are offering the holocaust of the blood of their children."

To the jocular tone of the author of the "Temps" article, we much prefer the noble words of M. Paul Deschanel, which do honour to the French conscience and the ideal dear to all Frenchmen, — that of their ancestors who demolished the Bastille. "France," he cried to a Chamber aglow with unanimous enthusiasm, "is defending not only her territory, her homes, the tombs of her ancestors, sacred memories, ideal works of art and faith, and everything which her genius diffuses as regards grace, justice and beauty. She is defending something else : respect for treaties, the independence of Europe and human liberty."

"Yes, the question at issue is whether all the effortsoof mind, during centuries, are to end in slavery, whether millions of men can be seized, handed over, put in pens on the other side of a frontier and condemned to fight for their conquerors and their masters against their country, against their families and against their brothers. The question at issue is whether matter is to obtain the mastery over mind and whether the world shall be the bloody prey of violence...

"At last the world's desire is to live, Europe would breathe, and nations dispose freely of themselves."

Convinced of its rights, — with all due deference to the writer in "Le Temps" who approaches the serious problem of nationalities merely with the object of bandying more or

less witty phrases, with remarkable thoughtlessness and incompetence, — the Lithuanian nation, because of the enormous sacrifices it has made in the present war, is firmly determined to demand the realisation of its national aspirations and to submit no longer to the oppressive yoke of its neighbours, neither that of the Russians, nor even that of the Poles.

C. R.

A few words on the religious history of Lithuania.

The advance of the German armies on the Eastern Front has drawn attention to a nation with which Western Europe has up to now concerned itself very little. The race in question is the Lithuanian, which possesses in all about seven million representatives¹.

The Lithuanian language, with its very ancient forms, is, among the languages of Indo-European peoples, the one which is nearest to Sanscrit. It consists of two branches: Lithuanian proper, with the Samogietic idiom, and Lettish. The Lithuanians inhabiting the Russian Empire are Catholics. The 500 000 Lithuanians of Eastern Prussia — contrary to the majority — are Evangelists. Whereas Protestant Letts dominate in Courland and Livonia, 500 000 Catholic Letts inhabit the Government of Vitebsk.

Historical information relating to the primitive fatherland of the Lithuanians exists since the year 850. Nevertheless, their history remained obscure until 1202, when King Mindaugas was baptised by the Archbishop of Riga and ascended the royal throne. In 1261, however, he renounced Christianity and at a decisive battle at Durbe conquered the Teutonic Knights. From that time dates the political expansion of this conquering Pagan nation, which quickly extended its

¹ More than 1 000 000 Lithuanians have emigrated to the United States, where they form well-organised colonies from a national point of view. A few colonies are established even in Canada.

sovereignty over the whole of Western Russia. Smolensk itself became a Lithuanian town after 1404. Several Lithuanian princes married Russian princesses, and thus began, little by little, the Russification of the conquering Lithuanians¹. At the same time, Polish statesmen, after the extinction of the princely dynasty (the masculine line alone reigned), sought to ally themselves to the powerful Lithuano-Ruthenian State, in order to annihilate the power of the Teutonic Knights, by annexing Lithuania to Poland. Jagellon, who had reigned as Grand Prince of Lithuania since 1377, and who was still a Pagan, married, in 1386, the last Polish princess Hedwig. At the time of his baptism, Jagellon received the name of Ladislas. It was through Jagellon that Lithuania became Catholic. The Grand Prince Vitovt sought to consolidate this conversion when, at the Council of Constance, he expressed a wish to re-establish for the White Russians and Ukrainians the ancient metropolis of Kiev, which, after the Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century, had come under the jurisdiction of Moscow. At the Council of Florence, Isidore, the Metropolitan of Kiev and Moscow, entered into the union with the Catholic Church. This union, formerly introduced into the Lithuano-Russian dioceses, lasted until, through the influence of Helena, the schismatic Queen of Poland, a daughter of John III, the Moscovite Grand Prince, a schismatic Metropolitan was again appointed at Kiev. Later, Gregory XIII sent to the court of Ivan the Terrible, at Moscow, the Jesuit Possevin, to put an end to the schism in the Lithuano-Polish State. The celebrated Jesuit Pierre Skarga, known as a sacred orator at the synod of Brest in Lithuania, worked to the same end.

The zealous Catholic King of Poland, Sigismond III, succeeded in his object in 1596, and almost simultaneously the Bishops of the Metropolis of Kiev and the Metropolitan Rahoza once more returned to the bosom of the Catholic Church, after the Pope had granted to them the Greco-Slav

¹ The mixture of Lithuanians and Slavs resulted in the people called "White Russians" in the former Lithuanian provinces of Minsk, Vitebsk and Mohilev.

rite and the eastern canonical law. Thus Lithuania became the centre of the Union. At Vilna, the capital of Lithuania, the Order of Basilians was again revived by the Archbishop of Polozk, the future martyr of St Josaphat Kuncewicz. Historic Lithuania remained Catholic until the second half of the eighteenth century. When the partition of Poland occurred, Catherine II, who had entered into possession of Lithuania, seized the Uniate dioceses in question, which stretched to the north-east of Vilna, with the exception of the Archbishopric of Polotzk. Few catholic churches were tolerated in Volhynia and Podolia; in Lithuania and White Russia, however, the Empress did not dare to undertake a work of radical extermination. Whereas Paul I was conciliatory towards the Uniates, Nicholas I, during thirty years, persecuted them terribly in Lithuania and White Russia. Between 1830 and 1835 more than three and a half million Catholics were obliged by force to accept the Greco-Slav rite. The tortures which the Lithuanian Catholics who refused to give up their faith underwent remind us of those of the early centuries of Christianity. One form particularly favoured by the schismatic converters was the burying of victims up to their heads; then, after long days of waiting, in view of their conversion to the "true faith", they severed the believers' heads with scythes. All the churches and convents were declared schismatic. The Church lost an enormous quantity of religious works. After the last Polish revolution, in 1863, the Latin Catholics were similarly persecuted. All the property of the Catholic churches and many large religious foundations were purely and simply confiscated and distributed among Russians, whilst Lithuanians and White Russians were forbidden to purchase land. The abuse of his unlimited powers as Governor General of the western provinces gained for Mouravieff, in Lithuania, the surname of "Hangman". His tyrannical measures constituted for the future a special law for Lithuania.

From 1863 almost every bishop was a partisan. Dioceses remained unoccupied for years because the bishops were condemned to live in exile. In 1880, the Government placed

at the head of the Diocese of Vilna an unworthy priest named Zylinski, and when Leo XIII succeeded in appointing Bishop Vryniewicki, the Government soon sent this eminent ecclesiastic into exile. At the seminary of Vilna, the scholars were obliged to study Russian geography eight hours a week. Only Russian characters were authorised for the printing of Lithuanian texts. Such prayer books were absolutely rejected by the people. The year 1905 brought Lithuanians the liberty to print works in their own language with Latin characters, and very soon the literature of the country began to develop. Up to that time, it had been limited to religious works and a translation of the Bible — still undiscovered — which dates from the seventeenth century. The translation of the Bible by A. Baronas, the Bishop of Seyny (in the Government of Souvalky) dates from the recent revival of the Lithuanian language. After the Ukase of Easter 1909, authorising the change from the State religion to other Christian religions, numerous conversions to the Roman Catholic Church took place in the Governments of Vilna and Grodna, as well as in the neighbouring Government of Minsk, inhabited by White Russians. Shortly afterwards, the Russian bureaucracy began to make conversions difficult by a series of Ukases and the most cruel reprisals against the zeal of Catholic priests. After 1905 an order again went forth that religious instruction was to be given, not in the Lithuanian language, but in Russian.

In 1904, Baron von der Ropp was appointed Bishop of Vilna. Later he was sent in to exile. When Ropp was elected to the Duma his election was annulled on the ground that he was a "State official".

Lithuania now awaits its political liberation, which alone will bring religious liberty, without restrictions, as well as the possibility of freely developing its culture.

R. V.

The Lithuanian and Lettish Questions before the Duma.

The Petrograd Correspondent of the « Gazette de Lausanne », makes some interesting comments on that historic sitting of the Duma, when, for the first time, the Deputies representing the various nations of Russia were able to express their opinions freely, amidst applause from the Left.

The Duma listened to the eloquent speeches of Milioukoff, Friedmann, Kerenski, Goldman, Ramott, Papadjanof and others, — speeches which were reproduced by the newspapers of the capital. But the provincial journals which copied them from the Petrograd press were seized ! The others inserted an official communication in which the words of the orators were mutilated. Notwithstanding that, the noble words of these Deputies will awaken warm sympathy since they demand a true responsibility and the control of public affairs by representatives of the people, liberty for all, the the right of all nationalities of the Empire to intellectual autonomy, — that, the free use of their language, the right to possess schools and newspapers in their respective languages, religious tolerance, etc.

M. Goldmann, the Lettish Deputy, said that, whatever happened, his countrymen would stand firm as a rock in favour of Russia. Thousands of volunteers had taken up arms to repulse the invaders : and they asked for permission to form special legions.

M. Ramott said that the Esthonians had been described by their German oppressors as enemies of the State. That was false. The Esthonians were devoted sons of Russia, but after the victory they hoped for reforms and above all communal autonomy.

M. Itchass, the Lithuanian deputy, drew a graphic picture of the position of his country, which for the past year has been devastated by war. Villages and towns have been burnt and bombarded, the people have been ill-treated, their fields have been laid waste and their crops destroyed. In spite of all this suffering, the Lithuanians put their trust in Russia. They rejected the idea of union with the tyrannical Poles. They claimed autonomy, with liberty to use their own language, to cultivate it and to study it in their schools, etc.

After a remarkable speech by M. Milioukof, the Duma voted a resolution approving of the promise given by the General in Chief to the Poles, assuring them of the autonomy of Poland and the continuation of the war until final victory, through the union of all nationalities, who are to enjoy the same rights, without exception of race and religion.

« One must confess », concludes the Correspondent of the « Gazette de Lausanne », « that such a sitting shows a profound revolution has taken place in Russia and that it gives promise of a happy future. »

G. F. L.

The evacuation, poverty and treatment of refugees in Russia.

On September 3rd the Petrograd newspapers estimated the number of inhabitants transported from Lithuania and Poland to be 4,500,000. The Russian Government decided to vote a sum of 25 million roubles in aid of fugitives devoid of resources. The members of the Duma have formed a committee, which considers that this sum is insufficient to meet the poverty and proposes that at least 200 million roubles is required to satisfy the most pressing needs.

On the same date, a telegram from Moscow stated that the « Rousskoje Slovo » published the following information : —

« The Union of Cities estimates the number of refugees whom one may already expect as 12 millions. The Government is still deliberating regarding the definition of the term refugee, in order to prevent difficulties caused by laws of exception in regard to the Jews and the Germans. Ten to fifteen train-loads of refugees arrive daily at Smolensk. These unfortunate people travel in goods-vans or on open platforms. Those the object of whose journey has not been determined by the authorities are immediately sent to Siberia. »

Moreover, we are informed from London that an American correspondent who has travelled through western Russia has written an interesting description of what he has seen, as follows : —

« The districts he visited — several weeks ago — are covered with refugees from provinces already occupied by the Germans. Everywhere he was a witness of this extraordinary emigration, without precedent in history. It is said that in the cities of Smolensk, Kief, Moscow, Odessa, Vitebsk and Petrograd alone more than a million and a half of refugees have already arrived within the last few days. The majority of them have lost all they possessed. To render assistance to these unfortunates, worn out and dying of hunger, presents great difficulties, which one can hardly imagine, unless one has seen these sad processions. In certain regions, some of the refugees have been employed in getting in the harvest, but this work is now finished. It is impossible to procure other work

for them so long as the branches of industry which flourished in Poland and the Baltic Provinces are not established elsewhere. The difficulties are still further increased by the fact that the majority of the refugees do not speak Russian, but only Polish, Lithuanian, Lettish and German. The unfortunate people cannot make themselves understood and their position is the same as if they were without resources abroad. Poverty is great, for the millions disappear like a drop of water in the ocean. The efforts of the municipal authorities are praiseworthy, but insufficient. All the available railways are submerged. »

The correspondent in question had sometimes to wait for three days before being able to proceed by rail from one locality to another

As regards the evacuation of the regions invaded or threatened, and the situation of the refugees in Russia, a neutral — the correspondent of a Swedish journal, writes as follows : —

« In reality, the war has destroyed the whole industrial life of Poland and Courland. It is true that a great part of the machines have been transported to the interior of Russia, in order to set them up again and utilise them for the needs of the war ; but this was carried out in so primitive a fashion and the separate pieces of machinery, without proper packing and addresses, have accumulated in such a way at the Kasan, Moscow and Jaroslaw railway-stations that it is impossible to sort them out and re-build the machines. For this reason, orders for machinery to the value of 150 million dollars have been placed in the United States, which gives us an idea of the number of new works which are required in Russia for the manufacture of war material. The authorities certainly anticipated that old orders might be delivered later by the old and the new factories. But the lack of railways, raw material, and especially experienced workmen and good overseers had not been taken into account. Under these conditions, I ask myself if Russia's hope in final victory, based principally on the fresh organization of industry, is not exaggerated. »

By her « defensive tactics of 1812 » Russia has further increased her difficulties, and without in any way stopping the progress of the enemy. The populations who are unwilling to leave their native soil are driven forth by the soldiers, and thus the retreat of the troops is often rendered more difficult. In certain cases, forests have been burnt with the sole object of driving out the refugees who sought refuge there. In the abandoned regions, everything has been devastated by the Russians. Only a desert remains. It will be many many

years before conditions are supportable again. On the other hand, ten thousand Lettish refugees who arrived at an important town in the east of the Empire were immediately sent back by the Governor, on the ground that they were Germans. The sufferings of the refugees are still further increased by the fact that they are not Russians, but Poles, Lithuanians and Letts, for the regions inhabited by the Great Russians have not yet been reached by the retreating Russian troops.

Undesirables.

Hundreds of thousands of refugees, comparable to a mighty wave, are rapidly submerging the whole of Russia. They have spread to the Ural Mountains and will soon have reached Siberia. Having read the newspapers, I am aware of the conditions under which these unfortunate people are at Moscow. Terrible conditions, but a paradise compared to those under which they are suffering here at Ufa.

At Moscow, they possess at least a roof and bread, which shows that something is being done for them, and thus eases one's conscience. But the situation here of these wretched people is very different, as will be seen from what follows.

Far from the station of Ufa immense trains all filled with refugees, are drawn up. Near each of them, dirty linen is spread out, and children play around the carriages. Everywhere the scene is the same : people and things are jumbled together, — old folk, children, and the sick worn out by their long journey, side by side with household utensils and for the most part useless furniture.

They hastily collected together everything which was within reach, as on the occasion of a fire. All are in tatters. It is a terrible scene of abject poverty. I pass from one carriage to another and endeavour to enter into conversation. *But nobody understands Russian.* The majority of them are Lithuanians, Ukrainians and Jews. Incomprehensible tongues are heard on all sides. I put a question to one of them, but can draw forth no reply. His neighbour explains in bad Russian :

« He does not understand foreigners. »

« What language does he speak ? »

« Only Ukrainian. The entire carriage contains refugees from Volhynie. »

I continue my questions :

« Where are you going ? »

« We do not know. We are being transported somewhere, but where we know not. »

« Since when have you been travelling ? »

« For a month past, » replies one ; « For six weeks, » says another.

« It's all the same to us, » adds a third, resignedly, « but why not tell us where we are going ? »

Another man, interrupting him, adds : « They say to Siberia. »

« Siberia is immense. And why take us to Siberia ? »

« It matters little where they take us, » interjects the third speaker, « provided it is nearer death. »

Full of emotion, I continue to question these unfortunate people.

« Have you eaten to-day ? »

« No ; not yet. We are still waiting... They promised to feed us every day. »

« When did you eat last ? »

« Two days ago, at Samara. »

Owing to hunger, uncleanness, and lack of room and air, the refugees carry with them all manner of diseases.

« Have you any sick among you ? » I ask.

Numerous sick people are pointed out to me in each carriage.

« Has the doctor seen them ? »

« No. »

« What are their ailments ? »

« God alone knows. All suffer from internal pains. »

Drawing near to one of the sick men stretched on the floor, I find that he is naked and quite yellow. The symptoms in his case were dysentery, vomiting, and convulsions, — a clear case of cholera.

In another carriage, amidst a heap of dirty rags, I come across the prostrate figure of a woman, her face covered with a handkerchief.

« Is she ill ? » I ask.

« She is dead. »

« Since when ? »

« This morning. »

I look at my watch and find it is four o'clock. No attempt has been made to remove the body, or to disinfect the carriage. No

anxiety is shown ! This woman, yesterday in good health and occupying herself with her children, fell ill only last night !

« Have there been other deaths ? »

« Many. All were seized at the same time. »

The majority of the refugees are agriculturists, but some are artisans and factory hands. I am aware that there is a lack of workmen for the manufacture of munitions, consequently I endeavour to ascertain whether a representative of the War Industry Committee has inquired if workers useful in ammunition factories are among the refugees.

« There was no one, » someone replied.

But I found that this was hardly correct. One of the refugees, with tears in his eyes, declared :

« I am a locksmith and have worked in the shops. Give me my liberty and I will find work. »

« But who prevents you doing so ? »

« Ah ! I was brought here by force. I didn't ask to come. It is impossible to obtain my liberty. I am being transported, but whither I know not... I have been told : « We have received you and we must deliver you. »

I quote, word for word, what I heard at the Ufa railway station. I shall not draw conclusions. They are evident. I shall not shed tears. These refugees need help, not tears. But I shall complete my inquiry by giving a few more details regarding these refugees. Their position is as follows :

They have been accepted as goods, as cattle. They are all numbered and have way-bills. They are no longer human beings, but mere merchandise. At Samara, for instance, *so many* were sent off. At Ufa the goods are verified ; the authorities make sure that *so many* are there. To let the locksmith go at some place en route would be to lose part of the merchandise and fail in one's « duty ».

Why has nothing been done for the reception of these unfortunate people ?

Everywhere it is the same. I am ashamed even to ask.

Refugees were not expected. One would say that they fell from the moon. Yet it has for long been known that the most thickly populated regions of the Empire were invaded. But nothing has been done to relieve the poverty of the refugees, forced by the authorities to abandon their homes. *Neither the Government, nor private charities have troubled their heads.* Everybody is merely astonished that there are so many wretched refugees.

The representatives of the Government and of public charities, as well as a huge crowd, flocked to the station, as though to a fire. Everybody pushed forward. *But nobody did anything for the refugees.*

When I left the station a train-load of refugees was moving away. The poor folk left without having eaten a bite. It was the third day they had fasted. I cannot say whether the body of the woman I saw a few moments before had been removed. It seemed to me that the train was en route for Eternity, — that goal which all of us will reach some day. But why embark those unhappy passengers, against their will, for such a destination ?

PIERRE ACHEVSKY,

in the « Rousskoie Slovo » for Aug. 18, 1915.

An impression of Lithuania.

(From the «Rousskoie Slovo »,)

The frontier between Lithuania and Poland is marked by the Bug, at the point where this river changes in a southerly direction.

The battle rages on this frontier.

The frontier between Lithuania and Poland is very apparent : on the one hand, the gay and thoughtless Poland ; on the other, the unchanging and severe Lithuania.

Looking on this country, I begin to understand the mystic pictures of Curlanis, that genial and mysterious master.

Visit, at eve, a Lithuanian village cemetery and you will be struck by something extraordinary. Amongst the thick verdure stand immense crosses, some yards in height, blackened by time. They seem to bow towards you. These crosses are to be met with not only in the cemeteries but also in great numbers on the roadsides and on the hills, in the midst of the fields.

Just now you can see people kneeling at the base of these crosses, praying earnestly. Sometimes the whole family is there : the grandfather, the mother and the children. Near at hand is a cart, containing all their possessions, and often a cow is attached to it.

What anguish is depicted on their faces ! What it costs them to part, to say farewell to these crosses which were erected by their

ancestors and in front of which several generations have knelt ! Now, withdrawing from the spot, they once more bend towards the ground, to take a handful of earth which they will carry with them into exile, as a pious souvenir of their native land.

One of them addresses me, saying : —

« What do you think, sir : will the Germans come or not ? »

It is difficult for me to answer, my heart aches so.

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« Already the galloping of the German horses are heard on the Lithuanian frontier, as in the days of the Great Vitovt, » says a noble Lithuanian to me. « But the good God will assist us ; all this will end as in the ancient days. We have already been obliged to flee before the German hordes and to take refuge in the forests. »



The question of the refugees before the Duma.

At the sitting of the Duma on August 30th the question of the refugees was energetically discussed. The Polish deputy Swentzitzki protested against the brutal expulsion of the peasants of Poland. For example, in the district of Poulousk, 22,000 out of 28,000 of the inhabitants were expelled from their homes with the utmost violence. The speaker drew attention to the hostile attitude of the Russian people towards these unfortunate refugees and the inhuman way in which they were treated by the authorities.

The Lithuanian deputy of Kovna, Januchkevitch, added : « The refugees do not demand favours, they merely ask for the recognition of their rights, for they have been driven by force from their country. The whole of their native land now resembles a desert. The people have been reduced to mendicity. The people have not fled voluntarily ; only the governors and the most prominent citizens fled of their own free will. »

The Jewish deputy Freedmann spoke in his turn against the cruel treatment inflicted on Israelite refugees who, since the beginning of May, have been driven from Kovna and Vilna, sent to Siberia, accused of treason and driven from one government to another. The authorities have been so cruel as to forbid people to give water to these unfortunates.

Such facts require no commentary and will suffice to convince our readers that we were correct in stating that the lot of the unfortunate refugees in the invaded regions of the Russian Empire surpasses in horror anything one can imagine, even the lot of the Belgians, who in neighbouring countries, in England, France and even Holland, have received the most affable welcome and the greatest hospitality. Even as far as America they have excited pity, and an attempt has been made to lighten their burdens by moral assistance and by generous gifts.

Have not the refugees of the Russian Empire a right to the same commiseration ?

56 THE QUESTION OF THE REFUGEES BEFORE THE DUMA

The people believe that the present war will mark the end of the system. All the faults of the Government are now being expiated : the venality of the officials, the provocative work of the secret police whose most recent brilliant action was the pogrom of Moscow, etc. The oppression of the non-Russian nationalities loosens the bonds between the various parts of the Empire and yet no one would dare to declare that peace alone would be the only means of salvation

The war in Lithuania.

At Kovna (Kaunas).

AFTER THE FALL OF THE FORTRESS
THE RAPID PASSAGE OF THE GERMAN TROOPS. — HOUSES ABANDONED
AND PILLAGED. — A VISIT TO THE FORTS.

Kovna, August 19...

When, two days ago, from the south bank of the Niemen, I perceived the fallen fortress of Kovna, I asked myself if I were not dreaming. Everything had happened so rapidly ; the resistance — up to then so energetic — of the great Russian fortress had been broken so suddenly. It had surrendered without conditions before the furious and skilful attack of the enemy. Later, at nightfall, when I again looked on the town from the banks of the river, it seemed to me that, after beholding reality, I was plunged into a fairy tale. The panorama of the city was lit up by numerous fires ; the whole horizon was ablaze, and against this marvellous background the silhouette of innumerable churches, ornamenting the town, stood out. Every gable and every tower was distinctly recognisable. There was something fantastic in this magnificent blood-red picture. To this was added the sound of cannon thundering in the west, almost without interruption ; and that of the mitrailleuses reducing to silence the last resisting forces. It was with difficulty that one accustomed oneself to the thought that Kovna had already surrendered to the German conqueror.

On the following morning reality was revealed. The German army had had no need of a night to come to a fresh determination in consequence of the *fait accompli*. I cannot say whether it had counted on the rapid fall of Kovna ; in any case, all the leading places were sufficiently strong to prove the enormous difficulties which

still remained after the fall of the fortified zone on the south-west and the town's enceinte. But when these difficulties were overcome, it was with bold determination that they profited by the favourable situation. Formerly, conquerors would have rested in a conquered city. For the German army to-day there is no repose. Whilst the major part of the troops were still far behind Kovna, unaware perhaps that the fortress was conquered or not, the advance-guards had already traversed Kovna, following on the heels of the weakening enemy and allowing them not a moment's rest. The staff of the troops to which we are at present attached arrived at Kovna yesterday. When I wanted to find them again this morning, I learnt that they were already far beyond Kovna and had installed their quarters near Fort VI, which was conquered yesterday, and when I tried to join them there I heard that they had already continued their march forward. Owing to the serried columns which filled the streets of the city, it was quite impossible to rejoin them there. But I was able to notice that they were already fighting with the greatest energy. The heavy howitzers which had just bombarded Kovna had already been brought into position against the enemy, who were withdrawing towards the east, and were thundering furiously. Likewise, all the troops I met were very determined to hold firm at all cost. Army corps without end were spread out among the hardly conquered forts to the north and the west, and all of them were animated with the same unshaken will to conquer. There is nothing astonishing in the fact that a succession of glorious actions are in preparation, in consequence of the offensive against Kovna. Already to-day the result of the victory of Kovna figures out at 500 cannon and 15,000 prisoners, to which must be added the immense booty of war of the city and forts. One must not, however, give way to exaggerated optimism as regards the resistance which the army will encounter in the west. One must retain one's coolness amongst these rumours of victory and content oneself with the knowledge that the resistance of the Russians is lessened but not broken... With difficulty, step by step, and with death and the devil as companions, the German army advances, but its object is not yet attained, notwithstanding its victories.

If the German army must continue its march forward, Kovna loses its value for the German staff. It will be no more than a *lieu d'étape*, like so many other cities.

From the fact that the Russian Government had made Kovna one of the most powerful fortresses in the Empire, we may conclude

that, apart from its strategical signification, it attached special importance to it. Kovna occupied, indeed, a particularly important rank among the circle of western cities of Russia. Vilna is larger and Riga is undoubtedly superior. But if you have seen the German cities of Tilsitt and Memel, you will find that Kovna resembles them in more than one respect and, just like the Memel route, has for centuries been a commercial road of the first importance. For several generations Kovna was the transit centre between the Baltic and the interior of Russia. Thanks to this extremely favourable situation, the city acquired great riches and played an important rôle politically. One can still easily distinguish the old town, which dates back to the beginning of the Middle-Ages, from more recent constructions. The city forms an arch to the north of the Niemen, which, with numerous windings, flows from east to west. The two banks of the Niemen are here relatively high, which is particularly noticable to the observer arriving from near Mariampol, for as far as the Niemen the country forms a tablelike plateau. A few miles from Kovna one sees a deep valley, and finally one perceives the city and the river at a height of fifty metres. This situation explains how the city could be easily converted into a fortress, for it is itself protected at the bottom of the valley, whilst the surrounding heights dominate the country to a great distance. The position of the city is also strengthened by the fact that it is here the Vilija flows into the Niemen, cutting the old town into two parts, the smaller to the west and the more important to the east. I must add that Kovna is not only worthy of inspiring a painter. Nor is the charm which it exercises over the spectator limited to its numerous religious edifices. Nor is it lacking in civil buildings and interesting streets. It is a city of 100,000 inhabitants, with numerous breweries, manufactories, and a very active wholesale trade. There is a tramway which naturally is not running at present ; also public lighting. But water conduits hardly exist and there is no drainage. The paving of the streets is lamentable and the foot-pavements are only supportable in the principal streets. But this is Russia and therefore one is not over astonished. It must be added that the houses are spacious and comfortable, and that one notices even a luxury which is hardly surpassed in Germany.

At the present time Kovna would be like a dead city if it were not animated by the passage of numerous German troops. The majority of the houses are closed and the shutters of the shops of the principal streets are up. Habitually, as in most of the frontier cities, there are numerous Jews at Kovna, who act as intermediaries

in the trade between Polish Russians and Lithuanians, but the majority of them have been driven away or carried off by the Russian army. Other well-to-do inhabitants have probably left of their own free will. Only the lower classes of the people remain and these have not lost the opportunity of getting many things cheaply. Almost everywhere the shops which were carefully closed by their owners have been broken open and pillaged. Yesterday and to-day I saw some loose female characters, drunk, accompanied by other women in rags, hurrying along the streets with baskets full of linen and silks. I also witnessed a reservist arresting a drunken pillager. On my questioning the soldier, he answered : « The rascal entered here and filled his pockets. » It is incomprehensible to find so many drunkards, despite the prohibition of alcohol in Russia. I have rarely seen so many loose female characters and drunken men. In the ebb and flow of battle all restraint is relaxed.

I can state that the German soldier does not give way to the temptation to pillage. He invades the shops which are open to procure, at a high price, what he requires. But it is natural that he should requisition what he cannot obtain for cash and that he should procure a lodging by force when the houses are closed. You cannot expect a man who, perhaps, has been for weeks in the trenches, to remain in front of a closed house. The people have not been treated with brutality. On the contrary, within twenty-four hours the simple soldier, although speaking a different language, is on good terms with the population.

A few more days and passing difficulties will be overcome. The closed shops will re-open, fugitives will return, pillagers will be placed under lock and key, the city will be rendered more healthy, order will be restored and at the same time the peaceful population will be assisted. This has been done everywhere in occupied cities ; it will be the same here, though the difficulty of the task increases with the importance of the city. But if one judges by past experience, there is no doubt that work will shortly be resumed. Then, little by little, Kovna will become convinced that its destiny is now bound for ever to Germany.

* * *

A visit to the conquered forts is also necessary. If you would form an idea of the power of heavy artillery, you must visit in particular fort No. 1. I visited it to-day, as well as fort No. 2. Both are very instructive, but fort No. 1 holds the first place as regards the range

of the big mortar-pieces. The problem of reducing a fort to the state in which it may be stormed is here completely solved. You see here a grenade hole of about ten yards in diameter. The shot of the giant gun pierced a rampart of earth five yards thick, as well as the roof of a cellar at least a yard in thickness. It first of all caused an explosion, projecting the foundations to the edge of the vaulted roof. Another shell struck the cemented enceinte. Here, in the moat of the fort, forming a bridge, lie gigantic blocks of cement which seem to have been raised and projected by an extraordinary force. In the casemates of the forts it was like a desert. In truth, there is no safe spot for the besieged when the shells of the « big Berthas » begin to rain down upon them. On the other hand, it was precisely the bombardment with the heavy German guns which prevented the evacuation of the forts. This explains why we find here such a considerable quantity of cannons, machine-guns and ammunition, as well as provisions and equipment of all sorts. Fort No. 6 presented a similar spectacle. Of all the forts of Kovna, it was the last to fall. Its installation was astonishingly complete. In its casemates there were even two chapels : one for Roman Catholics ; the other, still more richly endowed, for those of the orthodox Greek Church. In the officers' quarters oil-portraits of the Tsar and the Empress, and other princely personages, ornamented the walls. The stores overflowed with equipments. In the innermost room, the oven in which the delicious bread of the last meal had been cooked was still warm. Cloaks, uniforms, caps and tinned and bottled goods were heaped up in great quantities. Huge piles of sacks of oats, flour and other goods witnessed to the preparations made by the Russians. Heaps of account-books proved that they had not neglected the administrative side. It was necessary to walk prudently, amongst all these endless objects in order to avoid stepping on the hand grenades which lay everywhere. One felt a sort of pity for the poor fellows who risked their skins here, without exactly knowing why, and yet with the proud consciousness that all these preparations and counter measures would hold the German offensive in check. It is difficult to say what the suppositions of the Russians were, whether they thought they were able to resist the German attack, or whether, at the last moment, they had no time to carry away their stores. In any case, they abandoned an extremely rich booty which can be utilised by the German army.

Before very long the time-table of the German railways will include Kovna. Already for some time one has been able to reach

Koslova-Ruda by the train leaving the Berlin-Friedrichstrasse station at noon, via Eydkuhnen. On Tuesday the line will reach Mauruzie. In a few days the express from Berlin will arrive at Kovna¹.

DR PAUL MICHAELIS.

Vilna (Vilnius).

Owing to the fall of Kovna, the German army has opened up the road to Vilna, the beautiful capital of Lithuania, important from time immemorial on account of its commerce. Vilna — also of great importance as the junction of a number of railways — is situated in a hilly district at the confluence of the Vileika with the Vilija. The population, which numbers nearly 200,000, is composed for the most part of Lithuanians, Poles and Jews.

Vilna is an interesting city, not so much on account of its metropolitan aspect as because of its narrow and tortuous streets, its diversified and fruitful past, and the historical recollections attached to it. It was formerly the capital of the powerful kingdom of Lithuania, the nobility of which had been polonized. Merchants from the most important provinces journeyed to its fairs.

The history of Vilna dates back to the earliest times. The banks of the Vilija, in the district where the city now stretches, were formerly the scene of Pagan rites. White-bearded priests watched on the edge of the hill over the sacred fire consecrated to the Lithuanian Perkunas, or God of Light. The first evident sign of a town was the castle which Gediminas, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, built on the bank of the river. He and his successors still remained faithful to Pagan beliefs, and the attempts at conversion made by the Teutonic Knights did not take place without violence. This lasted until 1387, when the stubborn Lithuanians embraced Christianity. This, in truth, was due solely to the initiative of the Grand Duke Ladislas Jagellon, who, earlier, had taken possession of the crown of Poland. In accordance with his orders, the Pagan altars were overthrown and on the ruins of the Temple of Perkunas the present Cathedral of St. Stanislas was built. In the same year, Vilna received the communal laws of the city of Magdeburg.

The city played a great role in the long struggles of the Lithuanians and the Poles against the Teutonic Knights, who wished to extend their political influence to the eastern regions and who would not give up without a struggle the territory they had one day con-

¹ *Berliner Tageblatt*, septembre.

quered. Vilna also served as a point of support, first to one, then to another, in the wars of the Lithuanians and Poles against the Tartars and the Russians princes. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the city was often the object of Swedish and Cossack attacks ; and more than once it was sacked. In 1794, at the time of the last decisive struggle for unfortunate Poland, Vilna, at the outset, bravely resisted the Russian siege, but, on August 12th, was obliged to capitulate. Owing to the fact that at Vilna the great strategic route from Königsberg and Warsaw to Moscow and Petrograd cross, the city came to assume great strategic importance.

During the Franco-Russian campaign of 1812, Vilna was chosen by Napoleon as the terminus of his operations on the Niemen. When the Emperor traversed Vilna, beating a rapid retreat, he was obliged, one cold winter night, to escape from the city in disguise.

From the point of view of its historical buildings, Vilna is the most remarkable of all Lithuanian cities. Entire quarters bear the stamp of the Middle-Ages, whilst numerous large buildings recall the city's former ease. What is still more striking are the numerous impressive churches, among which must first of all be mentioned the Cathedral of St. Nicholas, built by Jagellon, which, by its shape, calls to mind rather a Greek temple than a Christian edifice. Six powerful Doric columns support the frame-work of the Architrave ornamented with statues. These graceful ornaments, recalling the ancients, date, in part, from the time of the empire. The interior of the cathedral contains a good number of remarkable statues, including a statue of the Virgin, the gift of the Byzantine emperor, Michel Paleologue, which ornaments the tomb of the Grand Duke Vitovf, who died in 1470. In a Louis XV chapel is the silver sarcophagus of Saint-Casimir, — a sarcophagus which weighs twelve hundred kilogrammes. Many of the churches and other buildings of Vilna show very clearly Gothic tendencies, imported from the west, without, however, entirely repudiating the elements of Slav art. The most remarkable of these are the Picture-Gallery (Pajtnetzkaja), the Catholic Church of the Holy Spirit, and the Church of St. Anne. The last named bears a close resemblance to the catholic buildings of the coast districts of Northern Germany. Another very elegant and spacious building is the Catholic Church of St. John, which was begun in 1388, under Jagellon, completed in 1426, and later restored. Its tower rises above all the other buildings and serves as a city landmark. The end of the sixteenth century is represented by the Cathedral of St. Nicholas, which is almost enrapturing, such is its

luxury, and in which the Jesuits preached until 1773 ; as well as by the very plain church of the Lutherans, in the « German street », now inhabited by Jews. The Church of St. Theresa, which was begun in 1626, witnesses to a great Italian influence : it is in an irregular and primitive style, and possesses an imposing marble façade. In the Autokol quarter stands the massive stone Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the true irregular style ; it was consecrated in 1684 and contains a miraculous statue which is visited by thousands of believers.

Very picturesque processions of pilgrims also proceed to the Chapel of Ausros Vartai, which possesses a miraculous statue of the Virgin, who performs miracles both in the case of Roman Catholics, and of members of the Orthodox church. A religious silence still reigns in the dwellings of the monks of the Middle-Ages in the abandoned cloisters of the Holy Trinity and the Holy Spirit. Not only the churches but the ancient profane buildings whose romantic appearance break the monotony of the small streets and the wide expanse of roofs are a proof of the animated life which formerly reigned at Vilna.

The Ausros Vartai, a sixteenth century gateway which has been handed down to us intact, is an imposing part of the city's fortifications. Quite near to the Cathedral Square rises the Castle of Jagellon, which, dating from the sixteenth century, served as a residence for the Bishops of Vilna. Not far away, Stephan Batory, who had chosen the neighbouring town of Grodna as a favourite place of residence, laid the foundation stone of an Academy which the Tsar Alexander I transformed, in 1803, into a University. But its life was short ; for thirty years later it was suppressed. Since then the buildings have been used for various purposes. A collection of antiquities is installed there, as well as a library, which contains about ten thousand manuscripts, many of them of great value for the national history. In front of the castle stands a bronze statue of Count M. Mouraview, who, in 1865, succeeded in suppressing the Polish insurrection which also spread to Vilna. The former castle of Prince Sapieha — a palace of irregular style — is at present used as a military hospital and is in such a state of delapidation that it is hardly recognisable. Among the grass on the hill on which the castle stands, and whence a view can be obtained of the other side of the valley, as far as the Calvary, surrounded by woods, the ruins of the fortress of Gediminas speak silently of the Past.

Review of Press.

Lithuania and the English and American press.

Both the British Press and the British Public gave a hearty welcome to the first number of « Pro-Lithuania ». A number of important daily and weekly journals drew attention to the utility of informing the governing and intellectual classes on matters concerning so little-known a country as Lithuania. « The Publishers Circular », in particular, recognised our « *raison d'être* » and reprinted the article entitled « Was Kant a German ? »

Since this most encouraging reception, Lithuania has come more and more to the front in world politics. Hardly a day passes now without an article appearing in some influential publication on the subject we have so much at heart. The following account of hostilities on the Russian front by the Petrograd correspondent of « The Observer » may be taken as an example, — « the most lucid and picturesque picture of what has really happened to Russia with Germany at its heels », as « Public Opinion » aptly says, which we have yet seen : —

» Prosperous towns are being emptied of their wealth [and depleted of their population, and, one by one, reduced to mere skeletons of their former selves, are falling into the enemy's hands. Bielostok is on the brink of the advancing German line, and in a few days I suppose Vilna, the ancient and beautiful capital of Lithuania, the city of the famous Jagello dynasty, the goal of mediæval Teutonic ambition, will be under German administration.

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» In Poland and Lithuania roads and railways are fairly plentiful. Farther east the roads grow worse and fewer, and the railways far apart. East Prussia is now the chief German base of supplies, and it was because East Prussia with its fine railway system, was immediately in of twenty army corps against the Russian centre between Bielostok and the rear that the Germans directed the heaviest blow with a strength Brest.

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Report of the Letto-Lithuanian Conference held in Berne in August 3rd and 4th. — In the Westminster Gazette for Aug. 16th 1915, appeared a short and favourable notice concerning the above Conference. The W. G. as conclusion, mentioned the request of the Lithuanian for a large autonomy at the hands of the Allies.

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The « New-York American » published the other day a long interview with Professor Hans Delbrück on the question of the terms of peace which Germany hopes to secure. In addition to the usual items, the « freedom to the seas », a large indemnity to be paid by England, the return of all the German colonies, together with compensation for disturbance in the shape of Uganda and the French and Belgian Congos, the Professor declared that Germany intends to « liberate the smaller nationalities of Russia ». In this phrase he was presumably referring to the inhabitants of Russian Poland, the Baltic provinces, Lithuania, and the Ukraine ; through what he meant by the term « liberation » remains undefined.

Lithuanian nationalism manifests itself in two entirely different directions : as an anti-Germany force and as an anti-Polish force. Since the early thirteenth century Teuton, not Slav, has been the dominant factor in Livonia and Courland — the Lettish provinces of « Lithuania ». The Knights of the Sword and, later, the Livonian Order gave way, in the course of centuries, to a land-owning class almost exclusively composed of persons of German origin. To-day the total number of these is about two millions. The native Lettish peasantry under the dominion of Germans acquired the Lutheran religion and drew apart from their own kinsfolk who, under Polish tutelage, embraced Roman Catholicism. This is the principal explanation of the difference between the Letts and the Lithuanians. During the last thirty years Lettish nationality has developed rapidly. The policy of Russification adopted against German influences in the late eighties acted, in the long run, as a stimulus to the Letts. At the same time the tendency of the German residents, to buy out Lett farmers and replace them by German settlers, resulted in an influx of the peasantry into the towns — especially Riga — their entry into commercial life, and the creation of an educated middle-class. The Letts now have their own news papers and an incipient literature — including a national poet who lives in Florence. Hatred of the Germans continues, however, and is now probably stronger than ever. It will be remembered that in 1905 the Lettish peasantry rose up in revolt against its German landlords, and was only subdued by the Russian military authorities after a considerable amount of Lettish and German blood had been spilt. Lately we have read German complaints that the country through which the advance towards Riga

was made was found to be virtually a desert. The retreating Russian troops are said to have burnt all that lay in their path. It is more than probable that the Lettish peasantry assisted in this respect, since it was the property of « landowners » as well as « Germans » that was being destroyed. Of equal significance is the announcement that Lett volunteer battalions have been found in Riga. It will thus be seen that Lettish nationalism is of an economic rather than of a racial character. In the Duma the Lett deputies co-operate with their Estonian neighbours, race being entirely subordinated to economics.

Of the same race as the Letts, the Lithuanians have had a very different history. After the Union of Krevo (1385) and the consequent « conversion » of the whole country to Roman Catholicism, Lithuania and Poland spent two centuries in conflict, interrupted only by seven separate « unions », of which the least factitious was that of Lublin in 1569, commemorated on the spot by a black obelisk, still to be seen. There have always been Lithuanian patriots to denounce these « unions », the more so when their country was irretrievably dragged into dependence by the partitions of Poland. The quarrel of the Lithuanians with the Poles has, however, more recent fuel to feed on. The Lithuanian Congress held in Chicago last October agreed to a programme of independence, and at the same time sanctioned the formation of a Lithuanian Information Bureau, which is now established in Paris, and publishes a monthly review, *Pro Lithuania*. In this a bitter complaint is made against « ecclesiastical Polonisation ». It is alleged that the Polish clergy discountenance the use of Lithuanian in Lithuanian churches, in some cases by force. Rome is accordingly asked to sanction a Lithuanian archbishopric, with a nativeborn clergy. The ideals of the American Lithuanian nationalists include a reunion with the Letts, although this part of the programme is necessarily left vague.

The provinces for which the Lithuanians demand autonomy are Kovno, Suvalki, Vilna, and Grodno. The Ruthenes also put in a claim for part of Grodno. The absence of natural boundaries, in fact, is the most difficult feature of these various nationalist claims¹.

Lithuania and the French Press.

In the « *Matin* » for August 31 appeared under the title « What Europe owes to Russia », a leading article due to the pen of a Belgian writer M. Dumont-Wilden. This article written in a jingo spirit, exalts the barbarous methods of devastation applied by the Russian Staff in the Non-Russian Provinces of the Empire. We publish hereafter the letter of one of our contributors to the author of the above mentioned article.

¹ The above article was also reprinted by « *Stateman* » London.

« What Europe owes to Russia » : a reply.

« Sir,

« Only to-day has my attention been called to your article « *Ce que l'Europe doit aux Russes* », published in the « *Matin* » of August 31st.

« I in no way desire to contest the merits of the Russian nation and the services it has rendered humanity in the domains of art, literature and science. But, alas ! I cannot share your opinion as regards the services which Russia rendered Europe at the beginning of this fatal war.

« You claim that « the plains of Poland and Lithuania, which have seen the illusory victories of the Kaiser, will see his armies repass at full speed, more decimated, more demoralised, and more useless than the Grand Army of Napoleon was after the retreat from Russia. Those plains will be their tomb, and on that account civilised Europe owes the Russian people eternal gratitude. »

« First of all, allow me to point out that history does not repeat itself. There is reason to believe that the Kaiser's armies will take good care not to commit the same errors as those committed by the Grand Army of Napoleon. Conditions are very different from what they were a century ago, when railways, autocars and aeroplanes were non-existent. The Grand Army advanced along a clearly determined route, a few dozen kilometres in breadth, whereas to-day the German and Austro-Hungarian armies advance along a front of 1000 kilometres. The countries in which Napoleon's Grand Army operated a hundred years ago were four or five times less populated than those in which the Austro-German armies are fighting now.

« If it was permissible to turn the path of the Grand Army of Napoleon into a desert, it is a criminal act to-day to consign to the flames the possessions of tens of millions of innocent inhabitants, to uproot entire nations and transport them even as far as Siberia, where the climate and conditions of existence are quite different, — a country where the majority of these refugees — women, children and old men — are condemned to privations, fatigue and ill-treatment. See the enclosed translation of an article from the « *Rousskoie Slovo* » of August 5/18.

« Will the object in view be attained ? Will these unfortunate countries — Lithuania, Poland and the Ukraine — be the tomb of the Kaiser's armies, as you hope ? It is difficult to suppose so, with the means of communication at their disposal.

« In any case, we can already note that Lithuania, Poland and part of the Ukraine are the tomb of these wretched nationalities, who have been uprooted, dispersed, annihilated, and civilised Europe ought to reprove this crime against humanity, for the suppression and annihilation of a nationality is as great a crime as the killing of an individual.

« You say that the Russians possess more true civilisation because they have the sense of 'the humane'...

« Is it humane to cause hundreds of thousands of women, children and old people, without either shelter or food, to perish ? Is it humane to

burn alive refugees who, desirous of remaining in their native place, seek refuge in the forests? Is it humane to torture old people who prefer to perish under the ruins of their cottages rather than be condemned to exile?

« Sir, you are a Belgian, and therefore, after the trials heroically supported by the whole of the Belgian people, after having yourself publicly condemned the Louvain crime (I recollect having heard you speak at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Sociales), I am all the more astonished that you should approve of crimes quite as horrible, the victims of which are wretched defenceless populations, innocent of the bloody conflict which has broken out in Europe and who see their countries in the midst of fire and blood, their homes devastated, and their children brutalised by those whose cause they have loyally embraced. X

« Belgian refugees have been received with open arms in France, England and even in Holland. America has been touched by the lot of those of your compatriots who wished to remain in their native country. But the Lettish, Lithuanian, Polish and Ukrainian refugees, as well as the Jews, ordered to leave everything by the Russian authorities, have been treated worse than cattle, and have been condemned to perish with hunger on the rough road to exile.

« It would have been more natural for a Belgian to raise his voice in favour of these unfortunates (as you have nobly done for the Serbians in the « *Matin* ») than to sanction acts of cruelty which dishonour humanity.

« I would still believe that you have acted through ignorance, — your only excuse, moreover, for I should not like to think that among the sons of martyred Belgium there are many of your compatriots capable of making themselves the accomplices of such a crime by their approbation.

» Belgium is at present suffering under the heavy heel of the invader, who has become an oppressor, and if the Allies intend to restore her national independence to the heroic little nation, there is no reason why other small peoples should be condemned to perish under the hand of the great powers themselves, who have taken up arms in defence of the rights of nations and for the liberation of oppressed peoples. For we also, like the Belgians, are among those who do not wish to die, but hope that this war will bring the end of oppression, whatever form it may take, that we shall be allowed to live our national life in peace, and contribute our part to the progress of humanity and civilisation.

« I remain

« Yours very sincerely. »

J. G.

Lithuania and the German Press.

Light on the History of Vilna.

In the *Bund* (Berne) for Sept. 21. Published a leading article on Vilna certainly inspired by a Pole, and containing many mistakes

Wishing to rectify those mistakes, the Director of the Lithuanien Information Bureau sent to the editor of the *Bund* the following letter :

« Lausanne, Sept. 21st, 1915.

« To the Editor of the « Bund »,

« Sir,

« In to-day's « Bund » I find an editorial on Vilna, containing several inaccuracies which I think I ought to point out to you, with a request that they be rectified in your esteemed journal.

« Vilna has never been either a first or a second capital of a Polish « republic ». It has never ceased to be the capital of Lithuania. It was chosen in 1323 by Guedeminas, King of Lithuania, as the capital of his kingdom, which it remained, moreover, until the annexation of Lithuania by Russia. Even by the dynastic and political union of Lithuania with Poland (1569) Vilna never became a Polish town, for Lithuania always preserved its own government, quite independent of that of Poland, and the majority of the kings of the Lithuanian-Polish State preferred to reside in the capital of Lithuania rather than in the capital of Poland. The Lithuanians have jealously defended their rights, never permitting the Poles to interfere with their interior affairs.

« As regards the intellectual life of Vilna, it was solely the work of the Lithuanians themselves. Again, it is to Lithuanian writers, writing in Polish, — Mickiewicz, Kraszewski, Syrokomla, etc. — that we owe the masterpieces of which Polish literature is so proud. On the other hand, it is quite certain that the literary and national renaissance in Lithuania since 1905 is in no way due to Polish influence, since the Poles have hampered it in all sorts of ways, and have even resorted to the most violent methods.

« As to Vilna being a centre of « polish conspiracy » against the Russian Government, it was indeed a centre of agitation and conspiracy against the despotic government of the Tsars, but for the emancipation of Lithuania itself and not for the liberation of Poland.

« The author of the article states that the sentiments of the Lithuanian people, in conformity with their traditions (?), ought to be in unison with those of the Poles, in the national interest of the whole of Poland, in which the Lithuanians constitute a point of support, an « important » element. It is my duty to declare that this is leading the readers of the « Bund » into serious error, for the Lithuanians who wish to liberate themselves from all oppression and tutelage, whatever it may be, Russian or Polish, do not wish to work for the interests of Poland, but for the salvation and independence of their own country ; they desire to be able to work in peace for the development of their national culture.

« I beg to remain, Sir,

« Yours very sincerely,

« J. G. »

Chronicle.

Resolution voted by the Letto-Lithuanian Conference at Berne.

August 3-4, 1915.

The representatives of the Lettish and Lithuanian colonies abroad, having examined the situation of their country, now one of the arenas of the world-war, have resolved : —

1. To express their solidarity with the Allies, who are fighting for the liberty of nations, and to protest against the pillaging and assassination of peaceful inhabitants, as well as against the violation of national conventions.

2. To ask to recognise after the war the right of the Letto-Lithuanian people to a broad national autonomy, which alone can raise the country from its ruins.

This demand is based on the following claims : —

a) The Lithuanians and the Letts form two branches of a single nation, totally different from the Slav and Germanic races. To the number of seven millions, they inhabit a territory of 250,000 square kilometres, situated on the shores of the Baltic, in the valleys of the Niemen and the western Dvina, between Germany and Russia.

b) The Letto-Lithuanian people, thanks to the strength of their national conscience, their intellectual and material standing, hold one of the foremost places among the races of Russia.

c) The Lithuanian State from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries occupied a territory extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and rendered Europe great services by arresting in the east the Tartar invasion and the German rush from east to west.

3. In order to attain the desired object, to establish in common a National Council, a fund, a political information office, and to publish periodicals in Lettish, Lithuanian and foreign languages.

Protest by Letto-Lithuanians against the Barbarous measures of the Russian military authorities.

A group of Lithuanians and Letts gathered together in Switzerland to protest with the greatest energy against the inhuman treatment which has been inflicted on the unfortunate populations of Lithuania and Lettish countries, in spite of the fact that these peoples have, since the

beginning of the war, given evident proof of their loyalty, patriotism and spirit of sacrifice for the good of the cause of Russia and her Allies.

The Russian army, in retreating, has taken certain so-called strategical measures, destroying everything on its path, leaving a veritable desert behind it, and driving before it the whole of the population without exception — women, children and old people — a large number of whom have died of want and fatigue en route.

The unfortunate ones who persisted in wishing to remain in their homes were driven forth with the butt-ends of the soldiers' rifles, and those who took refuge in the forests were burnt alive, the Russian army having set fire to the trees to force the refugees to come out, willy nilly.

Several millions of the inhabitants of Lithuania and Lettish countries have been transported to distant provinces of the Empire — Archangel, Kazan and Siberia, where the very severe climate is quite different to their own. Moreover, there they are foreigners, amongst a population of different language and religion, and who for that reason are hostile to them. For instance, 10,000 Letts of Courland were driven from their homes by order of the Russian authorities and transported to a distant town in an eastern province of the Empire. Instead of coming to the assistance of these wretched people, who suffer for the cause of the Empire, the Russian Governor of the town drove them away without pity and abandoned them to their fate under the pretext that they were « Germans ».

Accordance to evidence collected on the spot, these formerly flourishing districts now present the lamentable aspect of a desert, and it will be many many years before conditions of existence there are again supportable.

These barbarous measures taken by the Russian General Staff cannot be explained by strategical reasons; rather are they due to political reasons, the object being to annihilate these populations or disperse them, and thus solve the problem of nationalities, whereas the Russians pretend they have taken up arms for the liberation of oppressed races.

The Letto-Lithuanian group gathered together in Switzerland to appeal to the civilised world to protest against the annihilation of an entire nation which, despite the numerous persecutions which it has suffered for more than a century past on the part of Russia, claims the right to live its own national life, and is stubbornly opposed to being annihilated and effaced from the map of the world by barbarous and perfidious measures which all civilised people will reprove.

The German Administration in Lithuania.

According to the « Frankfurter Zeitung » of August 19th, Prince Francis Joseph of Ysenburg-Birnstern, formerly chief of staff of the delegates of the commander in chief of the east for the administration of Russian Poland, has been appointed head of the German administration in Lithuania, with headquarters at Tilsitt.

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