

THE THEOSOPHIST

ADYAR AUGUST 1942



POLAND NUMBER

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY is a world-wide international organization formed at New York on 17th November 1875, and incorporated later in India with its Headquarters at Adyar, Madras.

It is an unsectarian body of seekers after Truth promoting Brotherhood and striving to serve humanity. Its three declared Objects are :

First—To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

Second—To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.

Third—To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.

The Theosophical Society is composed of men and women who are united by their approval of the above Objects, by their determination to promote Brotherhood, to remove religious, racial and other antagonisms, and who wish to draw together all persons of goodwill whatsoever their opinions.

Their bond of union is a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by service, by purity of life, and by devotion to high ideals. They hold that Truth should be striven for, not imposed by authority as a dogma. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or of intuition, and not its antecedent, and should rest on knowledge, not on assertion. They see every Religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefer its study to its condemnation, and its practice to proselytism. Peace is their watchword, as Truth is their aim.

Theosophy offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and demonstrates the inviolable nature of the laws which govern its evolution. It puts death in its rightful place as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to

the world the Science of the Spirit, teaching man to know the Spirit as himself, and the mind and body as his servants. It illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions by unveiling their hidden meanings, thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence as, in their original purity, they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition. The Society claims no monopoly of Theosophy, as the Divine Wisdom cannot be limited ; but its Fellows seek to understand it in ever-increasing measure. All in sympathy with the Objects of The Theosophical Society are welcomed as members, and it rests with the member to become a true Theosophist.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

As The Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the civilized world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasize the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of The Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher nor writer, from H. P. Blavatsky downwards, has any authority to impose his teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to attach himself to any teacher or to any school of thought which he may choose, but has no right to force his choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office, nor any voter, can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion he may hold, or because of membership in any school of thought to which he may belong. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties. The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of The Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of The Society, and also fearlessly to exercise his own right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

THE THEOSOPHIST

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The Theosophical Society, as such, is not responsible for any opinion or declaration in this journal, by whomsoever expressed, unless contained in an official document.

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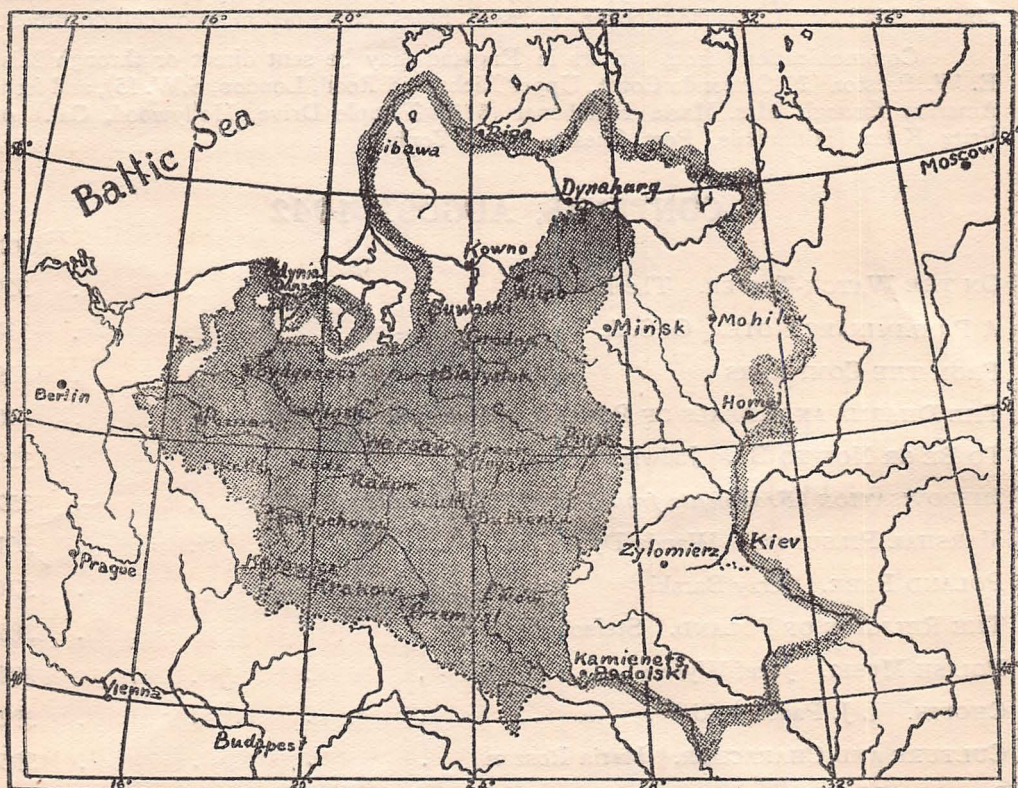
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Map of Poland (the shaded boundary line indicates Poland's extension before 1772).



ON THE WATCH-TOWER

BY THE EDITOR

IMPORTANT: These Notes represent the personal views of the writer, and in no case must be taken as expressing the official attitude of The Theosophical Society, or the opinions of the membership generally. "The Theosophist" is the personal organ of the President, and has no official status whatever, save in so far as it may from time to time be used as a medium for the publication of official notifications. Each article, therefore, is also personal to the writer.

LONG LIVE POLAND!

THIS issue of THE THEOSOPHIST is consecrated to that universal heroism in Poland whereby she remains free though bound in chains, whereby she remains whole though tortured beyond all power of description.

A SPIRITUAL BULWARK

As is written in one of the many admirable articles which I have the honour to publish thanks to the wonderful co-operation of Miss Wanda Dynowska, whose tireless energy for her beloved Motherland is one of the most remarkable and beautiful loyalties it has ever been

my privilege to admire, there is no Quisling in Poland, nor could there ever be one. And there is but one in splendid Norway. But in Poland all are patriots—men, women and children. There are none to fear death, even though there must be some who shrink from it: who would not? There are none to despair, and none to give up the struggle as hopeless. Poland is alive even under the unimaginable bestiality of the Germans. When peace comes as the result of an overwhelming crushing of the German people and their unspeakable leaders, Poland will, as in a flash of rebirth, arise and become more Polish than she has ever been,

closer to her great ideals, renewed as these will have been in the font of suffering; and her whole people will stand triumphantly erect and joyous under the red and white flag with its mighty eagle of resurrection. No land has ever been as ruthlessly trampled underfoot as has been Poland. No people have ever been as mercilessly cast into horrible slavery and killed as if they were vermin as have been the Polish people. Families have been torn asunder. Old grandfathers and grandmothers have been subjected to untold brutalities in the very presence of those who have loved and revered them. Children and young girls have been food for the lascivious brutalities of German soldiers and officers, and of German civilians sent to Poland to further all possible atrocities. Large numbers of girls have been sent to Germany to satisfy that sexuality which is part of Hitler's stock-in-trade for his offensive against morality. And whatever could be done to make the Polish people extinct has been done and is being done.

But nothing can succeed against that will of Poland which has been the cause of her dedication to be one of the spiritual bulwarks of western Europe against influences which otherwise might cause the destruction of a greater portion of Europe as Atlantis was destroyed. At one time Russia was a positive

danger to the rest of the Continent, and Poland was the barrier against the danger. Fortunately, Russia is with the Allies in the present struggle, and students of Theosophy in the inner recesses of the Science know that Russia has her own great future which she may seize if she will. It remains to be seen what she will do when the war is over.

No less has Poland her own great future which she has already seized in part, and is seizing more and more every day at the present time. Having been weighed in the balance of a crucifixion—adjectives fail me to describe its awfulness—Poland has not been found wanting, rather has she been found worthy of a resurrection which, perhaps, hardly another nation will be able to emulate.

I do not suggest that Poland has not sinned. Paderewski himself has written that misgovernment in Poland has to some extent made possible the retribution which now afflicts her. She has shown racial discrimination against the Jews, and she has joined with Germany in order to demand large territories from Czechoslovakia. But what nation is free from misgovernment? Is Britain free? Is France free? Is the United States free? Is Russia free? But I dare to say that no nation other than Germany has given itself over to evil in so terrible a manner. And I dare also to

say that no nation, whatever may have been its sins, has been called upon to expiate them as has Poland. Not that Germany is in Poland in any way as an agent of retribution. Far from it. On the contrary, Germany is in Poland because somehow or other she must satiate her lust for cruelty in all its forms and to the utmost possible extent. And when I say Germany, I do not merely mean her leaders, I also mean her people, who have given themselves in huge numbers to participate in the lust and to satisfy it. I say that the German people are criminally blameworthy for having allowed a Hitler to be born to enslave them, and I dare not say that we have no quarrel with a large proportion of the German people. Hitler and his evil crew must be given no quarter, not in a spirit of revenge but in a spirit of ensuring the safety of the world. But the German people as a whole must be rendered innocuous for precisely the same reason. I fear lest these sentiments may prove abhorrent to many of my readers, and I shall be quite glad to print a number of expressions of such abhorrence. But I am bound to speak my truth as I at present know it, or I should be false to my duty to those who have placed me in the great office which I have the honour to hold.

Even if I forgive in all the amplitude of real forgiveness, still

may it be my duty to judge and to chastise. But "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay" still remains magnificently true, for whatever we poor humans may do by way of trying to make the world safe for all souls to live in—including, of course, our brethren the animals—there must still remain the Justice of God who alone can know how even the most abandoned evil-doer shall be redeemed, as redeemed he must be.

A WARRIOR NATION

I want to say that I do not, nay, I dare not, pity Poland and her people. I am sure they do not pity themselves. Self-pity and the pity of others is abhorrent to them, for they know themselves to be warriors—they have ever been warriors—and whatever may be the suffering inflicted upon them because they are the hated Poles, of whom the Germans are mortally afraid or they would not treat them as they do, they never cease to thank God they are Poles, inheritors of a sacred land, and its destined guardians in the future, let the Germans do what they can in their impious efforts to obliterate both land and people.

Also do I want to say that Poland is undergoing no humiliation, any more than the Christ was humiliated when He was crucified to death. A people like the Polish people can never be humiliated. They can

only be purified and strengthened. And this is exactly what is happening to them all today, happened to them yesterday, and may still have to happen to them until the Allied Army of Liberation purges Europe of the monsters who have been fattening on it in cruelty and in hatred. I do not think that any people on earth could be humiliated by any savagery however devastating. Or should I rather say that no people could be humiliated whose soul resisted even though its body might be broken to pieces?

Poland's women and children have been the victims of inconceivable abuse. Countless numbers have been infected so that they shall not give health but only disease to their people. Countless numbers have been killed just to make their captors laugh. Yet they have resisted to the utmost of their power, and countless numbers more have committed suicide rather than suffer dishonour. Young boys who have had the courage to jeer at the Germans walking in Polish streets, have been shot down or frightfully tortured for their bravery. Priests have witnessed the desecration of all that has been most sacred to them, and have been killed when they sought in some way to protect the holy things of the Church. The age-old and wonderful Churches throughout the land have been despoiled of their sacred objects, and we are told that there is not a

sacred place in Poland—and there are many sacred places—which has survived the savage iconoclasm of marauding parties of Germans. And as for the Jews no words are strong enough to depict the awful horrors through which they have passed and are still passing—old and young, men, women and children alike.

A NOBLE EXAMPLE

Yet, because of this, the spirit of Poland is, perhaps, as it has never been before. The sacredness of Poland is even more glorious than it ever has been. The forms have gone. But the life is more brilliant than ever. The children of Poland shall be a new and beautiful race, with a unique heritage of heroism on the part of the children who have gone before them, dying for their country. The young men and the young women, together with their younger and older fellow-citizens, have stood firmly and boldly against the oppressor, and thus have set a noble example to the whole world. The older citizens and even the very old have often sought suffering and persecution out of their vibrant patriotism.

Indeed, when I visited Poland and some of her great cities many years ago, I was deeply impressed by the almost passionate love of every Pole for his country, for freedom, and for that Polish culture some aspects of which are described

in various articles in this issue, and which is distinctive and unique. The spirit everywhere was a martial spirit, born, I could see, of the terrible vicissitudes through which this great land has passed for well over a century. Poland has never known aught but suffering. But for this very reason her people have come to worship their land and its living traditions with a fervour unequalled by any other nation. They had to be patriots, or their country could never have survived, and the present tragedies, greater than she has heretofore borne, have only evoked a patriotism still more burning among one and all.

Poland was the first country in Europe to bear the full brunt of German atrocities, and although Britain had promised to her all possible support I am afraid that in fact none was forthcoming, be the reasons for this what they may. Her army was stubbornly valiant. But it was ill-equipped. How could it have been otherwise, desperately poor as Poland has ever been? And in these degenerate days no valour, however magnificent, can stand against the science which evil creates for its onslaught upon Good. The Polish heroes were simply mown down in their thousands. The Polish forts were easily reduced to dust even though they were most heroically defended, often at last by a mere handful when their opponents were sure that the

strongest possible force must be entrenched in defence of the crumbling ruins. City after city, town after town, village after village, succumbing to the evils of science, were looted in the most savage manner, and their inhabitants were either killed, or ravaged, or enslaved to masters who far surpassed all slave-drivers of the olden days in cruelty and in capacity to invent the most horrible tortures; or were in their thousands driven into Germany and Russia by foes who were able to reduce tyranny to a fine art.

And all the while Europe looked on. Today we have the United Nations to battle against the powers of evil. But then it was just Poland against Germany, a free, proud and unconquerable people, poor almost to starvation, but blessed by the holiest traditions, against the soulless and conscienceless might of Germany.

THE NATURE OF THIS WAR

But as I write these words it comes to me in stern reminder that unrighteousness still holds sway throughout the world. This war is not merely a war between the Allied and the Axis Powers. It will not cease when the Allies win, however overwhelmingly. It will only cease when Righteousness wins the victory over unrighteousness in every department of human life. Everywhere wrong is being done to the children of God—be it to

human beings or to sub-human beings. There is war going on between the human and the sub-human kingdoms, and among the humans themselves. Taking the example of Poland, we think of the wrong done there in terms of the human kingdom. But what of the devastation wrought in the kingdoms of the birds and animals, of the trees and flowers, of the mineral creatures, and of the sacred soil itself? All the life of God has been desecrated in Poland and elsewhere. When and how will there be retribution for all this? We talk of the resurrection of stricken humanity. Is there to be no resurrection for God's other crucified creatures? What sort of justice is it that takes only the human kingdom into account? The soil of Poland must arise out of its awful crucifixion, and the trees and flowers and corn and grass, and the birds and all animals. So, too, must the denizens of the mineral kingdom arise no less. Fantastic and absurd this may sound to those who have no conception of the unity of all Life, who do not know that all Life, in whatever form and kingdom of nature, must rise together. Yet there can be no heaven for any one of us which has not created or enriched the heavens of the rest of that Life which is forever moving heavenwards.

There can be no lasting victory for the Allies, certain though a

temporary victory is, which does not include victory for Poland and for all other countries which have had to endure the savagery of Germany and of Japan. There can be no victory for the Allies which does not include victory for China the Great. And let the Allies remember that they have lamentably failed in their obligations both to those countries in Europe which had to meet the first shock of the war without any equipment wherewith to meet it except the unquenchable spirit of their souls, and also to China, so shamefully and callously neglected by the very countries whose moral sense was found so weak and timid at the moment of its trial.

THE PLIGHT OF CHINA

The plight of Poland is awful. But I almost think that the plight of China is still more awful, for China, as I write, is at her last gasp, and may soon succumb to Japan if material help other than cheap and useless words be not at once forthcoming. There is talk now of a second Front in Europe. But the Front of which I cannot help thinking more than of any other Front is the Front which includes China, and of which India is an integral part. China has suffered for five years, and the spiritual debt to her is very heavy upon every western nation, but especially upon the United States and

Britain. Reuter put the matter very clearly in a despatch from Chungking dated June 15th—the date of my writing these notes for the August Watch-Tower :

The hope of a free China which dominates all others now is that something will occur to divert the Japanese onslaught from this country. This is not saying China will not grimly continue her general defensive against the enemy which has now come to symbolize for China all that is repulsive and repressive. The clearest minds here are aware that, apart from air transport, there is no possibility of an early supply connection with India.

People of the Allied nations should fully understand that China is now a besieged country. While the Chinese accept the opening of a second front in Europe as a development of the Anglo-Soviet agreement, Chungking not unnaturally is most interested in the effect of the agreement on Japan. Should a Japanese attack on Siberia be precipitated, it will be recalled that this week the Chinese indicated they would regard the Siberian front as a common front. Yet the fact cannot be glossed over that Japan is also positioned for a drive against the Yunnan province down here in the south-west. Resistance to this would have to be given with the utmost resolution particularly in the event of a twin drive from Indo-China as well as from Burma.

THE WARRIOR THEOSOPHIST

I hope that by the time this issue of THE THEOSOPHIST appears there will be some payment of the

debt to China from the United States and Britain. Of course, India can do next to nothing—just a medical mission or two, and these not from the Indian Government but from the Indian National Congress. The approach to China through Burma is entirely cut off, thanks to the strategic superiority of the Japanese in all their campaigns. But if Britain and the United States could for a short time each deflect an odd thousand aeroplanes for a few intense lightning raids upon the Japanese forces in China, or even possibly upon inflammable Tokyo, the relief to China might be very great. Something must be done, for if China falls there will be great shame both to the United States and to Britain. Perhaps something is preparing even now which will have worked wonders before the August issue of THE THEOSOPHIST appears with these out-of-date Watch-Tower notes. I pray that a surprise may be in store for Japan without delay. But what strange statements and opinions I am giving in this THEOSOPHIST of ours. Dedicated to the spread of Universal Brotherhood, is it not strange that I, also a very ardent Theosophist like those who read these words, feel not only able to write as I am writing, but also feel it my duty to write, *as a Theosophist* and as an out-and-out believer in that Universal Brotherhood which so

obviously must include the Germans and the Japanese and the Italians as we know it to include our own respective countries?

We have to learn to stand courageously for the righteousness which happens to be ours at our particular stages of evolution, as well as against that which to us is unrighteousness. And we have to learn to do this within a Universal Brotherhood which we know and feel and perceive to include all righteousness and unrighteousnesses. Our sense of Universal Brotherhood becomes greater as we are able to hold it perfectly amidst all opposites. Thus can we fight foes who we know are really friends. They *are* foes, and for the sake of our Truth we must fight them and strive to reduce them to impotence, denouncing them in such language and in such ways as we may deem expedient. But behind all this there will be in the Theosophist the sense of Brotherhood with them all, especially in its aspect of compassion. A Theosophist cannot bear rancour. He cannot hate. He cannot be revengeful nor wreak vengeance. But he can and must declare his Law and his righteousness, and this is what I try to do through the medium of these Watch-Tower notes.

I want to conclude this Watch-Tower with a note on Poland which I wrote last year for the Poland issue of our little weekly paper *Conscience*. Here it is:

BELOVED POLAND

My memories of beloved Poland are unforgettable. Even before I actually landed on her shores I was drawn to her not only because of her tragic yet heroic history but also because she formed an integral part of the India of the West, together with Ireland and one or two other countries. I knew I should discover a western incarnation of India in this eastern land of Europe—an India in terms of the West, a people afire with love of their Motherland, but no less impregnated with that wonderful mysticism which one associates with some of the eastern parts of Europe.

We reached Warsaw by train from Paris, passing through Berlin on our way, and were met by a number of our fellow-members at the railway station and taken off to a flat belonging to a little Theosophical community living and working in the city. I was first of all struck by the great poverty of the people, both in Warsaw itself and in the country as we travelled from the Polish frontiers. But I soon saw that this very poverty inspired a tremendous love for Poland and a resolve in the hearts of all to cherish her and to sacrifice to the uttermost for her.

We soon made friends with numbers of residents in Warsaw, partly because of our very real love for Poland and of our expression of that love in deep appreciation

of her history, her arts, her simplicity, and the fineness of her people. I gave some public lectures during our stay, and on each occasion I did myself the honour of paying tribute to Poland's wonderful individuality as an independent nation, and to the great service she rendered to western Europe by the fact of her being a bulwark between a Russia about which at the time nothing could be predicted and from which there was much to fear by way of iconoclasm and a Europe which would certainly have become barbarian were she to be overrun by the Russia as she then was.

I think the Warsaw public appreciated my very sincere homage, for the garrison of Warsaw was good enough to give a party in our honour at which a military band discoursed to us magnificently on Chopin and thrilled me beyond words. And to make our visit even more memorable we were received by Poland's great hero—the Marshal Pilsudski, to be in whose presence was a veritable benediction.

We were also able to visit Cracovia and Czenstohowa, where we were privileged to bow before a picture of the Virgin Mary truly eastern in garb and in colouring of skin—a great relief from the innumerable representations which cause Her to appear as a European. Both these places were fragrant

with the mysticism and gorgeous ornateness of the religious worship of eastern Europe, and it was indeed touching to watch the abandoned fervour displayed by the poor and the rich alike towards the sacred objects in their cathedrals and churches. I had and have no doubt whatever that there are in Poland, hallowed from aforetime, sacred places constituting the Valhallas of Poland's greatness, and I am sure that Cracovia is the heart of them all.

With very personal horror I have read of the unspeakable atrocities perpetrated upon this great land by the savage hordes of Germany, for I have many friends whose fate must have been awful, especially those friends who happen to be of the Jewish persuasion. I know well that starvation is one of the least of the ills from which the Polish people have to suffer, and I wonder reverently at the heroism which survives the terrible bestialities of the German oppressors.

Poland is in the midst of an inconceivable degradation, and has been crucified far beyond the limits of endurance. But she shall arise. A great resurrection shall be hers—all the greater for the hell the anti-Christ Hitler and his tools have fashioned for her.

Poland does not give up hope even now in the midst of her agony. She suffers as no other nation throughout the world has ever

suffered. She has been compelled to probe the abyss of martyrdom to its uttermost depths. She would seem to the onlooker to be helpless and hopeless. But she is neither. The spirit of her people LIVES! It is unquenchable, and will emerge all the more radiant for its long-drawn-out subjection, but

never surrender, to the forces of evil.

Long live Poland! The whole world needs her, both for the most noble example she is setting to every country, and for the great message she will speak to the world when the war is over and her resurrection is at hand.

George S. Arundale

A PRELIMINARY NOTE

It must be clearly understood that while THE THEOSOPHIST is happy to offer the hospitality of its columns to a number of writers who desire, in these dark days of their Motherland, to pay tribute to the splendour that is Poland, it cannot and does not necessarily endorse the views they express. Each article represents the individual opinions of its writer, and its readers must decide for themselves the value to be attached to them.

But any help that can be given Poland must surely be given, for she has been bearing with unexampled heroism sufferings so far endured by no other country except China. The brunt of the present war has to a large extent fallen upon this great little country, for not only did she fight with her armies until she could fight no longer, but even now she is fighting with the whole of her population against the devils who

are drinking her blood and are seeking in vain to deprive her of her age-old honour. There are no Quislings in Poland—only heroes and heroines, patriots one and all.

G. S. ARUNDALE

Our Cover Design

The design on the front cover of this special Poland issue of THE THEOSOPHIST is by Kalākshetra's art department. The artist has placed the crowned eagle, the national symbol of Poland, high against the background to give the effect of the Nation's resurrection and ascension. The decorative missal type is used in illuminated manuscripts and liturgies. The artist, Mr. Alex. Elmore, is the director of dramatic studies in Kalākshetra, and a keen student of heraldry.

J. L. D.

FROM THE COMPILERS

"Culture is the expression of the inner rhythm, of the spiritual tone of a nation or race. This mysterious rhythm is hidden in the soul, in the very blood of a nation, it is revealed in her great men, in the events of her history, in her religion and art, speech and customs, as well as her relations to others and her approach to the great problems of existence. Culture is not based on learning nor wealth, it does not depend on big cities, rich trade and industries, nor on powerful armies—these concern rather civilization—nor is it the creation of the brain alone. Culture depends on the purity of expression of the soul of a nation, and the nearer she is to the great realities of life, the higher will be her culture."

In the following articles we are trying to show something of this inner tone of Poland's Soul, something of her eternal Individuality, and of her Dharma in the great family of nations. If in our endeavour to see and to reveal the Real and the Beautiful—the only permanent—we may sometimes create the impression of overpraising or idealizing Poland, we must state that it is not our purpose nor our intention. Nor is it due to the fact that we belong in this incarnation to Poland. We could speak with the same admiring delight about the inner WORD of any other nation, of the life of God it reveals. Being Poles we may have a deeper insight, a richer understanding of the Ray and the path of this nation, but we also feel more keenly all her defects and weaknesses than any outsider could do; self-criticism being one of the Polish characteristics, recognized even by our foreign friends, Mr. P. Super¹ says: "We need and indeed can say nothing against the Poles which they have not already said about themselves."

We are trying to show in the light of spiritual valuation the idealistic tendencies in Polish history, in her socio-political structure, art, religion, and some peculiar traits of Polish character, without labelling them good or bad, as they are also the expression of the Ray of the nation.

We are trying to show what was the mission of Poland through the ages and to understand her role in the future of mankind, as from its faithful fulfilment depends all her service to humanity. To seek the Divine in man and in nations, its ways and forms of expression through personalities down here, is in our understanding a spiritual and Theosophical approach to life.

It is in this spirit that we speak here about Poland.

Rumania—Palestine—India, 1941-42

¹ Mr. P. Super—Director of the American Y.M.C.A., residing fifteen years in Poland, author of several valuable books on Polish culture.

THE DHARMA AND IDEALS OF POLAND

IF the historical development of Poland has followed a different course from that of other European countries, we may see its cause as well in her purely Slavonic temperament as in the role assigned to her by Karma and partly revealed in her geographical position. In the very middle of Europe, on a cross road from East to West; at the "gate" through which all hordes of barbarians were pouring—a danger to Christian culture; between two powers with utterly different aims and civilization from her own, both foreign to her ideals, both with ambitions and tendencies endangering her very existence; with no natural boundaries, no natural protection against continual pressure and menace. This has contributed to no small extent to the development of a vivid, although often half-conscious, recognition of the supreme importance of the moral, the spiritual power.

Their passionate love for Freedom the Poles have brought probably from past incarnations, as it manifested itself from the very beginning of their national existence, accompanied by respect for the

freedom of others, no desire to deprive anybody of it, a complete lack of the aggressive spirit.

The role of the protector of Europe and Christianity from the repeated onslaughts of the Tartars and Turks, has been accepted by Poland with readiness and joy, and of no title has she been more proud than that of the "Rampart of Christianity."

This was fully justified as the uninterrupted development of western nations and the blossoming of Christian culture were safeguarded from the twelfth to the seventeenth century by the Polish sword, by the sacrifice of Poland's knighthood, and often of her own immediate interests. These Polish Crusades lasted longer and were more exacting than those of the west, but they greatly helped to develop the Polish type of chivalry and nobility characteristic and prominent in all her culture and history. This part of Poland's Dharma has been fulfilled with honour and glory.

The second was of the same warrior type, it was the protection of all Slavdom from the pressure of her western neighbours, who have from prehistoric times and

later under the pretext of converting Slavs to Christianity massacred whole clans, menacing the very existence of the race. Had the Poles been less brave and skilled in warfare, and had they not loved freedom above all, they would have been exterminated as the weaker western Slavonic tribes, then living as far west as where Berlin lies now.

In the thirteenth century the Teutonic Order of the Knights of the Cross, a military Order under religious guise, captured Pomerania with Danzig, massacred its Polish population, spreading terror and devastation in all neighbouring countries and soon became a grave threat to the whole of Central Europe and to the very existence of Poland and Lithuania. It was understood by both the countries, and when a union between them was achieved, a formidable battle at Grünwald—1410—took place, breaking the power of the Order, saving Slavdom. The importance of this "Crusade" for the further development of central European countries could hardly be enough emphasized. English historians call it rightly "one of the decisive battles of humanity," and Dr. Falk¹ "the greatest battle for national freedom since the times of Persian wars." If Poland became a great State, shining with learning and culture in the sixteenth century, it

was due to this victory; if the Czechs could develop freely, if the Russian free cities of Novgorod, Smolensk, Pskov have not been germanized like Königsberg, Memel, etc., which were purely Slavonic settlements, it was due to this victory.

We may say that the unabated fight with the German *Drang nach Osten* on the battle-fields, as well as the protection of Slavonic culture from the infiltration of German influences, utterly foreign to the Slav spirit, has been one of the important parts of Poland's Dharma, from prehistoric times till our own days. A long, exhausting, tragic fight.

To understand the Dharma of Poland towards her other neighbours, we have first to examine her ideals at home and the extent to which she was able to express them in her life and structure. Let us remember that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries feudalism and autocracy reigned on the whole Continent, reaching its most extreme and rough forms in the two neighbours of Poland, where the prince or ruler was the owner of the whole State or Duchy, responsible to none, his despotic authority having no limits. A noble or *boyar* (Russian noble) had no rights even to his property or family, he could not marry without the consent of the ruler nor leave the country without his permission,

¹ Lecturer in Polish and Slavonic philology and culture at the University of Calcutta.

he had no influence on his country's affairs, could not express his opinion on any public matter without the risk of prison and tortures, without trial—he was simply a toy of his ruler's fancies. And the lowest classes, the peasants, were treated like beasts; no rising in status, no ennoblement was ever possible for them. Religious tolerance did not exist even in most progressive and enlightened countries; persecutions of Jews, of heretics, fights between Catholics and Protestants, stakes and tortures were general. Not one country can state its history was free of these horrors.

Let us now look at Poland's life during the same period, and quote plain historical facts. Poland was the only country in Europe which never had any religious war, where not a single creed or sect has ever been persecuted or oppressed, from the beginning of ages till today. This toleration is simply in the blood of the nation. The Jews in times of atrocious persecution in other countries were flocking to Poland where they enjoyed during many centuries the largest measure of self-government, having their own Courts and even a central governing body, where they could live and practise their religion as they liked. The Jewish historian Moses Schorr writes: "The deep respect for the human dignity of every Jew was universal in Poland,

contrary to all other countries of those times."¹

The Armenians in Poland had their Statutes and Courts, their Metropolitan Bishop and self-governing institutions and churches. About Protestantism Mr. P. Super writes: "Poland is the only great country in Europe, where the Protestant Reformation was given a fair trial without war or official persecution. It failed not because of repression, but for the reason that it simply did not suit the Pole. This treatment of Protestantism is one of the brightest gems in Poland's crown. It continues to-day, as I, a Protestant, can testify. The result is that probably nowhere else in the world are Catholic-Protestant relations so good and wholesome as in Poland."

Before we turn to the sociopolitical life of Poland, let us quote the words of Professor Robert Howard, of Harvard, summing up the chief principles at the basis of Poland's life: "The Poles possessed a great enthusiasm for freedom in almost every branch of life, the principle of the sovereignty of the nation calling to citizens to participate in the responsibility of the Government, the conception of a State as not a thing existing for itself, but as an instrument serving

¹ In his book *Reichstellung und innere Verfassung der Juden in Polen*, Berlin, 1917. And Mr. Rosenfeld in his book *Polen und Juden*, Berlin, 1917, says: "If we are striving for national autonomy it is the memory of what we possessed in olden times in Poland that is guiding us,"

the wellbeing of the society, aversion to absolute monarchy, standing armies and militarism, disinclination to make aggressive wars, but remarkable tendency to make voluntary unions with other people." In the first Polish Statutes—1347—there was no capital punishment (this was introduced far later), the severest crimes were punished by exile. The outrage of honour was treated on a par with murder.

Democracy was in the blood of the Poles, a high standard of citizenship developed early; the love of the Republic had something religious in it, to spend one's fortune in the service of the "Serenissima Respublica" was regarded as equal to direct service of God, expressed in other countries of those times by the building of temples or monasteries, or by deeds of charity. And the freedom and rights she gave to her citizens were indeed unique. The so-called "constitutional principles"—personal security, security of the home and of private property, freedom of associations, of faith, speech, press and opinions¹—principles for the establishment of which blood was

shed and violent revolutions raged in other countries even as late as the nineteenth century, were introduced in Poland in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and were never transgressed till the end of her independent existence.

Political freedom also developed early, the parliamentary system was definitely organized in the middle of the fifteenth century. The constitution "Nihil Novi," basis of all the political life of Poland till her next Constitution of 3 May 1791, was an epoch-making event; the King undertook to issue no law, to declare no war, without the consent of the Assembly of Deputies, called the "Seym." The Chief Seym, consisting of the House of Commons (composed of Deputies elected by universal suffrage at the local Assemblies of the provinces and of free cities), and the Senate—the King as the third element—was the supreme authority of the State. Deliberations of the Seym were open and decisions were taken unanimously. To understand the spirit of the Polish parliamentary system one must know some facts and take into account some peculiarities of the Polish attitude towards socio-political activities. Politics were to a certain extent the physical-plane religion of the Pole; this explains the passionate, sometimes almost fanatical spirit brought into it till our days. Hence the Seym

¹ Nobody could be imprisoned without a legal sentence, except if caught *in flagrante* committing the crimes of murder, theft, incendiarism, looting. No home of any citizen could be searched by any authority; the King could not deprive anybody of his private property without the sentence of the Court. No person could be prosecuted for opinions, however revolutionary they might be; a citizen who denounced another for his opinions was himself punished as disturbing order and common freedom.

differed from corresponding Assemblies in other countries, it partook rather of the nature of a Council of the Church. The Chief Sejm, duly assembled, was regarded as being under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. This was a dogma of the Polish Constitution. And earnest advice was given to attend it with a purified heart, after Confession and Holy Communion, with an uplifted and concentrated mind. Every Deputy was regarded as called to perform a kind of sacred ritual. It is in this spirit that the writers of the sixteenth century speak of the Sejm.

It was the centre of the *moral* life of the nation, when a decision was taken, its chief work was over, the voluntary co-operation of all in the execution of its will was the rule. If it was a matter of war, all the gentry had the duty to come fully armed to their respective regiments. The same in finance: the Sejm voted the general taxes, and often richer citizens voluntarily paid up for a whole district, collecting the dues without any benefit to themselves. The offices and public services were never paid out of the State Treasury.

The work of the Courts was also based on the same principle of voluntary co-operation of the citizens. Most often no force was used to bring the accused to the judge, or to take him to prison to undergo the sentence. To evade

the verdict of the Court was regarded as cowardice, a worse infamy than any other crime.¹

The citizen of those times regarded his allegiance to the Republic as not due to his ancestry, but to his own free choice: he wedded her, as it were, recognizing her as most just and worthy, but he wanted in return the right not to have to submit automatically to any opinion of others, rather to be convinced by them. This was the origin of the famous law of "free protest"—*Liberum Veto*. It was practised in some religious bodies in the Middle Ages, and on their example was introduced into the Polish Sejm. It is easy to criticize it, it has been amply done by a host of our historians, but one cannot help recognizing that it was based on an extreme reverence for the freedom of the individual conscience, and the idea that the majority must never do violence to the minority. As Mickiewicz says: "The history of Poland cannot be understood without going deeper into the religious spirit behind Polish political institutions of those times. The whole edifice of the State was built on goodwill, a high sense of

¹ There were many examples of rich and powerful people voluntarily delivering themselves into the hands of Justice; and even extreme ones of some being for a previous offence condemned to death by a Polish Court during their stay abroad and returning deliberately to submit to the sentence. Such was the spontaneous respect for the Laws of the Republic.

citizenship and virtue, on the best of the Polish qualities, it was a full trust placed in every citizen." What a risk, what an excess of idealism! Certainly. But one day such idealism, such trust in man, will become a matter of course to humanity and there will be no more danger in introducing it into politics. Poland may have done it too early. Mr. Ch. Phillips¹ says of her: "Poland amongst the nations has been like one born before her time." She was living in the future. Poles must not be ashamed of such a pioneering idealism, rather of the next period of history, proving that the nation as a whole was not ready for the success of such an experiment.

And yet that this principle was not utterly impracticable was proved by the fact that nearly for three hundred years it worked quite well in the Polish Sejm, the minority always voluntarily submitting, the majority using patience and respect in winning it to its own views. Of course, when the moral tone of citizenship declined, and self-will, indiscipline and meanness gained the upper hand, the whole edifice began to crumble. That was the danger inherent in the Polish Constitution. It was recognized by the nation herself and changed in her next Constitution.

The Polish Constitution was democratic and republican also because the King was since 1572 a kind of elected-for-lifetime President, and the ruling class of the gentry was very numerous, the largest in Europe. The percentage of voters was larger in Poland of the sixteenth century than in France of the eighteenth.

The gentry was not a uniform class as in other countries, it was composed of four groups: great magnates, owners of large estates, equal to the Duchies of the west; smaller landowners, corresponding to the English gentry; then a very numerous class of poor gentry, called "gray," owners of small farms, cultivated generally by their own labour, economically equal to peasants, politically far above them, (they never left their swords, even working in the fields, as a sign of their "Kshatriya" caste); and finally a still larger and poorer landless group of gentry, occupying small offices, serving in manor houses, etc. Its origin was chiefly ennoblement, which was very easy in Poland. It was conferred not by the King, but by the nation—the Sejm; the qualifications were personal merits or valour and self-sacrifice on the battle-field. On whole villages and generations the title of nobility was often bestowed. Every professor of the Cracow Academy became automatically a noble. Even some baptized Jewish

¹ Representative of the American Red Cross in Poland in 1918-22, author of a good book, *The New Poland*.

families, held in such contempt in other countries, have been since the sixteenth century received for personal merits into the nobility. Equality and brotherhood reigned among these four groups, in spite of differences in wealth and social rank. The highest aristocrat, the Chancellor of the State, would call a poor landless man, according to immemorial tradition, "my brother," or "sir brother," and treat him as an equal.

This makes clear a point generally misunderstood abroad, why Poland was called "a nation of nobility" and was at the same time, since the fifteenth century, the most democratic on the Continent.

The relations between the King and the nation were also since the Middle Ages characteristic, utterly different from those in the neighbouring countries, where autocracy and servility were the rule. One can criticize the adoption of free elections of Kings by the Republic and demonstrate the harm it has done, but a nation which did not want any form of absolutism, was seeing far greater dangers in the hereditary throne.

The attitude of the citizens towards the King was one of reverence but also of dignity and self-respect, vividly felt by every one of the gentry. They regarded the King as a moral authority, a worshipful head of the Federation, symbol of the majesty of the Re-

public, but they never knew what fear of the King meant, and he did not display the slightest autocracy. Poland did not know what conspiracy against the King meant: during her eight hundred years' history and forty Kings not even once did any act of terrorism or planning of it occur,¹ and the King never used any guard or secret protection, as he felt supremely safe in the midst of his people. The Poles met their Monarchs in an open, manly, chivalrous way; there was a point in the Constitution which allowed the nation to be freed from her allegiance to the King if he was wilfully and repeatedly breaking his oaths and the laws of the country, as it was a two-sided contract. Of course it could only exist in a State where the principle, "the King for the nation, not the nation for the King," was generally recognized.

We may now understand why the Polish Republic possessed such a tremendous attractive power which brought other countries into free and voluntary union with her. She was in reality the pioneer of the free Commonwealth of Nations since the fifteenth century. The first Union with Lithuania began with personal bonds between the two ruling families, but it grew closer and closer as the result of

¹ A note on King Sobieski in the December 1939 number of THE THEOSOPHIST implies an utterly wrong statement of conspiracy against him.

the decisions of both Parliaments. Its basis was: "Free with free, equal with equal." The King, the Parliament, external friends and foes were common, but the inner administrative institutions—courts, finances, armies—were different in both countries. It was not the only Union. In 1454 some German principedoms seeking protection against the rapacity of the Knights of the Cross asked Poland for admission into the Federation, Danzig was admitted and enjoyed a large autonomy; in 1561 the Duchy of Livonia (the present Latvia), a small, chiefly Protestant land, menaced by Moscow, preferred a Union with Catholic Poland to that with Protestant Sweden or Denmark, because it knew that with Poland its autonomy would be safeguarded. In 1658 another important Union with Ukraine was achieved. All these Unions were free, no compulsion or pressure was ever used.

We now see that Poland's Dharma towards her neighbours was to radiate Freedom and to awaken in other peoples the appreciation and desire for the freedom of the individual. Towards Russia Poland's Dharma was the same. Prince Dolgorukov in his book, *Vérité sur la Russie* (Paris, 1890), wrote: "Contact with Poles had shown the Russian boyars to what degrading slavery they were subject. All boyars in Moscow desired civil

liberties like those of Poland." On a strong request of theirs Tsar Vasili Shuyski signed—in 1608—a document in which he promised not to confiscate private property, not to execute anybody without the sentence of the Court. During the reign of the same Tsar there was a large party of influential boyars who wanted a Union with Poland, on similar lines to Lithuania; it would have had a signal influence on the history of Europe. It failed due to the orthodoxy of both the Churches. Yet traces of this first constitution, an attempt to introduce a Parliamentary system and Law Courts on the Polish model, lasted till the time of Peter I; it is only he who definitely destroyed all its vestiges and took to German examples. Hundreds of boyars escaped to Poland during his reign, as they could not bear the persecution.

Poland shone as an example of Freedom—realized and expressed during the ages of her power, and passionately loved and fought for during the age of its loss. The Poles always believed that the freedom of their country is only a part of Universal Freedom, they understood that by fighting tyranny in any part of the world they served Poland also, because Freedom is one. Hence they became soldiers of Universal Freedom. That is why Kosciuszko fought and Pulaski died for the freedom of America; that is why the insurgents

of 1830 wrote on their standards: "For our freedom and yours." One sees Poles in France, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Austria, fighting for "their" freedom. Karl Marx said of the Poles: "They help to destroy the feudalism of Europe," and: "The reconstruction of a democratic Poland is the first condition of existence of democratic Germany."

A Russian contemporary writer, Balmont, writes: "Poland was a country of freedom amongst autocratic States. At the time of her downfall she possessed such liberties as no other country in Europe, and this was dangerous for the surrounding absolutism," it was clearly expressed by the Chancellor of Empress Catherine—Bezborodko—in 1794: "The opinions and institutions of the Poles are contagious, the infection may easily spread." In 1905 at the first Russian "Duma" (Parliament), the voices of the newly admitted Polish Deputies outweighed the opposition to the agrarian reform of Russia. As a result their number was reduced from 30 to 12.

If we now look back on the historical path of Poland we have to agree that it followed a course opposite to all the States on the Continent, that it was a peculiar one; it had some common points only with England of those times, and much more with U. S. A. of today. The American professor,

Mr. Lord, writes: "The old Polish State was an experiment of a highly original and interesting character. It was the largest and most ambitious experiment with a republican form of Government that the world has seen since the days of the Romans. Moreover it was the first experiment on a large scale with a federal republic, down to the times of the United States. Like the United States today Poland was at the time the haven for the oppressed of all neighbouring countries, the State in which the greatest degree of constitutional, civic and intellectual liberty prevailed."

Why has Poland lost her freedom, we may ask, why has she not been able to achieve her goal fully and withstand all outer pressure? Innumerable Polish thinkers have sought the answer to this question, trying to solve the riddle of Poland's fate and the inner reason of her downfall. One of the greatest—Mickiewicz—says: "Poland has failed because the spiritual level of the whole society was not high enough, because the will to achieve at all cost the highest ideal of the nation, pointed out to her by her Guiding Spirit, was not powerful enough in *all* her people. The Polish Constitution was extremely exacting, it could work only by a continual sustained effort of all the citizens. The higher the ideal the greater the power required for its realization." Another thinker says:

"The will for Freedom degenerated in many into self-will, a sin which being the denial of a fundamental law of harmonious evolution brought the calamity of the loss of freedom by the country, which had to discover new spiritual laws in her crucifixion." We see that the causes are sought deeply, in the moral, the spiritual domain, and this spirituality has saved Poland.

Poland's experiment in those times failed, but are we not entitled to think that this peculiarity of her path remains as real for her future, being the outcome of her deepest destiny? Could we not suppose that this first experiment was a kind of preliminary experience, a preparatory sketch for a future masterpiece of socio-political architecture, which Poland will build one day?

The eighteenth century was in the whole of Europe a period of very low ebb in the tide of social, political and moral life. This explains the passivity and indifference of Europe when Poland found herself in deadly danger, and fell, overcome by the brutal force of her three neighbours, in 1772-95. It was also Europe's shortsightedness with regard to her own interests, because the partition of Poland greatly helped the growth and expansion of German autocracy and militarism, which were the chief causes of the last as well as the present war. It was

rightly stated by Lord Eversley: "The partition of Poland, although remote and indirect, was the essential cause of the World War. It overthrew the European equilibrium and introduced the victory of violence and of the principle 'Might is Right'."

In Poland, weakened by long wars with Sweden and Moscow, a low tide of the inner life succeeded now the high tide of three previous centuries. The decline of civic morality, selfishness and self-will were spreading, poison crept into the body politic of the nation. The dangerous points of the Constitution were now exploited by the unscrupulous, a type, hitherto unknown, of mercenary Deputy, appeared, and one Session of the Sejm after another was powerless in face of vetoing members. The electoral campaigns created confusion and strife, kingly power was often placed in quite unworthy hands, detrimental to the State, bringing an orgy of intrigues, bribery and lawlessness. Traitors appeared. The luxury, licence and corruption of the Courts of the Kings of the Saxon dynasty spread and infected the aristocracy. The power of Russia was growing. Peter I was doing all he could to maintain and deepen the disorder in Poland, and began to interfere in her internal affairs. Moral weakness and decay of patriotism prevented the citizens from mobilizing

all their forces against the outer enemy, the Sejm even now refused to introduce a standing army in spite of the visibly growing militarism of the neighbours.

Many mistakes, faults and sins were committed during this lowest period of Polish history, many decisions taken in utter contradiction to the spirit and traditions of Poland, some under the disastrous influence of the Jesuits. The Dharma of the nation was betrayed at the behests of the worst minority of the age. But it must be stated that a number of great men sounded powerful warnings, and spirited cries were heard all over the land. Unfortunately it was not until the calamity of the first partition unexpectedly fell on the country that the people were awakened and at last ready to accept radical reforms, which led to the famous Constitution of 3 May 1791. "It was the first Constitution in Europe based on the right of the people to govern, opening with the words: All power in the State emanates from the people's will," says Mr. Ch. Phillips.

The reforms began with education, new model colleges were opened, public libraries and societies of learning were started. A Party of Polish Patriots with many outstanding men was founded, it started the Educational Commission, the famous, first-in-Europe

Ministry of Education; it drafted the new Constitution which was discussed and adopted by the "four years' Sejm." It gave full rights to burghers, and the protection of the State to the peasants, limited considerably the privileges of the gentry, and abolished the *Liberum Veto*; it also assured the supremacy of the Lower House over the Senate, like Britain did in 1909, and organized a Cabinet of Ministers on modern lines—responsible to the Parliament.

It is a significant fact that in the midst of the lowest period for the Polish Soul a lofty uprising was possible, coming not under any impulse from outside, but from the very depth of the national Spirit. It is also important to note that a Constitution which was considerably limiting the rights and privileges of the gentry was voted by the gentry itself. It was a deliberate self-sacrifice to the common good, a way far nearer to the Polish genius than social revolution. A tremendous wave of enthusiasm welcomed this achievement, there was a general feeling that Poland had entered a path which would lead her once more to the heights of glory. It might have been so, if no intervention of foreign powers had come.

If the first partition of 1772 could be ascribed with at least some justification to the moral decay of Poland, the second and

the third were the direct result of a powerful movement of regeneration of the whole nation. Many foreign countries gave expression of approval and praise to the Polish achievement, Edmund Burke congratulated her in a parliamentary speech, but Empress Catherine of Russia who hated all liberties asked for the immediate repeal of the Constitution, sending her troops into Poland. In spite of the heroic and frantic fight of the small Polish army defeat was inevitable, and the second partition took place.

The May Constitution was unable to avert the tragic events, for it was too late to give another turn to the inexorable wheel of fate, yet it did the greatest thing—it saved and regenerated the national Soul and directly helped all the future fights for freedom and the rebirth of the Polish State in 1914-18. It will remain for ever not only a proof of the vitality and inner strength of Poland, but also a memorial to national conscience vividly awake, recognizing national faults, ready to eradicate them at all costs. The last act of the free Republic was her greatest spiritual achievement.

Similar also was her armed defence against three assaulting powers, in the so-called Insurrection of Kosciuszko, 1794. He was the last great man of free Poland, worshipped by the nation as no

one before him ever was, being the living embodiment of her highest Ideals. He united in whole-hearted co-operation all, from King to peasant, appealing to the deepest of the nation. He called peasants to arms, and this was in itself an epoch-making event, nowhere practised before. Nobles and burghers, peasants and gentry, in complete equality and brotherhood signed the act of adhesion to the Insurrection, renouncing all privileges which hitherto had divided them. Volunteers from all classes flocked under Kosciuszko's banners. The famous peasant "Reapers," armed with scythes, with a hero-villager Glowacki at their head, achieved miracles of valour; the shoemaker Kilinski organized a regiment of the lowest classes of the Warsaw burghers, and a Jewish battalion was spontaneously formed for the defence of the capital. The Jews adored Kosciuszko and called him "the messenger of God." Warsaw withstood a 54 days' siege by powerful armies, the Russian and the Prussian, and repulsed them victoriously.

Kosciuszko as Chief of State, with unlimited powers placed in his hands by the nation, issued the famous decree of Polaniec, still enlarging the May Constitution, granting the peasants freedom of movement, reducing by half their obligations, extending the protection of the State to the farms of the villagers, whose fate, although

never so deplorable in Poland as in other countries, was still bad enough to provoke anxiety and plans of extensive reforms in the minds of the best patriots.

"Kosciuszko in all his activities always emphasized the moral principle," says his American biographer, Miss Monica Gardner, adding: "In all his manifestoes there was a hint to the things beyond, an undercurrent of Polish spirituality that conferred upon these national proclamations the peculiarly Polish quality, almost a religious touch." He was indeed great with the greatness of the whole nation, and his character, touching sublimity,

was a pure channel for the Deva's power.

Kosciuszko's Insurrection ended in apparent failure, and the last partition of Poland followed. And yet it was also an invisible victory; the spiritual power it strengthened in the nation was such that it sustained her resistance, will for and faith in Freedom for all the future generations. It was an achievement equal to the Constitution of May 3rd—a surety of Poland's inner independence even in outer slavery, of the regaining of full independence in the future. Both were inspired by the Genius of the nation.

WANDA SOKOLOWSKA

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

WHAT was the mission of Poland after the loss of her visible existence as a State? As well might one ask what would be the task of a man buried alive; would it not be to draw—at all costs—an inner breath, by some yogic superhuman power, to resist the law of gravity itself by the concentrated power of the Spirit, by the will to live?

That was the task before Poland.

Her body sunk in the dark grave, her Soul engaged in a Yoga of action and sacrifice, her Spirit free ascends to unprecedented heights, seeking the answers to the most

burning problems; exploring the deepest mysteries of Being, to solve the nation's "to be or not to be," to achieve the realization of her immortality.

What constitutes the life of a nation? What is her Soul, her Spirit? What is her relation to Humanity, to the Universe, to God? Where are the sources of man's and a nation's immortality? What is Eternity? What is our part and our duty in the cosmic process; what our relation to the collective body of the nation and of humanity and our obligations towards both? What is the purpose

of all existence? How can man, by the power of the Spirit, control the visible world of events?

The answer to these problems could be found only in the Wisdom Eternal. And a band of Poland's greatest thinkers dived deep indeed to find it. They came back from their exploring wanderings bringing the Light to guide all present and future generations. They presented the Ancient Wisdom from the special angle of the nation's Ray, expressed it in the language of her genius, but they also gave in it a priceless contribution to the common treasury of mankind, as their works have a universal, not only a national value.

Such is the system of "Absolute Philosophy" of Heone-Wronski, scientist, mathematician and philosopher, recognized as having no equal or parallel since Kant; such is the great religio-philosophical work of Cieszkowski, who discovered in the well-known words of the Lord's Prayer a whole social, political and religious scheme, covering the past and future evolution of humanity; such is the creative philosophy of Trentowski and of Libelt; and the religious message of the mysterious "Man of God"—Towianski; such the inspired visions of the triad of poet-prophets, Mickiewicz, Slowacki and Krasinski.

Equal to the highest achievements of human thought, this

Polish philosophy, original and virile, is characterized by a special emphasis laid on the *Creative* aspect of Divinity; on the basic unity of all existence, its seeming duality appearing only as a mode of its manifestation—the Absolute being present here and now, in every bit of the visible universe, Eternity being an endless present; on the inherent Divinity and the creative power of man, whose sonship, and even identity with the Supreme is recognized; on the "Messianic" task of the human individual, who has to become his own Saviour, gaining his immortality by his own inner effort, and the corresponding Messianic mission of the collective Entities of nations and humanity, who have to ascend by constant creative labour, till transfiguration is reached, till they achieve a fully conscious co-operation with God, whose highest expression on this globe they are.

Men and nations that are more open to divine inspirations, in whom the inner *Word* expresses itself with greater purity, can sooner reach the state where they may be used as Messengers of God, to show to others the way to the common goal. Here is the basis of the belief in such a Messianic mission as that of Poland. The peculiar trend of her history, her martyrdom unmerited by any visible act, her utter devotion to the ideal of Freedom blending with the worship of the

Holy Mother, served as so many proofs. Poland's mission is called "Christ-like" by the deepest thinkers.

This philosophy is spiritual to the very core ; it sees the Universe as a manifestation of the Highest Spirit, for the sake of the spontaneous and endless creative process and the unfoldment of spirits. Re-incarnation is of course admitted ; and the approach of a new era of the Paraclete—the Holy Ghost—is proclaimed, when Christ's Ideals will become all-powerful and manifested in every domain of human life, social, political, international, etc.

And although the highest summits of this philosophy were too much in advance of the age to be understood, and even now are comparatively little known in Poland itself, yet through the works of the triad of poets, who were spiritual leaders as well, and also by an invisible inner penetration, they have influenced the nation—being the essence of her deepest approach to the problem of Existence—and contributed to the greatest extent to her "salvation."

Poland can be proud of this philosophy. Unfortunately it is nearly unknown abroad ; the position of a subjugated nation was chiefly responsible for that. All efforts were made by the partitioning powers to make Europe forget that such a thing as an original

Polish culture, with its own philosophy existed ; they succeeded to no small extent. But now, one would say, it is time to make known to the world the priceless heritage of a nation whose spiritual leaders have not only preached but realized her immortality.

There is also a second part of Poland's Dharma, which concerns the visible plane of existence. We may ask why the loss of physical independence was to the Poles such an incredible, fathomless horror, such a calamity, the agony of which was felt with an intensity and frenzy not seen in any other country of the world whose fate was even to a certain extent similar to hers? The answer is simple. It depends on the plane of consciousness on which the life of the individual, or the nation, is chiefly centred. If it is on one of the first three Rays, the abstract can be so real that the physical matters less, and sometimes may even seem unessential. A Yogi, no matter where he is, in a prison or on the Himalayas, under the yoke of a foreigner or among friends, will ever remain himself ; no power can interpose itself between him and the Truth of Existence. For a nation of this temperament the loss of physical freedom may not be equal to "Avichi," although it will always be detrimental to her growth. But Poland belongs to a type which cannot live in the

abstract ; pure metaphysics is rather foreign to her, and the highest flight to heaven is real *only* if it is followed by a shaping of visible forms according to heavenly glimpses. The rhythm of life, to be felt real, must swing from the highest to the lowest plane ; the break of the link between the two means suspension in a void, more horrible than death itself.

For centuries the Polish mode of life was the endeavour to mould visible forms according to the ideal, to *dream through action*. A sudden cutting off from all the field of activity was a moral agony touching the very core of her life. The impossibility of visible creation drew her Soul towards "eternal perdition," as it brought her under the domination of her deadly foes—inertia, sloth, hopelessness, passivity, uncreativity and apathy.

And it was for her Soul, for her inner existence, that Poland had to fight during these hundred and twenty years, political independence being a *sine qua non* for her Soul's "salvation." From this arose a whole moral code, all the ten commandments of national faithfulness. Any submission—even in thought—to the existing state of things, any "agreement" to slavery, any denial of the complete purity of the Ideal, was a sin, a betrayal of the very heart of the nation. On the other side a protest, a revolt, an active resistance, no matter how crazy or

foolish it might seem to practical positivists, became a simple duty, the only noble, pure, manly thing, without which life ceased to have any value. Here lies the source of all the Polish insurrections and conspiracies ; of the dreams of her youth, and the deeds of her heroes, during this dark period. If the will to Freedom had been extinguished, even for one moment, if the faith in independence as an attribute of life itself, had vanished, even for a second, Poland would have ceased to exist and no diplomatic endeavours could have brought her to life again.

From this purely moral standpoint let us look at Poland in her grave. Her Dharma was to save her Soul, to be true to herself, to remain faithful to her God. It is the fight of the Spirit against matter, and against evil, and only as such can it be properly understood. The Confederation of Bar, started to fight the growing menace of Russia (1768), and the Insurrection of Kosciuszko (1794), after the second partition of the country, fighting three armies, were things of the Spirit ; the rising against the oppressor in 1830-31, then in 1848 and 1863, when an unprecedented fight was led by an underground National Government obeyed by the whole nation under three different yokes, with all the dreams and active steps towards social reform ; the heroism they were fought

with—were things of the Spirit. All the secret educational organizations, the Youth Leagues, the conspiracy struggles (1895-1907) with the first heroes among the workmen hanged in Warsaw; the secret military and riflemen organizations of Pilsudski, all these were fights of the Spirit of Poland for its "to be or not to be."

One can understand how the multitude of the nation's cells had to divide, by their inner weight, into a minority of true warriors of Poland, and a majority all the time in danger of being "swallowed up" by the abyss, of slipping at any moment, unconsciously, into the easy roads of national betrayal. All normal, quiet, easy personal existence without a constant care for the whole of the nation, and her deepest culture, was a betrayal. Only the heroic, the difficult, the grand, the proud, the visionary, and the mad with devotion was truly Polish. The small minority of her faithful sons had to fight not only the outer oppressor, but even more this invisible foe, and save the weak, the stumbling, unconscious multitude. It was a titanic fight, a struggle of which no nation that has not touched a similar experience herself, can have any idea.

There was indeed no other way in those times for Poland than greatness. And there was no room for a personal, individual greatness either. Every great man had to

take into his heart the whole of the nation, disregarding the cutting of her body into pieces, caring and feeling for all, to take the burden of the millions on his shoulders and engage in a deadly struggle for their salvation. There is no more bitter and tragic fight than that with our own kith and kin—blood of our blood, bone of our bone, yet seemingly enemies of their own saviours. This was the peculiar lot of Poland's heroes, of her great men and even of the unknown silent workers of this period. That is why there was no room for an individualistic art in those times; all literature served the same, the only goal; so also did education, social work, and all the activities which were still possible in that crippled existence behind the prison bars.

And there were moments, even generations, when the power of the demon seemed overwhelming. Such was the period after the defeat of the Insurrection of 1863, when savage, unimaginable repressions followed. A reaction came against all romanticism, all action and thought of revolt, a passionate reaction, although it was called "positivism." It gave birth to auto-flagellation in the rationalistic school of history, to agnostic theories, to a frantic fear of further risings; faith withered, the last vestiges of self-confidence faded. It was a moment when the darkness of the

grave was most dense and the touch of death most icy. Fortunately it did not overwhelm the whole nation, only the intellectual, the reasoning class, otherwise Poland would have been lost. But one must also add that this deadly wave left its deep traces in the attitude of compromise and conciliation which was to remain alive for a long time in some parts of Polish society ; a shameful mark of slavery, a stain on the Polish shield, at which symptoms we—the spiritual patriots of Poland—blush and bow low our heads under the burden of shame. One of its last expressions appeared in the first years of our independence, in the greatest sin ever committed in Polish history—the murder of the first President of the Republic in 1922, by a reactionary rightist

fanatic in dread of socialism. It had often made the life of the greatest man of Poland—Marshal Pilsudski—not an easy one. Meanness, crookedness, in some forms of socio-political life, was the shadow of those times.

Thanks to the few Poland emerged victorious from the fight for existence during the dark period of 1795-1914,—although the power of the demon, the dirt and mire of the path she had to tread, were more dangerous enemies than any imagination could conceive. Poland arose after a hundred and twenty years strong and alive, to give a unique example in the history of mankind of the power of the Spirit triumphing over matter, of Love over hate, of the Ideal over brute force.

JADWIGA PORAY

IMPROVISATION

BY MICKIEWICZ (1798-1855)¹

Fragments

ALONE ! Ah, men ! And who of you, divining
 My spirit, grasps the meaning of its song ?
 Whose eye will see the radiance of its shining ?
 Alas, who toils to sing for men, toils long !
 What need hast thou, my song, of human ears ?
 Flow in the secret recesses of my heart,
 Gleam on its heights, inviolate, apart,
 Like sunken streams, like stars beyond the spheres.
 Then heed me, God and nature, for my song
 Is worthy you, worthy to echo long —
 A master I !

¹ The greatest poet of all Slavonic nations. Philosopher, prophet, seer and spiritual leader of Poland. The philosophy of action, power, of the spirit triumphant.

I stretch my hands on high
 And touch the stars. Ah, see !
 Now forth there peals,
 As from the illimitable crystal wheels
 Of some harmonica, a melody ;
 And as the circles roll
 I tune the turning planets to my soul.
 A million notes stream on ;
 I catch each one,
 I braid them into rainbow-coloured chords,
 And out they flow and flash like lightning swords.
 I take my hands away : each starry circle
 Of that harmonica its turning stays ;
 Through spaces far beyond the planets' sparkle,
 Beyond all confines now, my arms I raise.
 I sing alone ; and long
 And wailing like the tempest's breath, my song
 Searches the ocean of humanity ;
 It moans with grief, it roars with storm,
 And listening centuries transform
 The echoes to a vast antiphony.
 I hear it as I hear the wind that rocks
 The rushing waters, whistling loud ;
 I see it as I see the wind that walks
 Apparelled in a robe of cloud.
 My song is worthy of God and nature ; great
 It is, it also doth create ;
 Such song is power and deathless energy,
 Such song is immortality.
 Yes, I have made this immortality I feel—
 What greater deed, O God, canst Thou reveal ?

* * * *

Yes, I have wisdom now, and love, and power !
 Oh, never have I felt as at this hour.
 This is my zenith, and my strength tonight
 Has reached its height ;
 Now I shall know
 If I be one supreme, or only proud.
 This is the destined moment ; lo,
 I strain my spirit's arms abroad !
 Now my mind
 Casts off its body ; through the air's expanse
 It wings, and far and fleet,
 On past the mazy planets' dance,
 I take my course where God and nature meet.
 My wings ! I have them now, and they suffice !
 I stretch them to the east and to the west,
 The right wing strikes the future and the left the past,
 And higher, higher, on the flames of love I rise
 And look into Thy breast.

O Thou! of whom they say that still Thou art
 Loving towards men, though dwelling in the skies,
 My strength has power to reach to Thee,
 But I am human still and there where lies
 My body, in the land I loved, there lies my heart!
 And yet my love hath never found repose
 In selfish joy with any single man,
 Like the poor insect, living in the rose;
 Nor in one generation nor in one clan.
 I love a whole nation, and my wide embrace
 Presses the past and future of the race
 To my deep breast.
 Both friend and lover, spouse and father, I;
 And I would raise my country high
 Upon the crest
 Of love, for all the world to glorify.
 But I have not the means; 'tis that has brought
 Me here, armed with the power of thought,
 Of that thought that snatched Thy lightnings from the sky,
 That followed where the planets go,
 That opened up the ocean's floor
 By its great strength. And I have more,
 A power that man cannot bestow,
 Feeling—that oftentimes must choke
 Within itself, and yet sometimes doth pour
 Forth words as the volcano smoke.

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I am a creator born;
 My power hath come to me
 From where Thine came to Thee.
 I gaze upon a comet's track to prove
 My power—and the meteor cannot move.
 Only men, corrupt of heart,
 Yet with an immortal part,
 Heed me and know me not, nor me, nor Thee.
 And so I come to seek in heaven the art
 To make them yield to me,
 And with the power I have o'er nature, bind
 The human mind.
 As I rule birds and planets with my nod,
 So will I rule my fellow-man, my rod
 No sword—that calls forth sword; no song—
 For it must germinate too long;
 Not learning, it will soon decay;
 Not miracles, too loud are they;
 But I will rule men by the love in me,
 As Thou dost rule, forever, secretly.
 Thou knowest that I never have belied
 My thought: then give me equal rule with Thee
 O'er spirits. I will make my land a pride,

A living song more marvellous than Thine
Own works. For I will sing of happiness divine ;
Give me the rule of souls !

* * * *

I, highest of the beings of the earthly sphere,
I have not seen Thee yet, but what Thou art I guess ;
Now let me see and let me feel at last Thy loftiness.
Give me the power I seek, or tell me how
To gain it. I have heard of prophets who
Could reign o'er spirits, and so can I, too.
I would have power o'er souls no less
Than Thou in heaven dost possess,
To rule them as dost Thou.

(*A long silence*)

Now—and I challenge Thee, come forth ! Once more
Baring my soul to Thee as to a friend,
I call upon Thee solemnly, attend !
No answer ?—Yet in person Thou didst war
With Satan. Spurn me not : although alone

I challenge Thee,

I and a nation's mighty heart are one ;
Thrones, Powers, Armies follow in my train.
If Thou dost drive me on to blasphemy,
A bloodier conflict Thou shalt join
Than ever Satan waged with Thee ;
For Satan sought dominion for the mind,
I battle for the heart of all mankind.
I have grown up in suffering and love,
And though of my own happiness dispossessed,
I beat my hands upon my bleeding breast,
But never raised them against heaven above.
My name is million, since I love for millions,
For them their pain and suffering I feel ;
I gaze upon my country fallen on days
Of torment, as a son would gaze
Upon his father broken on the wheel.
I feel within myself my country's massacre
Even as a mother feels within her womb
The travail of the children whom
She bears. Yet Thou, still wise and cool,
Reigning in bliss, dost rule,
And men will say that Thou canst never err !
Hear me if that be true which once I heard
With filial faith, that Thou dost love the earth
To which Thou gavest birth :
Hear me, if once Thy word
Saved from the flood within the sheltering ark,
With man each original beast, the spark
Of love : if love be no monstrosity,
Whose nature is impermanence,

That cannot ripen to maturity :
 If in Thy rule love is not anarchy :
 If on the millions crying : " Save us, Lord !"
 Thou dost not gaze with an unmoved regard,
 As Thou wouldst gaze on the confusion wrought
 By some false reckoning : if in creation,
 As Thou hast planned and made it, love is aught
 But a wrong figure in Thy calculation,
 Then hear me, O Lord !

From *The Forefathers' Eve*. Translated from the Polish by
 DOROTHEA PRALL RADIN. Edited by G. Rapall Noyes, Head
 of Department of Slavonic Studies, University of California.

MARSHAL PILSUDSKI

BY WANDA DYNOWSKA

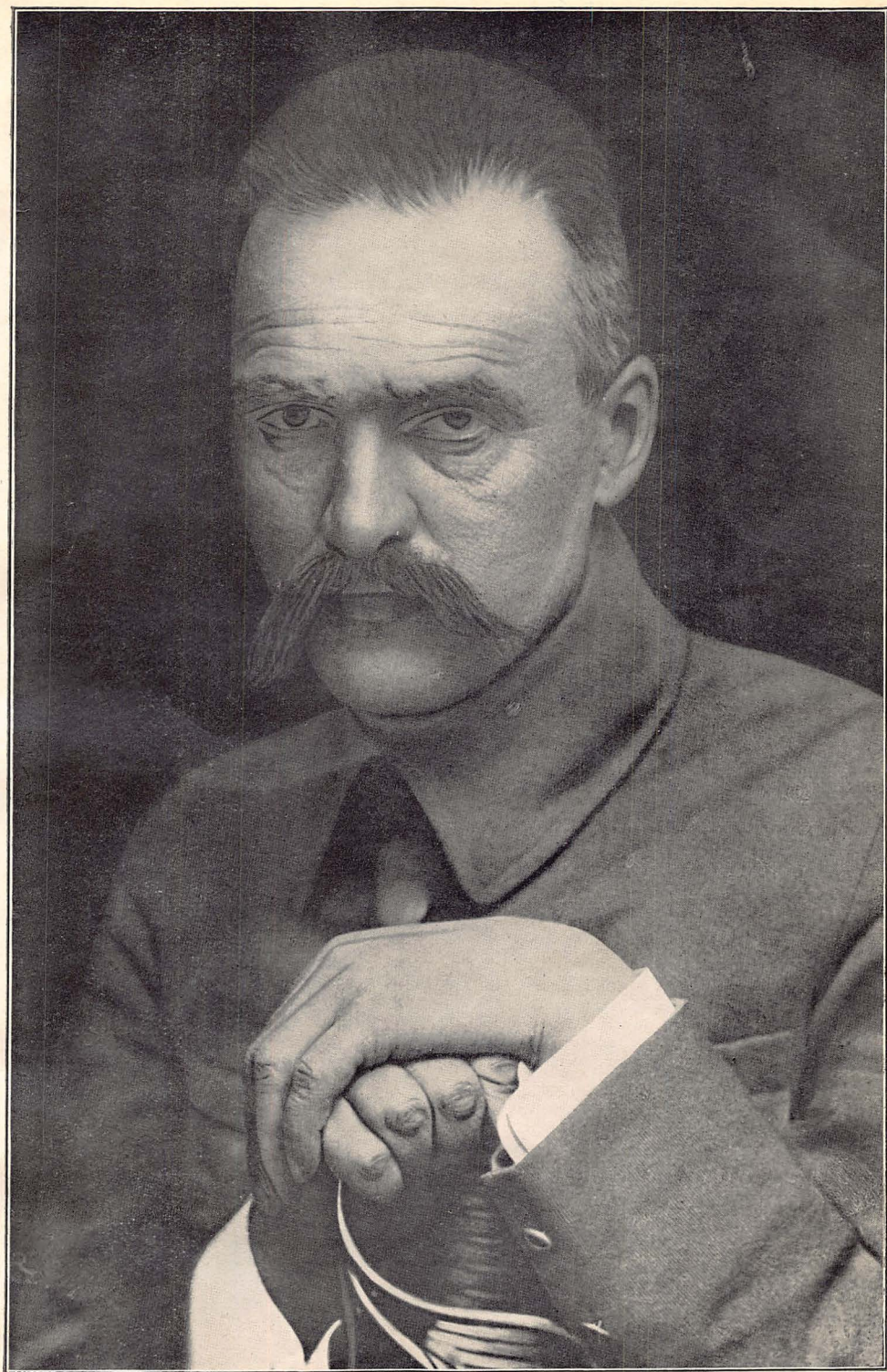
THE Marshal was too great to be understood by his contemporaries. There were very few indeed, even amongst those who loved him, who could embrace his character, his methods; there was none to keep pace with him. There was something baffling about him, this "fatal force," as says our poet, "which will press you invisibly . . ." No meanness could stand it without a reaction. Even devotion was tried by the exacting pressure of his presence and some indefinable atmosphere surrounding him. Often when I met him I felt a strange silence in spite of the vivid talk, a kind of unutterable concentration in the background, which made one speak in a lower voice and modified the rhythm of one's thoughts. One would say that he was never alone.

All virtues, all qualities, good or bad, are more easily understandable for men than that one peculiar and synthetic, evading all definitions, which is—Greatness. To recognize greatness one must have it in oneself at least in germ, one must be ready at any moment to leave the old for the new, the known for the unknown, or to have a pure and simple heart and a sensitiveness to life. This was the case with the great majority of the Polish people, who felt instinctively Pilsudski's greatness and worshipped it quite spontaneously. But all that was mean and false hated the Marshal. All that was the shadows and the stains of slavery in Polish society could not bear the strength, flawlessness and integrity of his character, and was ever rising in opposition and hindering his work.

The Marshal was himself a bridge between the ancient Poland and the new ; by the first half of his life he belonged to that Poland oppressed, persecuted, nearly sunk in hopelessness, where any change in the course of existence seemed simply unthinkable, like a change in the course of the moon or stars. The habit of slavery was hanging over the nation. But he had in his heart the legacy of all the fighters for freedom, and even further back the power and Kingship of Poland's greatest Kings, and that ineffable Presence about him, that touch of the Highest, like Moses whose mission was to lead his people out of an age-long captivity, like Joan of Arc, for the task of leading Poland out of her prison was first of all a spiritual task, it required not simple courage and capacity, patriotism and character, it required far more than that. First the free Poland conscious of herself had to be reborn in one soul, to be recreated in one heart, a mighty will had to surge like a pillar of fire from one spirit. He had to awaken other souls from sleep, to stir up their will and their enthusiasm and lead them on through arduous, arid paths. To have such power over people's hearts and lives one had to be not only a born leader, but to be possessed by an Ideal, by an unshaken almost mystic faith. From the spiritual point of view the chief greatness of Pilsudski

consisted in the fact that he was the first, and for a long time the only one, who had the power of such faith, standing against all the outer world, against all the weight of facts, almost against his own nation. His far-sighted vision was the mainspring of his actions, his inspiration the unerring guide of his deeds. Again was born a man to express in full the Polish ideal—to link up the dream with the visible and practical, to be an example of "dreaming through action."

Strange as it may seem, he always had to follow the middle path, he found himself in nearly all activities between two extremes, struggling with both, hammering out in a creative and solitary effort a different, a new path. His own character had many seemingly contradictory traits, and the unusual harmony of opposites was one of the irresistible charms of his personality. The dauntless force of a warrior and the tender sensibility of an artist, romanticism and realism, deep-rooted love of tradition and the revolutionary spirit of a pioneer, simplicity and imposing proud dignity, concentration, gravity and vivid wit and humour. But probably the most peculiar characteristic of his was his passion for truth, it was a continual search for the primary reason, the intrinsic value of every phenomenon, the desire to perceive the "thing in itself."



MARSHAL JOSEPH PILSUDSKI, 1867-1935
Liberator of Poland

Mr. J. Jedrzejewicz¹ thus defines this quality: "Reading the Marshal's writings, we are struck by the frequency of the word 'truth,' he uses it sometimes in a most unexpected way: the truth of life and the truth of death, of work and of effort, of conscience and of duty, the truth of greatness and of meanness, and even of falsehood and of lie." The last expression may perhaps baffle the reader.

Auguste Rodin, the great French sculptor, defining a true artist, said: "He is a man in love with truth, a man who never shrinks from seeing and expressing the inner hidden truth of men and happenings, be it marvellous or hideous, what people call beautiful or what they call ugly; he knows one beauty—it is truth, and renders it with a fearless sincerity. His only enemy is sham, pretence, hypocrisy, that which hides the truth of things, this he is mercilessly tearing down to reveal at whatever cost all that it veils. And even in the most acute suffering he is a happy man with the austere happiness of the strong." Pilsudski undoubtedly belonged to this type, for a great artist indeed he was.

Mr. J. Jedrzejewicz continues: "In all life, his own as well as that

of groups and collectivities, in the history of nations, in the structure and laws of the society and of the State, in the characters of people, their labours and sacrifices, and even in their baseness and villainy, the Marshal looked always for something more grave than simple causality, more real than utility, he wanted to see the hidden reason of actions and happenings, the true essence of it all. The need with him was an almost metaphysical inner urge. But on the other side Pilsudski is supremely realistic in all his undertakings, every action is thought over, calculated and well prepared with scientific thoroughness. In the combination and interaction of these two qualities lies the individual uniqueness of Pilsudski's genius. It makes him also a profoundly tragic figure. The compelling inner need of seeing ultimate values and a constant striving for them, and at the same time the necessity to act and work in a world where they are neither understood nor appreciated, made conflict inevitable, and his world was a tragic one indeed. With a man who could not breathe nor create save in an atmosphere of truth, who wanted to mould his own life and that of his nation and State in the spirit of truth, which was not for him mere theory, not a philosophical doctrine, but a living everyday reality, the essence of every act and thought, it could

¹ One of the Marshal's old soldiers and co-workers in the building of Poland as Minister of Public Instruction and for some time Prime Minister, in his lecture delivered recently in Palestine.

not be otherwise. One thing he hated and disdained: it was falsehood, he did not hesitate to use the strongest, the most drastic words to unveil it and chastise it in the life of his society. His struggle with every aspect of it was constant and merciless. Being himself a knight of truth, probity and honour, valuing always moral qualities above all else, he wanted to lift up the whole nation to this high level, he laboured and toiled to straighten her paths, to make clean her ways. That is the chief reason of his tremendous and enduring influence on his country's life."

That was also the cause of the Marshal's conflict with the parliamentary parties, unfortunately only too often using crooked, mean methods, unworthy of free men. That was the cause of his *coup d'état* in 1926, when he could no longer bear the abuses and perversions of parliamentary methods undermining the very basis of true democracy, threatening the civic morality of the country. He felt it his duty to interfere in the name both of his love for Poland and for truth. He expressed it immediately after his drastic step: "Being against the use of violence in the life of a nation, as I have amply proved during my office as Chief of State, I had, after a hard inner struggle, to take the painful decision to use force, with all the conse-

quences of the act. During all my life I have stood for the 'imponderable' values of man, for honour, virtue, valour, truth, never for the immediate gains, but there cannot be too much injustice, too much unrighteousness in the life of the State if it does not want to sink into ruin."

It was the extreme care for the purity of national life that bade him act, and the great majority of the nation (except the extreme rightists) felt it instinctively and was with him. It was expressed in the general enthusiasm and in the free vote of the Sejm, sanctioning as it were the Marshal's step, by electing him President of the Republic. To the amazement of all he declined to accept the honour. He could have become a dictator as easily as in 1918; as a matter of fact it was, as then, the general wish. But to educate the public in righteousness, responsibility, cleanliness of political methods, was his purpose, not to rule as an autocrat. His decision, probably unique in the history of successful *coups d'état*, was a clear proof of it.

How ridiculous and futile seem to us, who knew him well, the opinions circulating abroad till now, calling him a dictator. The Marshal hated all autocracy, he expressed more than once his belief that Poles less than any other nation can be ruled by force. A sincere democrat, he wanted to see a

healthy responsible co-operation, a mutual adaptation and accord of all parties—the basis of democracy—in the one purpose, cherished above all differences of opinion, namely, the service of the Motherland.

He was a great educator of his nation, not only her liberator. Embracing all her life in his great heart, he saw her Truth with an infallible eye and toiled to uproot all that was obstructing its realization. The consciousness of the whole nation in his own soul was with him. When his nearest followers were impatient with him for not taking any step to stop a destructive campaign led by his opponents, he answered, laughing: "You cannot understand that I represent the *whole* of Poland, not only those who love and revere me but those who oppose or hate me as well."

The childhood of Pilsudski, like that of so many Polish children of those times, was spent in an atmosphere of fiery patriotism, of intense suffering at the failure of the last Insurrection, in dreams of liberation, and in vivid consciousness of wild persecutions going on all round.

The influence which remained revered and alive to the last of his days was that of his mother, a great, noble type of the silent heroism of Polish womanhood.

A student of medicine, he was suspected with his elder brother

of being in touch with Russian revolutionaries and deported to Siberia. After five years of complete solitude, endless wanderings through the wilds, of brooding over his country's destinies, over problems of infinite gravity and pain, seeking a way out, Pilsudski returns to Poland a man of 24, with a formed character, his goal clearly before him, with faith unshaken in Poland's great destiny, which becomes a guiding power through all his life. He has a bold, far-sighted plan of action and sets immediately to work, with a practical sense, tenacity, fearlessness and perseverance which are the foundations of his character. From this moment he ceases to belong to himself. He enters the underground ranks of the Polish Socialist Party, which stood for the independence of Poland, and becomes a prominent member of it and soon its virtual leader. To overthrow one day the foreign yoke the forging of a weapon is necessary, and to this end twenty years of hardest work are dedicated. The only means by which the nation can be reached, or at least the elements most responsive to the idea of an armed fight—workmen and youth—in a country where every movement was watched, was conspiracy, and clandestinely printed papers. He starts such a paper.

To give an idea what this work meant let us quote Mr. Anatole

Mühlstein¹: "One may say that Pilsudski prepared his instrument for many years creating a free Poland in the minds of her people before the fact. He was himself orator, writer, printer, propagandist, colporteur, in the most difficult conditions imaginable, in the midst of continual danger of discovery, then prison, exile or death certain. All activities have to be surrounded by absolute mystery, one loses one's individuality, one's name, one's family. It is not enough to have ten different names and passports, to cheat the police, even the nearest co-workers must ignore one's real name, and pseudonyms have to be changed as soon as they become known. Rarely could one have a quiet room, sleep two nights in the same place, have even a few days of normal life in a month. Life was infinitely difficult, spies everywhere, each step a danger, one was like a wild beast pursued by hunters; a complicated technique for every move had to be elaborated, can one imagine a greater strain on the nerves? Even war is easier, one is surrounded by comrades, the danger is shared with others; not so in the underground fight, where loneliness is complete, companions are myths. Few could support this life for long without a breakdown. Pilsudski had over fifteen years of uninterrupted

clandestine work of this kind. Romantic in his aims, realistic in his means, he had a small press in his own room, and during six long years the hidden influence was growing every day, infusing a new spirit of strength, hope, faith into thousands upon thousands of Poles. When at last discovered by sheer chance and arrested, Pilsudski thought more of the prestige of the organization than of his own defence. . . . After some time Pilsudski founds his new headquarters in Cracow, and from here leads further the whole movement whose expansion and growth in strength are astonishing."

The period 1905-07 is the time of revolutionary activities of the Party, with many terroristic attempts on the life of the worst Russian policemen and officials, including the Governor of Warsaw. In spite of the tremendous psychological effects, the raising of the spirit of Polish society, and the creating of fear and anxiety in Russian circles, Pilsudski was rather against this method; far more for the steady organization of a purely military force for the future. The differences of opinion in the Party lead to a secession, the young and most daring remaining with Pilsudski. He now starts in Cracow a regular military school in miniature; and the period 1907-14 is an unmistakable preparation for a national fight.

¹ From his book, *Le Maréchal Pilsudski*, 1867-1919, vol. I, Paris, 1939.

Pilsudski early foresees the imminence of a European war. He faces the tragic fact that Poles serving in three armies will unavoidably be involved in a fratricidal fight, and decides to create a purely Polish army, however small, in spirit, purpose and idea, serving Poland exclusively, though using for the time the technical assistance of the only Power which could give it—Austria. What is more astounding still, Pilsudski foresees many years in advance that both Russia and Germany must emerge from the future war weakened and half ruined. He speaks of it in his lectures in the military school and in Paris. He was unable to give any logical proof to this vision, but it was an inner certainty for him, influencing his plans and actions. He succeeds by his fiery spirit, by some compelling force, acting like a spell on people's minds, in reviving faith and desire to fight for the independence of the country in ever larger circles. Mr. Mühlstein writes: "Of all that Pilsudski achieved in his life, so full of great deeds, the re-awakening of the fighting spirit in the nation is probably the most astonishing, for in no other fact has his divining genius been displayed so clearly. As leader he has never been so great in his whole history as in this moment, when his capacities of practical realization blended into one with his faculties as seer."

He creates the nucleus of a military force which was to become the future Polish army. The best, most capable, brave and idealistic element of youth is attracted, the real élite of the nation, in moral character as well as talent. He told me once how very careful he was in training this first batch of "his boys," not only in military science, but inner culture, refinement and purity of life, that subtle moral atmosphere which evades definition, knowing they would have to represent the honour and the spirit of Poland; I may add: and be the channel of her Deva's power. He succeeded. The legend which has grown around this "First Brigade of the Legions" will ever be immortal in Poland's history, likewise its influence on Polish culture.

New and large organizations were then started, with secret training groups all over Poland, with nuclei in every University abroad where Poles studied. But with the growth of the movement a new task appeared—its legalization with the Austrian authorities and the establishment of some basis of common relations. From this moment another form of struggle begins, first with Austria, afterwards with Germany, which lasts till 1918. Another capacity had to be displayed by Pilsudski, that of diplomat, of statesman, manœuvring with cleverness and tact amidst infinitely complicated situations, between official pressure,

fluctuating political currents and national interests. To have Austria's technical assistance was at this moment indispensable; how to adjust the opposite aims, and use all the possibilities for the only purpose—Polish independence; how to obtain the best issues, and in all unavoidable compromises never yield in essentials, never deviate by one inch from the path of national honour? Pilsudski's proud and unflinching firmness combined with his adaptability and his capacity for a realistic appreciation of facts, alone could have coped with such baffling situations from 1914 to 1917. Any smaller character would have deviated from the only straight line, often indeed narrow as a razor. But Pilsudski was as great a character as statesman as warrior. He succeeded in this task too.

Approaching August 1914 he had 10,449 men. On the 6th he marched towards the "Russian" Poland, crossing the "frontier" under Poland's own banners. That was the moment of the rebirth of free Poland. This very fact was the greatest challenge, both to the passive majority of the nation and to Europe, which for the last fifty years had wanted at all cost to avoid any discussion of the "Polish problem." It was this *fait accompli* which not only awakened the Polish nation, but also soon compelled the occupying Powers to

proclaim the Independence or autonomy of parts of Poland. (Germany and Austria on 5 November 1916; Tsarist Russia in December 1916, confirmed in February 1917 by the Government of Kerenski.) However limited, these proclamations were of tremendous importance, they obviously brought the Polish problem onto the European forum and prepared the way for a general recognition of full and complete independence, though for this as well as for her frontiers, arms had once more to be used in the east, and infinite diplomatic effort in the west. But this undeniable fact remains, that it was the Polish genius which started the fight and gained by blood and effort the freedom of Poland.

Pilsudski's soldiers, ill-dressed, ill-equipped, with the oldest rifles and a scarcity of ammunition, regarded at first with suspicion, almost with scorn as "amateurs" by the professionals, soon became famous for their exploits, for their knowledge and unrivalled spirit, and gained the respect even of their enemies. Their independent and rebellious attitude towards both the Powers with whom they were nominally co-operating was manifested from the very beginning and was to increase to the point of undisguised hostility. Pilsudski was himself in constant steady opposition to the Austrian authorities. After two years of friction

and conflict it culminated in his dismissal from the command of his Brigade in 1916, though he remained the only authority the soldiers really recognized. His arrest was ordered by Beseler, the German Governor of Warsaw, after a year's diplomatic duel, hostile addresses by Pilsudski, his stubborn resistance to the recruitment of Poles, and finally his refusal to take and to allow his soldiers to take an oath binding them to Austria and Germany. The result of this "rebellion" was the dissolution of the Legions, the internment of their officers and soldiers in concentration camps, and severe reprisals; Pilsudski, with his Chief of Staff Sosnkowski, was sent to prison in the fortress of Magdeburg.

Beseler hoped that now, when the Polish leader, the only serious and unmanageable enemy on the side of Poland, was no more there to influence the country, he would succeed in all his plans. He was mistaken. From the time when the Russian troops withdrew from Polish territory and the Germans took their place, these were regarded by Pilsudski as the next chief enemy and treated accordingly. The struggle, which at first had diplomatic forms, changed into open hostility and opposition. Knowing his arrest to be imminent, he started in time a new weapon against Germany—a secret "Polish Military Organization," delegating

many of the best officers of his Legions as instructors. When he was arrested the organization under able command carried on the fight, and not only caused all Beseler's plans to crumble, but also was chiefly responsible for the quick and skilful disarmament of the German garrisons when the armistice came.

Pilsudski, released from Magdeburg by the German revolution in November 1918, arrived in Warsaw and was acclaimed by the whole nation as Chief of State. A third period of activity begun, one more aspect of Pilsudski's character was revealed. His power was unlimited, he could act as dictator, organize as he thought best, introduce such reforms as he believed to be necessary. He took another course, from the very beginning he wanted to educate, to mould, to shape from inside as it were, not by the imposition of orders and rules. The first Cabinet formed had many socialists; the majority of those who had fought for freedom were of radical opinions, far-reaching reforms were possible. But Pilsudski felt he now represented the whole nation, being her Chief, and had no moral right to impose by authority anything not desired by the majority, which must be rather slowly prepared for changes. He had the traditional Polish respect for individuals and groups.

He wanted to co-operate with his opponents, even with his enemies,

for resentment and bitterness were foreign to his nature. He summoned a Legislative Assembly on the basis of "the freest franchise possible," and entered a period of life where from one side honour and glory surrounded him, adoration and the worship of the multitude, and from the other more misunderstanding and difficulties than ever, from both extremes of society, on the right and on the left.

The war with Russia, 1918-20, was won by his military foresight and strategic genius; the battle of Vistula in August 1920, called by Lord d'Abernon "one of the eighteen decisive battles of humanity," prevented the spread of communism all over the Continent, thus saving Europe from social chaos. But the greatest idea behind this campaign is unknown or forgotten even by many in Poland itself. The purpose of the Marshal's advance up to Kiev was the creation of a great federation of smaller nations in the centre of Europe which could stand every pressure from east or west, and serve as a powerful bulwark against the rapacity of Germany, well foreseen by the Marshal. He wanted to bring the Baltic States into close union with a large autonomous Ukraine, and Rumania, forming thus a powerful chain from north to south, with Poland in the middle. Such a great union of about 85 million people would have certainly influ-

enced the whole life of post-war Europe, and given a different course to the events of 1938-39. Unfortunately the lack of understanding of this far-sighted idea in Poland itself, and even more abroad, compelled the Marshal to abandon it and to seek partial safeguards on other lines, by means of pacts and treaties. Here too the obstacles he met were hard to overcome. Skilful German propaganda had succeeded in strengthening Lithuanian chauvinism and Ukrainian terrorist organizations out of all proportion. The treaty with Rumania had been achieved, but it was not enough. The later treaties of non-aggression with U.S.S.R. and Germany were known only to be temporary. That Marshal Pilsudski realized this fact and regarded the future clash with Germany as inevitable, the author well knows from his personal talks. Today his idea of Federation is recognized as useful and necessary by the Allies, and the Polish-Czech Confederation may be regarded as the nucleus of a far bigger union of Central European countries.

The history of free Poland is so closely associated with the name of Marshal Pilsudski that the two cannot be separated. It was he who re-created her in spirit and in body; he who reawakened her to self-respect and self-confidence, who led her to victories, who built up her power and her strength,

who gained for her recognition and respect abroad. His personal guidance was continually directed to those domains of Poland's life which seemed to be most threatened or most important. It is not easy to define his merits in this period of Poland's history. We are still too near to it. But it does not seem to us improper, knowing his identification with the Spirit of the Nation and its paths, to regard him as the greatest figure of our history, from the purely national as well as from the spiritual and occult point of view. This does not mean that we are deifying him, nor that he never erred. Mistakes are unavoidable even with the greatest men till they reach oneness with God; but these do not matter, nobility of motive and purity of action can be displayed even in our mistakes, and this was the case with the Marshal.

It seems he seldom erred in his vision; he foresaw the first Great War; apparently he was aware in the depths of his consciousness of the approach of the present one. This is how Mr. Jędrzejewicz speaks of it in the lecture quoted above: "In 1934 when I decided to resign from the Premiership, I saw the Marshal; having expressed my points I wanted to retire, he asked me to remain. His expression, till now kind and smiling, suddenly changed. I could hardly recognize his face, so weary and tragic it

now looked. Inexpressible pain and anxiety were in his gaze. Never will I forget that expression. Was it he, the Chief, the greatest leader of our country? He began to speak in a lowered voice about Poland's future, about her fate, when he would be no more, about the terrible dangers menacing her. I cannot now repeat all that I then heard, the time has not yet come. I listened dumb and awe-struck, and for one moment by a mysterious inner movement I was able to feel as he felt, to think as he thought. An abyss of agony for his country's future opened, a foreboding which had no name. I understood how tragic was the life of this greatest man of Poland, I saw what used to trouble his heart and mind when according to his habit he would walk during lonely sleepless nights, feeling now that the end of all his services to her was approaching. Never will I forget what I saw."

Rainer Maria Rilke, a profound Austrian thinker and poet, expressed a deep truth when he said that the greatness of men is best revealed in their deaths. Whoever has lived the memorable days of 12-18 May 1935 in Poland knows the inner meaning of these words.

The Marshal died as he had lived, unexpectedly, as in a battle, busy with work to the last moment, on the eve seeing Ministers, on the same day signing military papers, in spite of acute suffering (cancer

of the liver), not caring for himself, only for the Beloved of his life. And what his death achieved for his nation was almost more astonishing than his life.

We believe no crowned monarch of any modern country could have had his nation at his feet in such spontaneous unfathomable grief, in such boundless devotion, as this simple austere man, the real leader of the reborn Poland. It was only in this moment that the secret of his oneness with her highest, her inmost Being was revealed in all its fullness and truth. That week in Poland's life was not only of mourning for her Father and Chief, it was also a spiritual mystery for her Soul.

If in the life of nations there are some strange moments when a gradual ascension culminates in a tremendous spiritual opening, a sudden enlargement of consciousness, an "Initiation" indeed, such was that week for Poland. The transcending of the limitations of ordinary existence by a deep impersonal emotion felt by all, made the union of millions of souls closer and closer till they blended into oneness never known before; one would say that the great Deva was moulding His people with unprecedented magic, it was like a mighty breath blowing through it, lifting it to unknown heights, like a rending of the heavenly vault above the land, making easy the free com-

munication of the Angelic hosts with all the cells of the nation. Rich and poor, intelligent and ignorant, all were one, differences disappeared. Peasants, workmen, village women, schoolchildren from distant provinces, from all the corners of the land, streamed in endless waves to "see Him," to "bid Him farewell." The comradeship of grief, the brotherhood of love, was stronger than all else. Jews wept with Poles, White Ruthenians from the eastern provinces with mountaineers from the Tatras. The thieves of Warsaw issued a statement that any who dared to steal anything from the deserted homes or thick crowds during this sacred week dedicated to the Marshal, would be dishonoured and punished by them. And not a single incident of the kind occurred.

When one hour after the Marshal's death we were standing at the gates of Belveder—his residence—and the President, Ministers and dignitaries of the Republic entered to pay their last homage to the great Man, not a word was heard, not a rash movement seen, only tears in all eyes, even those who never wept. And a silence, silence supreme. "Oh, it is the touch of Wawel, of the Tatras here tonight," whispered my friend. "Yes, He is with His Knight."

And next morning it was one sob through the whole of Warsaw, one long sob throughout the country,

and the mystery of the nation's ascension began. When innumerable dumb crowds, collected, in perfect order streamed to Belveder to bow before him who had laboured there for their happiness; and during the first journey to the Cathedral on a simple gun-carriage with the White Eagle of the Republic stretched over his soldier's coffin, in majesty and peace, when an impenetrable wall of breasts was lining the streets, every heart melting in tears; and in the big solemn Cathedral full of lights with the great music of Chopin, so loved by him; but above all on the wide space of the Mokotow fields, where he used to review the Army, when now for the last time before his coffin—symbol of the "Serenissima Respublica"—detachments of all the units of the Army marched saluting him in farewell, a Presence was there, a Presence enormous, majestic, divine, to receive with him the salute and to bless.

"It seems it is for a tremendous deadly fight ahead that this blessing, this divine touch, is given," whispered once more my clairvoyant friend, her gaze fixed in space, as on a distant picture. "Battle? In the east? No"—and she could speak no more.

Every officer, every soldier present had been touched by an in-

visible rod of power; "an inner experience, for which he might have waited several incarnations, has been his, the eyes of every one revealed it," told us a Theosophist officer, who was leading a unit. The army was like a single block, a single statue carved in granite.

And when the train with the Marshal's coffin, on an open platform covered with fir and pine branches, moved to Cracow slowly throughout the night, it was bright like on S. John's Eve, with big fires kindled by peasants all along the way; and the same night, fires were lit all along Poland's frontiers, every few yards, with the soldiers and guards singing patriotic prayers and hymns, a fiery line encircling Poland with blessing. One more symbol, one more inner fact.

The funeral took place at Cracow on the Day of Wesak, at the very hour of the august Ceremony his coffin entered the holy vault of the Wawel Cathedral and found repose among the Kings and Prophets of Poland.

Once more the ineffable Silence descended upon the crowds assembled, covered the land, touched the great heart of the nation—a moment too sacred to be expressed by any word.

Marshal Pilsudski's death was for the Soul of Poland a supreme occult experience.

POLAND FREE

THE 6th of August 1914 is the true date of the rebirth of free Poland. It was then that the yoke was thrown off by a powerful decision of her spiritual will, embodied in one Man and a band of mad youth utterly devoted to the age-old Ideal, entering the war on Poland's own behalf with unlimited faith in the Nation's Spirit. All that has followed has been only the consequence of this fact.

Nothing could be more mistaken, from the inner point of view, than those foreign opinions that it was the Treaty of Versailles which recreated Poland—"a sudden happy turn of events." What nonsense! No turn of outer events can save an individual Soul, no outer happenings can create a nation's freedom, they can only give a shape to her own inner force whose power is irresistible. To no outer foreign grace do we owe our independent existence; rather to Polish blood, effort, genius and *will*. Versailles could not but take into account the facts, which in 1918 were: that between the two weakened and faltering Powers, undermined by revolution, each being in a state of utter chaos, a living nation was rising to its full stature, and former rulers had recognized her actual independence. No diplomatic con-

ference could deny facts, and if President Wilson's immortal 14 points were there, they took second place. The first was Polish action.

Since the beginning of the war of 1914, there had been many schemes and combinations regarding how Poland was to rise, with this or that support, in this or that compromise; with Russia—the pan-Slavistic idea; or with Austria, the conservative plan; both unacceptable to true Polish patriots. All these were brain-conceptions, of no value from the spiritual point of view, with no real power behind. This had been, from 1895, obviously and undeniably concentrated in one group, in one Man, who was, like Kosciuszko, the doer of the national Dharma.

It was instinctively recognized by the nation when Pilsudski, arriving in Warsaw in November 1918—straight from the German prison—was unanimously proclaimed Chief of the State. It was the second important moment—Poland's conscious rebirth as a State; one of those historical moments when a whole nation rises to her full stature to understand in a flash her own destiny, with a joy too great to be described.

Her independent existence began with fighting in self-defence.

The frontiers unsettled, the intrigues of yesterday's enemies still active; small neighbours claiming her indisputable territories, (Wilno with its 3 per cent of Lithuanians; Lwow, Cieszyn), and soon the Russian troops advancing from the east. Devastated, exhausted, ruined, with her economic, agricultural and administrative system completely disorganized, Poland faced tasks of such magnitude that they would have baffled any nation, and we do not think any other in the world could have done better in a shorter period of time than Poland has done. To understand the extent of the effort, to see rightly her achievements, one must clearly bear in mind some facts:

1. Five-sixth of Poland's land was devastated by war operations, worse than Belgium and France (the loss in buildings was estimated at 330 million dollars in gold, yet no reparations were allotted to her).¹

2. Agriculture ruined: 11 million acres of land out of use; 15 million acres of forest destroyed.

3. Industries at a complete standstill (machinery and all other equipment taken by one or the other of the retreating occupants. The total loss of industries has been estimated at 10,000 million gold francs).

¹ Over 1,800,000 buildings were destroyed in towns and villages as well as one-half of the bridges, station-buildings, and railway workshops; the railway rolling stock from all central Poland had been removed, and over a million of the population with all their property.

4. The monetary system profoundly disorganized, (6 different currencies in circulation, and the menace of inflation, which was soon to become a fact and to influence the next years of national economy).

5. Four different systems of administration, all greatly disorganized; four Codes of Law; no Constitution.

6. Chaos in education (with the exception of the part formerly under Austria); 34% illiteracy in the villages of Poland ruled by Russia; not one Polish University or Academy (except Cracow and Lwow).

7. Physical and nervous exhaustion from four years of privations, misery, persecutions, and war shocks; 20% of children rickety or consumptive from lack of nourishment; unimaginable impoverishment of all classes (626,000 destitute people on State support; 750,000 orphans; 2 million unemployed).

8. The army nearly non-existent; the Pilsudski Legions disorganized by German prisons and concentration camps, the troops fighting in France not yet returned. Soldiers from the three armies just coming home. No equipment, almost no arms or ammunition. No police force.

9. Comparatively deep-rooted psychological traces of a century of abnormal life; lack of confidence in the nation's own innate power; atavistic distrust and bitterness

in political matters, individualistic ideas and passions strong. (The extreme right with the old half-servile, half-chauvinistic mentality, and frantic fear of socialism; the extreme left under the pressure of foreign propaganda.)

Anxiety in the hearts of the best men as to what will be the face of this Beloved, adored, longed for through generations, will her features fulfil their cherished dreams?

In these conditions the existence of the reborn Polish State began. To heal, to rebuild, remould, recreate, with the greatest possible speed every domain of its life, was it not a gigantic task?

Can we imagine the tremendous amount of energy, skill, effort, self-sacrifice, goodwill and patriotism needed to cope with the task?

Mr. C. Phillips¹ says: "Why is it that Poland has not gone under in 1918? Was there any country riper for a revolt and total collapse than Poland, starved, outraged to the point of madness? What was it that kept her sane and held her together in a sort of miraculous integrity? She had the spirit of 'come back' in her strong. She was like young David busy with more than one Goliath. The sufferings of the Poles at times simply appal one. But even at their

worst you were forced to forget them in the face of the energy and buoyancy of these people. You inhaled all about you the bracing air of 'things doing.'"

Yes, the Poles rose to the occasion. The intoxicating joy of freedom regained, doubled and tripled their energies; it was like a flood-burst of energy after a long damming up. They proved that their skill and capacities in the work of building and organizing their country were no less than their heroism had been in the struggles for her independence.

What has been achieved?

In less than six months the army was organized anew, hundreds of thousands of volunteers were flocking to defend the frontiers in the long Polish-Bolshevik war, ending with the brilliant victory of Polish genius and strategy, embodied in Marshal Pilsudski; and at the Treaty of Riga, March 1921, by the common agreement of the Soviet and Poland's representatives her eastern frontiers were defined, (ratified by the Council of Ambassadors in 1923). Poland knew that historically and culturally she had a full right to push them farther east; if she did not try to do so, it was not the result of her weakness, but of her moderation and goodwill. Wilno and Lwow had been defended. Cieszyn had been unfortunately lost, spoiling relations with the Czechs for twenty years.

¹ Mr. Charles Phillips was the representative of the American Red Cross in Poland during the difficult years 1918-22. He wrote an interesting book, *The New Poland*.

The Constitution prepared by a Legislative Assembly, called by Pilsudski and founded on the "freest and most democratic franchise possible,"¹ was voted in 1922 (amended in 1935). Polish currency was introduced. A unified Polish Code of Law was established, after long and extensive work, by the best lawyers. The administration was completely reorganized; agriculture, trade and industries revived, developing with astonishing speed; the new marvellous port of Gdynia was built, as well as a hitherto non-existent Merchant Marine (in 1927 it possessed 490 ships now fighting on the side of Britain), and a Navy and Air Fleet. The Central Industrial District was organized on an imposing scale. More and more Polish products and manufactures were exported and appreciated in other countries. Every part of the economic and industrial life was renewed and reconstructed so well that Americans who knew Poland in 1919 could not recognize her in 1929; and the progress and expansion of the last ten years was still greater, prosperity increasing, unemployment diminishing every year.

Education was most vigorously fostered from the first moment of independence; 15 per cent of the yearly budget was reserved for it. In 1937, 27 Universities and Academic Schools were working; 72

teachers' training schools; 2,230 secondary, 1,030 special; 28,122 primary, and 1,651 nursery schools. Five and a half million Polish pupils were studying in 1937-38 (over 50,000 in Universities), and over half a million of minorities who had their own schools. Illiteracy had fallen from 34 to 27 per cent in 1929, and was almost non-existent in 1938. Scientific and cultural institutions were developing splendidly in all the chief cities. In 1938 there were about 190 big scientific libraries; innumerable were the smaller literary ones, as Poles of all classes love reading. New big institutions were established, like the Radium Institute founded by Mme. Curie-Sklodowska; the newest, marvelously endowed Physics Institute; (both taken now to Germany with all their installations). "The Institute of Research in East European Problems," "The Institute of Investigation of national and social problems," the Institute of Social Economy, of Rural Sociology, of Rural Culture, etc., etc. The chief minorities of Poland had their own well-prospering scientific institutions. Museums were opened, about 180 scientific and academic museums, and 90 art galleries were started.

The Academy of Polish Literature was founded in 1933 and was doing, with the Polish P.E.N. Club, much good work. Literature,

¹ C. Phillips.

already rich, was continually vivified by new original and virile talent, a large part of which was feminine. Dramatic art flourished, and its standard was regarded by foreign critics as amongst the highest in Europe. Warsaw alone had thirteen permanent theatres and three schools of dramatic art; one of them most interesting, the "Experimental Institute Reduta," with spiritual ideals, a community life, and a peculiar discipline like that of a kind of religio-artistic monastic order, the best actors were its pupils.

Plastic art, sculpture and architecture, as well as music, were rich in fresh and outstanding talent. One may say that every field of Poland's life was blossoming, and pulsing with creative life. The prisons were reformed; industrial training, art, lectures and concerts were introduced. Courts for juveniles and special clubs and schools for them were established. Hundreds of health and physical culture centres were started as well as hospitals and sanatoriums; mortality gradually decreased, health and vigour improved greatly. The birth-rate was the highest (after Bulgaria) in Europe—1.3 p.c. (Japan 1.5; Germany 0.8; U.S.A. 0.6; Britain 0.4). In twenty years the increase in population was six million.

In the domain of social reform much has been achieved. Not only

was Poland one of the first in Europe to introduce, by legislation, the 8-hour day and paid yearly vacations, but also the progressive protection of the labour of women and juveniles, with a post of woman Inspectress in the Ministry of Labour. Well-organized social insurance schemes (a special Labour Fund), under which no one unemployed of the manual or intellectual working class was without permanent help. Social Aid took care of disabled youth and adults, and of the poor and destitute, combating begging, prostitution, etc. Warsaw Women's Police under the lead of a prominent, spiritually-minded woman, was found the best in Europe by a League of Nations delegate. Co-operative Societies as well as Trade Unions developed vigorously in towns and villages (the turnovers of agricultural co-operatives were, in 1933, 400 million; in 1938, 750 million). Agrarian reform was introduced and carried by an evolutionary method, the principle of private property being safeguarded; in accordance with the Land Reform Act, six and a half million acres were parcelled out, chiefly among the landless peasantry and holders of too small pieces of land, some six hundred thousand new farms being created. If the parceling out did not proceed as quickly as many would have wished, it was from lack of funds.

But the most remarkable results have been achieved in the education of the masses. Original methods were introduced in the night schools; Rural Universities were started for peasants (the best in Europe after Sweden and Denmark), and Universities for workmen in the towns; posts of Cultural Instructors were created, helping the youth of the villages to organize and to develop freely, under their own initiative, social group-studies, clubs, amateur theatres, sports, etc. When one of our educational workers was sent abroad, by the Ministry, to study the corresponding institutions in other countries, she visited nearly the whole of Europe, and found only in the then socialistic Spain and democratic Sweden the same fresh, vigorous breath of new ideas of a new approach to the "masses" based on reverence for human dignity and confidence in the unlimited potentialities of every individual, irrespective of class and social status. Educational institutions breathing this new spirit were of tremendous value to the life of Poland. A new type of a free, nationally conscious, responsible, idealistic young citizen was developing, with a keen sense of national solidarity, proud patriotism, and at the same time interest in world affairs. It is this youth, together with the best Polish intellectuals, that is now upholding Polish honour and lead-

ing an unabated struggle with the Nazis.

The most interesting achievements were seen in the artistic domain. Not only has a new generation of writers, poets and novelists, from the peasant and working classes been born, enriching with accents of peculiar vigour and robust individuality the already rich Polish literature; but the dramas and representations used as a *method of development* in schools, cultural and educational institutions and village-clubs have proved to be the best for the Polish temperament. There was an Association of Popular Theatres in Warsaw, working idealistically and creatively, helping the village youth in all artistic matters. While speaking of the education of the masses, one must mention the salutary influence of military service on the education of the peasant youth. Rightly to appreciate the character of the Polish army and its spirit, one must remember that it was created out of idealistic, consciously patriotic and self-sacrificing volunteers. It had always far more of the spirit of ancient chivalry than modern militarism; it was also a school of character and of citizenship. Education in the army and cultural clubs for soldiers, under the leadership of girl-instructors, were well organized and ably led. In this field, as in many others, women did invaluable service.

Organizations of women of all classes developed splendidly during those twenty years as well as their civic work. Poland was one of the first to create manuals and introduce in all educational institutions the study of the science of citizenship.

We may ask what were the still deeper, the spiritual tasks before Poland, and how has she fulfilled them?

The spiritual pioneers of the nation were aware of the paramount need of a new Ideal, able to inspire and guide the whole nation when her previous age-long ideal—Independence—had been achieved; and they were seeking it, with all the intensity of the ideal-thirsty, passionate hearts, but it was not an easy task. If to give expression to any new aspect of Life, to shape any new image of the Nation's Truth, nothing short of a genius is needed, in this case, in this historical moment, even genius could hardly have sufficed.

Although Poland's history was following a different trend from that of all her sister-nations of Europe, her life was intimately interwoven with theirs, and all the tremendous problems of modern humanity were facing and perplexing her in the same degree as other countries; perhaps in an even more poignant and immediate way, for Poland was situated not only physically

between her enemies, but also between two systems of thought, two extremes of fanatical ideologies, ruthlessly put into experimental practice; living on the cross-road of currents seemingly so different, yet in many ways proving similarly destructive; both equally denying in practice the principle which formed the intrinsic value of Poland's culture—freedom of the individual and spirituality. All her inner and outer work was going on under a tremendous occult strain, in a higher temperature as it were, bearing the continual insidious pressure from both sides. Poland's own Ideal has always been utterly different. Never could she worship the State as a goal in itself. She regarded it always as a means to aid the all-round development of the individual. Methods of terrorism, of class hatred, of extermination of one part of society to free another, have been completely foreign to the Polish genius.

The immediate aspect of her Ideal has been best defined by her greatest leader in one of his frank private talks: "The creation of a new type of man, a free yet self-disciplined, idealistic citizen, who could harmonize in himself the two extremes never well enough balanced in Polish history—robust independent individuality and conscious, voluntary submission to authority—and co-operate with the State in full creative responsibility."

It was a broad, synthetic Ideal, able to guide all the earnest strivings of a nation in a peaceful era of history, but—and here lay the tragedy—not dramatic, dynamic or even spectacular enough to catch the imagination of the youth of *our* age, and to inflame it with a new impetus to action, in these days of revolutionary changes and upheavals. The same phenomenon was seen in other western countries, which failed in the same way. To follow the middle path in such times is the most difficult, perhaps an impossible task.

Could Poland have done the impossible? Could she, in spite of her much more complicated situation, have risen to express a spiritual Ideal in the social domain, to have evolved at least the first vestiges of a different social order, based on self-sacrifice and co-operation instead of hatred and wrong, with an almost religious touch, according to her own Social Conscience? Who would dare to say?

Yet it is a fact that many in the nation were well aware that Poland could stand only through moral force. In 1932 one of the writers on Marshal Pilsudski's ideas of citizenship wrote: "A greater inner effort now awaits Poland than at any previous time, if she is to withstand the raging storm and remain *herself* on the paths of history. She must labour to create her own *forms* of life, in accord-

ance with her own individual ideology. The times approaching will call for the highest moral values from the whole Polish nation; 'steel souls' she *must* create. Poland will certainly solve all the structural and social problems in her own way, without being afraid of the most radical and drastic measures, if these are the outcome of the Polish genius, of Poland's *own* creative thought."

It is also a fact that numerous were those who laboured in this spirit in their respective fields with unceasing zeal, individuals as well as organized groups. Here and there signs were visible of this new force, unmistakable promises of the future achievement, towards which the nation was slowly advancing in toil and creative effort.

Could she have attained it in a few more years of uninterrupted unfoldment? We can hardly answer the question. Perhaps. But her inner and outer enemies were strong. The catastrophe of 1939 was hanging in the invisible long before its condensation on the physical plane; the occult pressure became more and more difficult to bear. The majority, even of the leading men, was overwhelmed by such an elementary joy of visible creation, such a passionate desire for health and vigour, that it forgot, or even denied, the peculiarity of Poland's spiritual path and its graver duty. Vision was dimmed,

the proportions of things confused, in the last years before the war, and several of our thinkers ascribe to this state of mind some of our errors of that period. (The recognition of Abyssinia's conquest; the recapture of Cieszyn and Yaworzyna from the Czechs in a moment which should never have been exploited by the chivalrous hand of Poland, however just in themselves her claims to those territories may have been.)

If we are asked in what Poland has succeeded, in what has she failed during these twenty years, we will answer that in all creative building, expanding and organizing of her visible life, she succeeded remarkably, marvellously, beyond all expectation.

In the psychological sphere she failed: in the total eradication of all traces of her long slavery, and in achieving a *psychologically* harmonious solution of the minority problem, though, besides the fact that the minorities enjoyed more rights in Poland than in any other country of central and eastern Europe, many broad-minded attempts had been made.

Spiritually she was on the way to finding her own inner path, the new aspect of her Ideal, and she was diving deep indeed—the efforts of her vanguard were worthy of all honour; yet she has not been able to reveal fully the face of her inner Individuality.

Does it mean that if weighed in the balance her failures would outweigh her achievements? Certainly not. No nation or individual can be expected to live and compress into twenty years the experiences that others took a hundred and fifty years to assimilate. And if we compare the spiritual work done, as well as the progressive steps, initiatives, measures and achievements of Poland, during those years, with that of many of her European colleagues we shall see that on the whole she was still in the first rank of Humanity's units.

We may ask why is there hardly one country in the world, besides India, about which so many unjust, wrong and distorted opinions are circulating, repeated most ignorantly even by friends of Poland?

Those who now know how thoroughly the Germans prepare their campaigns, how cleverly their propaganda precedes all military action, may understand some of the sources where these vilifying opinions and "news" about Poland were forged. Germany's plans for Poland were prepared years ago. Her quick growth in inner and outer power was much disliked, and Germany used *all* methods to check and undermine both. She used many partners; Lithuania and some terroristic parties of the Ukrainians were playing Germany's

game. Yet this was not the only source of hostile information about Poland. There were, and still are, several others no less skilled. We meet the results of their activities in India in most nonsensical ideas, like "feudalism" (never known in Poland), "dictatorial tendencies," or "persecution of Jews in Nazi style," etc., etc.

As the most commonly distorted question is the minority problem, let us look at it impartially and honestly. The two chief minorities in Poland are the Jews and the Ruthenians called also Ukrainians. The large number of these—about four millions—is due to the fact that in the Republic of olden days there was a Union on a federative basis not only with Lithuania but also with so-called Red Ruthenia. (The emblem of the Republic has been the White Eagle of Poland, the Horseman of Lithuania and the Angel of Ruthenia). During the time of partitions the province inhabited chiefly by Ukrainians was under Austria, which has done much to make the Polish-Ukrainian relations difficult; but its liberalism helped to develop Ukrainian culture, education, scientific organizations, etc., and to awaken a strong nationalism, which for some time past was looking for German help in its dreams of independent united Ukraine (one million under Rumania, about 15 under Russia). When Marshal Pilsudski's great

plan of a Central European Federation with a united autonomous Ukraine failed, his sympathy and liberal treatment of the Ukrainians remained. They enjoyed the full religious, cultural, educational and economic freedom in Poland. The Greek Catholic Ukrainian Church had its own Concordat with Rome, and had equal rights with the Roman Catholic. It had its own Metropolitan Bishop, its own Ecclesiastical Academy and Seminaries (3) for priests; lands owned by the Uniat Church were larger than those of the Roman Church; temples and shrines were as numerous in the Ukrainian villages as the Catholic in Polish ones; they were held in the same respect, and never any antagonism between the two Churches existed; if several times arrests of village priests occurred it was because of their extremist political activities, having nothing to do with religion. We most emphatically state that all the rumours about the ill-treatment of the orthodox Uniat Church or any other religious denomination are *absolutely false*.

The freedom of economic and cultural development was also great. The Co-operative Societies, the charitable and educational institutions, were strong and well-prospering. The Ukrainians had 33 nursery, 457 primary, 26 secondary schools, 7 teachers' colleges, and 4 commercial schools with the

Ukrainian language as the medium of instruction; 2,754 primary schools bilingual, and many more with the Ukrainian language compulsory. They had 12-15 Deputies in the Parliament, their own representatives in the village and town self-governments; they were accepted to all the offices except the higher ranks of the Army; they had many prosperous newspapers and publishing houses; all their cultural and intellectual life was far from being crippled in any respect. If German influence and their well-planned campaign among the Ukrainians, responsible for the exploits of terroristic organizations, had not been there, spoiling all the efforts of the Ukrainian Moderate Parties and of many Polish politicians, the Ukrainian problem would have been easily and peacefully solved in Poland. With this continual pressure it was difficult. It will have to be solved in the future in a liberal and broad-minded way. Karma has linked the two nations for ages, and it must mean a duty or some task to be done in common.

The high percentage of Jews in Poland—(10%) the highest in the world—was not only due to her tolerance and liberalism, accepting them when they were persecuted elsewhere, from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century; not only to rights and privileges they enjoyed in the Republic of olden days;

with those whom Poland has accepted herself she would have been able to deal easily, and till the time of the partitions the Jewish problem did not exist in Poland; many Jews were sincere Polish patriots and fought in the struggles for her freedom.

The rights they enjoyed were full; there was no legal restriction for Jews in any domain; religion and education were completely free (12 nursery, 87 primary, 2 secondary, 14 commercial schools with Yiddish as the medium of instruction; and 29 nursery, 172 primary, 9 secondary and 3 teachers' colleges with Hebrew; 2 scientific Institutes, "The Jewish Society for Culture of Judaic Science"; "The Jewish Scientific Institute"; etc.). But one must say that with the free development of Polish trade, of the Co-operative system and private enterprise in business, many Jews felt their possibilities of gain were becoming restricted, which was of course unavoidable.

The Jewish problem in Poland is a tremendously complicated one. The things we want to emphasize here are: no "pogroms," or any organized persecution of Jews, ever happened in free Poland; there were here and there individual cases of excesses, or spontaneous group-excesses, like in the Universities, all of them strongly condemned by Polish public opinion, and prosecuted by the Law and the

Government. That they were magnified a hundredfold, and other happenings simply invented, by German agencies, and all repeated by the press of the world, is a fact.

One must admit that the Jews are not liked in Poland because of psychological differences, but one must also state that in spite of it, when their persecution in Germany began, Poland was human enough to admit into her territory another several hundreds of thousands. And now, even under the Nazis, Poles are helping and protecting them, and one can hope that common suffering will create the first deeper links, and in the future Poland this problem will be less acute.

Other small minorities like the White Ruthenians (a million), the Lithuanians (80,000), the Russians (100,000), the Germans, were all enjoying the same facilities of cultural development and freedom of conscience and organization. The Germans have exploited it in the most clever way to organize a tremendous net of the Fifth Column (a considerable percentage of the 500,000 Germans living in Poland have done this work with precision).

Poland free, without any interference or hostile propaganda, is able to solve liberally all her minority problems, as it is in her tradition, character and ideals.

JERZY BARSKI

THE RELIGION OF POLAND

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

THE religion of the overwhelming majority of Poles has been Roman Catholicism, since the times when it came to Poland from the kingdom of Bohemia, in the beginning of her historical existence in A.D. 966. The adhesion of Poland to Roman Catholicism was of paramount importance to all her future: it was her chief link with the Italo-French world and culture. Although the harm done to Poland by the Roman Church, especially by Jesuits, has been very great, not only in the remote past, but even in the last twenty years of Poland's inde-

pendence, yet comparatively it would be probably far less than the good done by it. In fact Roman Catholicism is so cognate with some fundamental characteristics of the Polish nature that it would be difficult to imagine any form of Christianity more suitable for the Polish nation. In the sixteenth century and in the twentieth some interesting attempts were made to organize a National Catholic Church, independent of Rome, till now without much success. Yet something creative may result in the future.

The Greek Orthodox Church, in spite of its inner mysticism, was connected

with the spirit of Byzantine culture and with autocracy which was utterly foreign to the Polish nature. Had this Church been influential in Poland during the hundred years of Russian rule, it would have made the denationalization of the Polish masses quite possible, as their national consciousness was not yet vividly enough awakened in those times (120 years ago) to withstand the pressure. These facts explain why Protestant and even atheist Poles, while criticizing the Roman Church, still have some national gratitude and respect for her. If the separation of Church from State were introduced in Poland, which would be salutary to both, no inimical steps, as in France or Spain, against the Church, would be possible.

Throughout the centuries many of Poland's most fiery patriots were priests like the famous preacher Skarga in the sixteenth century, and the educational reformer Konarski in the eighteenth. During Poland's fight for freedom the Church gave assistance not only passively, but also actively through her monks and priests, such as Father Marek, the inspired helper of the Confederation of Bar, in the eighteenth century; S. Andrew Bobola, who was canonized not long ago; and the young school-chaplain Ignatius Skorupka in the war in 1920, who, his cross lifted high, leading his soldiers, chiefly schoolboy volunteers, to the attack, fell in the midst of the battle. And hundreds, nay, thousands of known and unknown priests, who resisted heroically in 1939.

Thus in spite of its weaknesses, shortcomings, limitations and even its

sins, the Roman Church has merited the gratitude of Poland, having taken an essential part in the preservation of her national spirit.

It should also be realized that though the Roman Catholic Church is fundamentally the same everywhere, yet its variations in France, Italy, Spain and Poland give it in every nation a distinct individuality. In Poland it bears the peculiar imprint of the joyous and poetic spirit of the ancient Slavonic religion, with its nearness to nature, and innumerable picturesque rituals and ceremonies which survive until our days, under different names, giving to it a touch of beauty and romanticism.

RELIGION OF ACTION AND SACRIFICE

The association of Christian priests with fighting may shock some Theosophists and pacifists. To understand it rightly we must know that in Polish psychology fighting for Freedom is a religious action, opposing aggression with arms a spiritual duty. This deep inner feeling is the expression of a peculiar Polish characteristic. Being eminently of an active temperament and of chivalrous spirit, Poles are only true to their own Dharma when they live a religion of action and sacrifice. The sword used in a sacred cause, in defence of Freedom—their highest Goddess—is as holy to them as the Cross. Love of their faith and love of Poland, worship of Our Lady and worship of Freedom, are blending into a peculiar mysticism and form the basis of the Polish religion—active and romantic, linking the sublime heights of the Spirit with the lower planes of activity.

Another characteristic of Polish religion is the "religious" attitude in social service, having no connection with the Church or faith. Some time ago a book was published, a collective work of one of the idealistic group of social workers, under the title, *The Religion of Social Service*. It gave many new ideas, akin to those expressed by Mr. C. Jinarājādāsa, on religion in its aspects of reverence for our Brother-man and on serving his latent Divinity. There are many voluntary social and educational workers in Poland, utterly devoted to their tasks, sacrificing their lives with marvellous self-abnegation in this spirit of worshipping God in their fellow-men. They take brotherhood and equality as bases of their work, they hate the common conception of charity and almsgiving, seeing in them an element of self-gratification and patronizing prevailing always over the sense of brotherhood and respect due to every human being.

They regard all sharing of knowledge and wealth with those who have less than themselves as a simple duty of comradeship and social solidarity.

CULT OF THE DIVINE MOTHER

The third most prominent characteristic of the Polish religion is the cult of the Virgin—Divine Holy Mother. She is not only the Mother of Jesus, she is the closest protector and friend. Devotion to her has a manifold variety of forms and aspects. She is worshipped in the popular religion as the Mother of fields and birds, crops and cattle, grain and snow, herbs and fire, and during the whole month of May

in every Church, chapel or roadside shrine, every day, special prayers and songs are offered to Her by innumerable worshippers.

She is for chivalrous men the highest ideal of saintly womanhood, the embodiment of the eternal Shakti. The spontaneous, often unconscious worship of the Holy Mother, has been for centuries so deeply ingrained in the very blood of the nation that it is instinctive, even in those who are not at all religious. But even atheism is somewhat different among Poles from what it is in other countries. It often is merely a protest against the narrowness and obscurantism of the Church, and does not touch their innate, instinctive mysticism, the sense of the Eternal and the Infinite, the feeling of the reality of the First Cause and of the immortality of the human Soul.

There is a characteristic scene in Mickiewicz's drama, *The Forefather's Eve*, which may be regarded as a general symbol. One of the Polish political convicts, being a little drunk, sings in the presence of the hero of the drama a song wherein the names of Christ and the Holy Lady are repeated in a somewhat irreverent way. The hero exclaims: "Shut up! I lost my faith long ago, never do I think about Saints, but I will never allow anyone to blaspheme Mary's name."

The part played by the worship of Our Lady in the history of Poland is unique. The first national anthem composed in the thirteenth century—legend says the tenth century—is a song in praise of Her, a grand, majestic call to the Divine Mother. It has been sung on every battle-field throughout

the ages. It is very different from all other national anthems, no parallel can be adduced for it, except the hymn of India—Vande Mātaram.

The Virgin was the object of a most tender and fiery adoration by all from King to peasant. In the seventeenth century, when the Republic was overrun by the Swedes, the only fortress which withstood the siege victoriously was that of her famous monastery of the Luminous Mountain at Czenstohowa, which held her oldest miraculous image. This was due not only to the valour of Father Kordecki, the prior, of his monks and of all the faithful, but also, as legend says, to Her own intervention, for She appeared, floating above the fortress in a shining form, extending Her protecting arms and spreading terror in the assaulting armies. It was then that She was proclaimed by the King, in a solemn oath taken at Lwow, as the Queen of the Polish Crown. And soon afterwards, in 1656, by the consent of the Pope, She was crowned as such. Since that moment the Polish Kings were said to rule the country on Her behalf, as Regents or Deputies of Her. This fact has certainly exercised a great spiritual influence on the nation and must have had definite occult results.

Besides this chief shrine of Hers at Czenstohowa, where the dark-faced image blesses yearly innumerable pilgrims, provoking outbursts of ecstatic rapture, similar to those known at Lourdes, there is another miraculous image of Hers in the famous Ostra Brama in Wilno. Its power is such that for generations everybody, no matter to what religion he belongs, has

paid reverence when passing under the big city-gate, on the upper story of which the small shrine is situate. Here the Greek Orthodox lays also his offerings at the feet of the Queen of Angels, whom he reveres as much as do the Catholics.

If the Madonna of Czenstohowa represents the mystic link with that which is common to all Slavdom, the image of the Madonna of Ostra Brama, with its affinity to Italian religious art, is more the symbol of the Angelic, the Devic, world.

A Russian philosopher and mystic of the nineteenth century, Vladimir Soloviev, has said that if the gulf between Russia and Poland is ever to be bridged, and real brotherhood between the two nations established, it will certainly happen at the Luminous Mountain, at the feet of the Holy Lady adored by both countries. One can hope that the roots of mysticism have not been completely destroyed in the Russian Soul, and one day, perhaps not so very far off, new shoots will spring forth from them, and then Soloviev's prophecy may come true.

The worship of the Virgin is the characteristic not only of the simple folk of Poland, but of her greatest men too. I remember with a certain emotion one of my conversations with Marshal Pilsudski, who was always keenly alive to the influences of Higher Powers. He told me then about his devotion for the Holy Lady of Ostra Brama, and of an incident when he was editing an underground socialist paper in Wilno.

The small press was in his own room, and every time he went out his anxiety

about a possible police search was considerable. One day he suddenly thought of the Mother of Ostra Brama. "I invoked Her aid, and simply said to Her: 'Well, Mother, you must take care of our press, it is working for Poland's freedom, please take the responsibility for it as for your own whenever I go out and I shall be calm.'" Did She give a satisfactory answer to Her Knight? He did not tell me, but after a moment he added with a marvellous smile: "And after that I was never anxious, I was sure nothing could happen under Her protection." It is hardly possible to express the fiery ardour glowing at that moment in the deep grey eyes of this man of power. It is difficult indeed to give any idea of what this devotion to Her means to a Polish heart.

The adoration of the Pole to Her is blended in the depths of the "super-conscious with his love for Poland and for Freedom," says Dr. Maryla Falk.¹ In her deep study of Polish thought, analysing the highest works of Polish inspiration, she adds: "The cult of the Virgin asserts its extraordinary promi-

nence since medieval times. In the background of this peculiar form of national worship is the vision of the Virgin as the ideal Archetype of Poland and as the familiar personification of the Divine Freedom, in whose image the State of the free Poles was shaped and defended on earth." And: "To the two factors in the drama of bondage and deliverance of the human soul as seen by Indian thought—God and the Soul—a third is added by Polish mystic thought, which throws a new light on Poland's worship of Our Lady, and on the deepest meaning of Polish patriotism. This third item is the unit of the nation, as intermediate between the unit of the individual and that of the Cosmos. This intermediary item partakes of the aspects of both the others, it is fundamentally a psychic Entity."

Thus devotion to the Divine Mother and devotion to the Spirit of the Nation, conceived or simply instinctively felt as a living and powerful individual Entity—an Archangel, let us say—are blended into one, and this gives a peculiar and unique character to the Polish worship of Our Lady on battlefields, in every active fight for Universal Freedom, as well as to Polish patriotism and the service of Poland.

STEFANIA RAWICZ

¹ Dr. Falk, lecturer in Polish and Slavonic philology and culture in the University of Calcutta. The article appeared in the *India and Poland* number, edited by the Association "India and the World," May 1941.

The sign of the new, the Paraclete Era of higher Christianity will be the unity of the inner with the outer life, of the Spirit with the visible action. Christ will be realized as Power, as Fighter, as Man Triumphant, resurrecting in God, binding Heaven to our earth.

TOWIANSKI

POLISH MUSIC

THE Polish peasant is deeply musical and has a great richness of motifs and rhythms in his songs; many of them are most ancient, coming from prehistoric times, invoking Slavonic Gods, some are based on a gamut reminding one of the Indian. The Polish peasant's collection of Christmas Carols is considered the richest in the world; and his wind and string instruments are numerous, several of them very ancient, and not seen in other countries.

But it is in dance—the music of gestures—that the national genius of our people has found its best expression; it has created a great number of original dances: *krakowiyak*, *kuyawyak*, *polka*, *mazur*, *oberek*, *polonaise*—these are danced in all parts of Poland, and many others are used only in some provinces.

Three of these dances have specially influenced Chopin. *Mazur*, brisk and smart, born on the plains of Mazovia, in contrast to the monotony of the landscape; its accents are changing and capricious, its tempo quick but dignified, it is typically Polish in its rhythm and inner expression of inspired impetus and is most difficult to dance well. *Kuyawyak* is slow

in tempo, lyrical, often sad and plaintive in mood. There are thousands of variants, all of them full of grace and charm. *Oberek*, very quick, full of exuberant joy, has regular accents, always on the last of every second tact. These three dances find their reflection in Chopin's *Mazurkas*, those small masterpieces of a new artistic form which will remain for ever unrivalled.

Besides the popular songs we have an original religious music. Some ancient musical texts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, till now unpublished, can be found in the libraries of our monasteries. In the sixteenth century Marcin Leopolita wrote three Masses for five voices, and many Introits of great beauty. The motifs were taken from peasants' songs and themes of gregorian chorus. The greatest genius of those times, Mikolay Gomolka, court-singer of King Zygmunt I, published in 1513 a hundred and fifty short songs, for a mixed chorus, to the words of the Psalms, just then translated by Jan Kochanowski, the greatest poet of the age. It is a most inspired and stupendous work, unique of this kind in Europe of the sixteenth century. In the same epoch

Staniczewski wrote a beautiful song for eight voices, "Beata Virgo Maria"; in his fugue for organs, As Dur, Sebastian Bach has taken the first five tacts of it. In the seventeenth century Zelenski published in the new style of the Renaissance eight books of Offertoria for the whole year, two choruses for seven or eight voices each, for two organs. Polish music of those times is equal to that of other countries and brings to the common treasury some original characteristics.

King Zygmunt I created a chapel of Rorantists at the Wawel Cathedral on the model of Rome. It was composed of one master and nine religious singers, and was active till the end of Polish independence. There are still many precious manuscripts not yet published.

There were several famous lutists in the fifteenth and sixteenth century; one went to France and was appreciated as the most excellent of his time under the name Jacob le Polonais. A French writer Jean le Laboureur wrote after his visit to Poland: "The music of their Kings is regarded as the best in Europe."

The Italian Opera reached Poland in the early eighteenth century and was much liked at the Court and by the rich nobles of the provinces. Some became themselves composers, and they started theatres with orchestras; others opened musical schools, in one of

which the pupils were all villagers, and one of the works of J. J. Rousseau was enacted by them at the Prince's Court.

In Germany and Sweden of the eighteenth century we find an influence of Polish dances, and the theoreticians of music consecrate much attention on the peculiar Polish style. The Polonaises of Prince Oginski are famous, they have, along with the works of Elsner and Kurpinski, inspired Chopin. Chopin, leaving Warsaw a mature artist, aware of his powers and conscious of his artistic ideas, fully recognized how much he owed to those two teachers.

At the Court of the last Polish King music flourished. Here the Polish Opera under Moniuszko, and the National Theatre under Boguslawski, were born at the beginning of the nineteenth century. There have been hosts of musicians since those times. Henry Wieniawski the violinist is well known, and Paderewski is so famous in the whole world that it is hardly necessary to write about him. His lyrics are charming and the dramatic tone forceful; he interpreted Chopin marvellously.

Niewiadomski is well known by his songs, Melcer by good operas and concertoes, Opienski by beautiful music for Slowacki's tragedies and for Shakespeare's *Tempest*. Polish directors of orchestras are well known; Mlynarski for years

led the orchestra in Glasgow; Fitelberg and Birnbaum the concerts in Vienna, Switzerland, Petrograd, Moscow, and many years in Warsaw. And the famous Stokowski in America is also of Polish birth. We have very remarkable composers, like Karłowicz, who perished young in the mountains, leaving many sympho-

nic poems rich and deep; Rozycki, author of many operas; and the greatest of all, Szymanowski, of original and powerful talent giving new accents and new flights to Polish music. He is regarded in musical circles as one of the best modern composers in Europe.

JOZEF WYRWA

CHOPIN¹

BY I. J. PADEREWSKI

“EVERY great music has its source in the cosmic spirit of Eternal Religion.”

It is sometimes said that art is cosmopolitan. This is a prejudiced view. Only science—a product of reason—does not know any frontiers nor country. But art—like philosophy—and everything that springs from the very depths of human consciousness, cannot but bear all the characteristics of the National Soul.

If among all the arts music is most accessible to every race and nation, it does not mean that it is cosmopolitan, rather that it is cosmic in its character. Music is the only art essentially alive. Its elements are the elements of life itself. Universal energy is vibrating constantly, endlessly in time and space. Divine melodies are flowing inexhaustibly, unceasingly, infinitely, through the starry spaces, the milky ways, the un-

known globes, and beyond all globes, through human and superhuman regions, and creating this eternal marvellous link between all the worlds—the cosmic, universal “harmony of Spheres.”

Peoples, nations, stars and globes are singing. Everything speaks, sings, plays, resounds; nothing exists save through movement, vibration, voice, through the Word. The Soul of a nation speaks and sings too. How? Listen to Chopin and you will know. Great music is ringing with the inner sound of the whole race, the voice of the whole land where it is born. Human music is only a fragment of music eternal and divine.

No other nation is richer in feeling, emotion, sentiment and subtle inner moods than the Polish. God has not counted the strings on our lute. He has not measured its sounds. It is in this sphere of feelings that lies perhaps our greatest and most seducing charm, but this may also be reckoned as one

¹ From a lecture delivered in Lwow at the Chopin Centenary Celebration in 1910.

of our weaknesses. The change of moods is sudden and quick, succeeding each other often without any interval; we live in extremes, from rapture to tears, from ecstasy to deepest depression there is often only one step. Maybe a certain instability with which we are sometimes charged, and the undoubted difficulty in collective disciplined action are the cause of this characteristic, often deeply tragic.

Of all great men whom God has entrusted with the revelation of the Polish Soul, no one has expressed this scale of emotions more fully than Chopin. Music—maybe only his music—was an ideal instrument for the expression of this Soul living in extremes. In this music sweet and stormy, passionate and delicate, almost to fainting at one moment, powerful and terrible the next; in this music which seeks to escape from the discipline of conventional rhythms and free itself from the metronome, as from a hated rule of a foreign lord; it is in this music that our nation, our soil, our whole Poland lives, feels and acts *in tempo rubato*.

An average Polish listener, uninitiated into the intricacies of the great musical art, may be indifferent, sometimes even impatient with the difficulties of Bach, Mozart or Beethoven. He may often feel a cold atmosphere, as in a big foreign cathedral. He may be unable to feel the Promethean pain of the greatest musician of the world as his own.

But when Chopin is played, every Pole is transformed. He listens with reverent delight, blood flows to his heart and tears to his eyes. Familiar dances of the Mazovian plains, the melancholy

of Nocturnes, the mystery of Preludes, the dignity of the Polonaises, the vivacity of Mazurkas, the titanic tales of the Etudes, and epic stories of the Ballads, the heroic impetus of the Sonatas—all this he feels and understands because all this is his, all is supremely Polish. He feels a touch of his native air, the atmosphere of well-known landscapes surrounding him. Scherzo . . . Does he not hear the triumphant songs of love of those ancient gigantic Slavonic Gods—wonderful fantastic joyous entities, in merry processions amidst the green fields and deep forests, with gnomes, salamanders, sylphs, undines and a host of smaller nature-spirits playing in freshly ploughed soil? The Goddess of Love with her gay damsels passes with swift pace, or hearkens to the mighty songs of the Great Queen who opens her heart full with delight, chanting her exuberant love—is it not the heart of Poland herself?

The Pole listens and the breath of his beloved land enters his soul. Chopin is indeed the voice of his country. From the sweet luminous Berceuse to those two Sonatas, terrible and powerful, which seem to be chiselled in a metal worthy of heroes, he goes through all the stages of his life and the life of his nation. He sees his childhood, "rustic and angelic," his youth "proud and stormy," "his mature age, age of defeat" (Mickiewicz), and now is the winter of life, the end of all his dreams, struggles and sufferings, here is the grave in his beloved Polish soil, with trumpets of Archangels leading him to eternity—the Funeral March.

The Pole hearkens and just like the poet "his pure tears are flowing"; so

we all listen to this supreme singer of the Polish nation.

Chopin in the depths of the Polish soil discovered precious stones, which he changed into marvellous jewels enriching the treasury of the nation and of mankind. He invested our village folk with the dignity of the greatest nobility, that of beauty. He introduced our humble peasant into the large world and made him equal with the proudest.

Poet, magician and monarch, through the power of the spirit he "changed the popular into the universal" (Norvid).

When Chopin was born the triple crime of partitions had been perpetrated on Poland. The star of Napoleon, which brought so many hopes to Poles, was still bright in the firmament. The childhood of Chopin was spent in this half-free part of Poland, artificially cut out from her living body like out of a heart still warm; a new Insurrection was approaching. Not knowing it he left the country for further studies, and could see her no more. But leaving her he was not alone. Her genius was with him, in fact it was incarnated in him. And that is why no other nation tried to claim him as its own, as was the case with so many great men of Poland.

Soon after Chopin's departure a terrible oppression, a savage persecution of all our culture began. Everything was prohibited, Polish schools, Polish language, faith of our fore-

fathers, the cult of our traditions, our national poets, but . . . not forbidden was Chopin. And in him we have found all, the prayer of our heart, the love of our freedom, and the dream of our victory. During these long gloomy years how many sacred cords have bound our souls to his music, how many hearts in deadly pain have found a balm in the eloquence of his heart, how many has he revived, comforted and regenerated? Who could count? He was the genius who struggled above the frontiers with the modest, innocent black letters of music as his weapon, for the Polish spirit so severely persecuted. And now he is in full, shining glory of the undying gratitude of the nation. He is not alone, her genius is with him. The greatest man cannot be great outside and beyond his nation. The greater, the more beautiful, the stronger he is, the nearer he finds himself to the heart of his nation. Chopin did not know how great he was. But we know that he was great with our greatness, strong with our power, and marvellous with our beauty. He is ours and we are his, as all our soul is revealed in him. Let us be strong to endure, to meet bravely further trials, let us lift up our hearts and prepare them for great and noble action, let us lift up our souls towards an unshakable faith in our nation. A nation that has such sons does not perish, she does not die, because she has an immortal eternal Soul of her own.

The highest flight of the Spirit in a Nation attracts to it the highest spirits.

SLOWACKI

CULTURE AND CHARACTER

THE love of beauty, grace of life and courtesy of manners, charm of customs and traditions have characterized Polish culture for ages, as well as a vivid, often exuberant joy of life. This last expresses itself seldom in crude and vulgar forms, even amongst the lowest classes. Mr. Charles Phillips says: "Fine manners are the oldest heritage of the Poles, the poorest beggar seems to the manner born. In every cottage of Polish peasants you will encounter good manners and unconscious grace in his modest etiquette." And Mr. Super writes: "The Poles' natural idealism, romanticism, toleration, taste and mental parts combine to provide a peculiarly graceful social atmosphere; courtesy, dignity, consideration and physical grace being its basic elements" as well as hospitality having no equal except in India, and a keen sense of humour displayed even in the worst conditions. Mr. R. Butler, not a friend of Poland at all, writes in his book, *The New Eastern Europe*: "They [the Poles] are the only ones in this part of Europe in whose composition there is included that subtle differentia, which marks off the 'big' nation from the 'small'"; and "in all Europe there is no other

people, with the possible exception of the French, which is so naturally gifted."

The charm of the Polish home; the grace of Polish architecture—most typical in old wooden churches, barns and granaries; the captivating beauty of Polish folk-art—weaving, pottery, lace, wood-carving, native batik; all are the expression of the artistic faculties and the instinctive deep-rooted love of the beautiful.

The extremely intimate communion with nature is one of the inner sources of Polish art and culture. It reaches a kind of mystic worship, a complete identification in many a poet. One of them writes: "The mighty stream of the Vistula in all its calm majesty teaches us more than any book, it penetrates into our soul, it flows through our heart, it brings about the union of our being with the Soul of the Land. The soil has its own Soul, this is literally true. When we enter into close communion with it, we begin to understand the meaning of the saying that planets are states of consciousness."

This nearness to the soil has influenced deeply our speech and song—two wings of the national

genius. "The Polish speech grew up directly from the native soil, it has an originality and a unity—no foreign amalgamations—it is pure like a stream descending straight from the glaciers." Its words are so pliable that they easily give perfect expression to the most delicate and subtle feeling and inner experiences as well as the richest pictures of nature and creative imagination, which is very vivid among the Poles. In the stanzas of Slowacki, who has been called by some English literary critics "Shelley and Blake in one person," and who is the greatest master of the feminine (Devic) side of the Polish language, every word seems to be a living winged entity, full of fragrance and light. In Kochanowski, Skarga,¹ Mickiewicz—representatives of the masculine line of our speech—the words are more solemn and austere, they seem to have more weight, the capacity to command, to shake and to awaken human consciences. Mickiewicz, in his lectures at the Collège de France, often spoke words powerful like thunder over the heads of mankind. These poets are till our days the great teachers of the rhythm and music of our language.

The characteristic of the Polish style in all literature is a spirit of

activity, vivacity and impetus—the same characterizing the popular songs, in which a deep inexpressible sadness, tragic and longing, are combined with an exuberant joy and a tremendous dash.

Individualism, an innate sense of democracy, deep religious feeling, and idealism are also the prominent traits of Polish character and culture.

Mr. Super thus defines Polish idealism: "It is the belief that ideals will prevail over brute force, devotion to principle, vision of the future, high valuation of spiritual considerations, relative indifference to the material situation, joy in ideas and striving after their realization, the quest for the ideal. . . Here are the roots of much that Poland was, is and shall be. It helps one to understand her faults and her failures, her sufferings and her surviving, her splendid achievements and her abiding worth. It is a fact that her culture is of the spirit, not material. Be it good or bad, this idealism is a reality, and it must be realized to understand Polish culture. It is one of the chief traits of character that makes the Pole interesting, attractive and admirable."

Because of this idealism the Pole throughout history represented a definite moral type, his attitude towards individuals and communities was never determined by race, creed or any other outer

¹ The Rev. Peter Skarga—court-preacher to King Zygmunt III—1536-1612, the greatest orator of the Republic, likened to the Hebrew prophets, so powerful were his thunderings on civic righteousness and patriotic duties; incomparable in his visions.

consideration, but by simple humanity. His approach to socio-political problems had a religious touch, he possessed a peculiar quality which we may call Social Conscience, and a firm belief that love is the only real power able to unite in lasting bonds nations as well as individuals. This belief was so vivid in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that it found its expression in the Act of Union between Poland and Lithuania, regarded as a mystic and sacred wedding of the two countries. It is typical and unique. It begins thus:

In the name of the Lord, Amen. May this deed be remembered for ever. It is known to all that he will not attain salvation who is not sustained by the mystery of love, which does nothing wrong, radiates goodness, reconciles those in discord, unites those who quarrel, dissipates hatred, puts an end to anger, furnishes to all the food of peace, brings together the scattered, lifts up the fallen, makes rough ways smooth, turns wrong into right, aids all virtue, injures no one, delights in all things, he who takes refuge in its arms will find safety. Through love laws are established, kingdoms are ruled, cities are set in order, and the welfare of the State is brought to its highest, amongst the virtues it is the most to be commended, and if anyone shall hold it in contempt he deprives himself of everything good. May love unite us, make us equal, us, whom religion and identity of laws has already joined.

"What a document!" exclaims Mr. Super, "was there ever another such treaty? It puts the 13th chapter of the First Corinthians into politics where it is certainly much needed."

It is not the only one, we find the same religious touch in Kosciuszko's manifestoes to the nation, in the orders to the insurgent army of Traugutt, the head of the revolutionary National Government in 1863, when he says: "The Polish soldier must be a real soldier of Christ"; etc., etc.

It was the Social Conscience acting, when in the fifteenth century a Polish scholar—Jan Ludziska—was the first to feel and express forcefully that something is wrong in the conditions of the peasants; and many of the writers of the sixteenth century emphasized that human dignity must be equally respected in the poorest villagers, "these our brethren in Christ, children of our Mother—Poland." The Polish conscience applied the same principle to foreigners and to heathens. The Rector of the Cracow Academy—Pawel Wlodkowic—at the Council of Constance (1415) and Basle is alone in protesting strongly against the feudal principle, recognized by the Church, that the territories of heathens can be appropriated by Christian Powers and their inhabitants converted by force. He says: "The heathen also must be treated

with humanity; faith cannot be imposed by violence." He becomes famous by his statement that the same morality which has to rule the life of the individual must be applied in the social and political field, that Christian love and respect for humanity in others must guide national and international affairs. This idea becomes the most cherished creed of the great thinkers of the post-partition period and is vividly alive in our days.

In the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century the same Social Conscience is prompting rich nobles—landowners—not only to abolish serfdom on their estates, but to organize peasant self-governments, with schools, hospitals, banks, etc., of their own. Such were the experiments of Brzostowski, of Staszyc, the well-known professor and scientist of the Wilno University, of Master Towianski, and of many others.

The same conscience guided Kosciuszko not only in the most progressive ideas proclaimed and introduced in his own country, but in the full liberation granted and education in citizenship given to a batch of Negroes in America, in exchange for the land awarded to him by the American Congress in recognition of his great services to the American nation. It was in 1798—sixty-eight years before the law liberating the Negroes was passed!

It is also alive in Polish modern literature where the problem of social justice is presented with force and insight, with no class hatred nor flame of revenge, rather with deep understanding and compassion. Polish youth has been for generations actively concerned in social problems, not under the influence of any party, but out of a spontaneous inner urge. The love for the lower, the weaker, the younger, for the multitude, is a characteristic of the Polish temperament.

There is a keen reverence for manual work, the tilling of the soil, the labour of the craftsman and workman. A kind of original philosophy of work touching mysticism, was created. The working man, the "people," becomes a symbol. "The people is a dissatisfied, suffering, longing collective man, free from the burden of prejudices, keenly alive to great, to new truths," says Mickiewicz. The same ideas are repeated by many contemporary thinkers. One of them says that the source of the spirituality of Polish culture, of its peculiar freshness and fragrance—felt by every sensitive visitor—as well as its vivid social conscience, is to be found in Poland's spontaneous, almost unconscious harmony with two fundamental laws: the law of reverence and the law of protection. "Reverence is the most dynamic of all the creative

forces. The deeper it is felt by a nation the nearer she is to the Truth of Being. The law of protection is the motherly force at work. Souls and nations that are able to embody it in their deeds are nearer than others to the harmony of the cosmic order, to the Beauty of Being." Reverence seeks the Ideal, aspires upwards; Protection calls down powers from on high. Both are the life-breath of Poland.

The new conscience in humanity is being awakened chiefly by "motherly" souls. And the Polish genius was for ages deeply concerned with this all-human problem. Poland was also often called a bridge-builder, a union-maker. She forged links between religions, the Uniat Church is a link between the Roman and the Greek Catholic Churches, between the cultures of Western and Eastern Europe, between peoples—in Unions and Federations.

Another characteristic makes Polish culture somewhat different from those of more western countries: it is the capacity to create great symbols, myths and legends capable of inspiring generations, it is vividly alive even today. While Europe of the nineteenth century was busy building her material prosperity, developing all the in-humanities of the capitalistic system with the enslaving power of machinery, and nearly forgetting

the intensities of spiritual ecstasies and the grandeur of heroism, Poland, compelled by her strange destiny, was nourished by and living on them. Her life was abounding in happenings as dramatic as were the Roman Arenas with burning stakes and the life of the first Christians in the Catacombs. A dynamic religion was created every day anew, with all the power to inspire people for life and death. This has left a deep imprint on her culture and character. Heroism in all classes of society was taken as a matter of course; a peculiar modesty, rather unconsciousness of anything extraordinary even in the midst of sublime deeds and emotions, has developed. It is indeed difficult to be recognized as great in Poland. No amount of skill, knowledge, bravery, talent or statesmanship can suffice. Only moral greatness, nobility of character, generosity, kind-heartedness, added to bravery, like the knight's *sans peur et sans reproche*, and the absolute conformity of a high ideal with life and practice can gain the reverence of the nation. And we see such great characters, faithful to the last breath to their ideals, in every age of Polish history. The Polish hero-type is chiefly the hero-martyr, the knight, the individual and the collective warrior.

The joy of life is strangely intertwined in the Polish Soul with

a sense of tragedy. It is through tragedy that the art has chiefly influenced the nation, in tragedy the Polish Soul has found its deepest expression and hammered out its highest culture. It shines in the peculiar Polish patriotism which is a religion in itself. No country in the world has been so ardently worshipped and adored as Poland. But this name means not only a country for Polish hearts, it is an ideal and a high

spiritual Entity as well. "Poland is not only a land, it is an idea." "To be truly national one must be supernational, universal," repeat our great poets. The passionate Polish love of Freedom is an all-embracing Ideal, it is the Kingdom of Heaven longed for the whole Humanity, because "only in those activities which are working for the spiritual Freedom of Humanity can we Poles fully express our real selves."

MARIA ROSZAN

SEAS AND MOUNTAINS IN THE LIFE OF POLAND

BY WANDA DYNOWSKA

THE vigour and vitality of Poland's life have depended through the ages of her history in some measure on two factors—the sea on her northern and the mountains on her southern borders. Already in prehistoric times the Slavs who united to form Poland had a well-developed navy, and were waging wars with the sea-power of Denmark. A considerable length of the Baltic shore including the future Danzig, then a purely Polish settlement, belonged to Poland in the ninth and tenth centuries; her early commerce followed the great water-routes of the rivers flowing to the Baltic Sea—chiefly the Vistula, carrying the produce of the land to England, Holland,

France and more distant countries. When Poland for some hundred years lost her access to the sea, because of the growing rapacity of the Knights of the Cross, it was a historic tragedy, like the amputation of a living limb from the Republic. When she regained the outlet to the sea, in the fifteenth century, it became the source of a many-sided development of the country. The land on the Baltic shores—Pomerania or Pomorze—inhabited by the stubborn race of Polish provincials, the Kashubes, seamen and fishermen, whom all the germanizing endeavours were unable to denationalize, has belonged to Poland for 654 years.

THE SEA

The sea also was an important factor in the formation of national culture. This was understood by the poets and writers of Poland and dimly felt by the nation, whose link with the sea was vivid, even in times when all dreams of a possibility of calling it Polish again one day would have seemed childish.

The sea became a myth in Polish literature, a subject of poems and longings. The genuineness of this feeling was proved by an outburst of general and passionate love, when independent Poland once more could call a seashore—although considerably smaller than in olden days—her own. A beautiful and picturesque ceremony took place, religious rituals were performed on the poor, bare shores of Pomorze, and the "Marriage of Poland with the Sea" was solemnized at Puck, when a Deputy of the nation, riding his white charger into the surf, saluted the tide with his drawn sword and threw an iron ring into the waves. It was a day of jubilation throughout the country. And every year detachments of the army repeated during great "Sea Festivals" a moving oath of fidelity of the Republic to her "wedded Spouse."

In a few years, as by magic, the bare shores changed. In place of a poor fishermen's village there grew up with astounding speed, the proud and splendid port of Gdynia, earning the admiration and applause of all specialists, and the interest of tourists. With the most modern harbour arrangements, beautiful buildings, spacious streets and squares, Gdynia became not only one of the richest of Poland's towns, the route of 73 per cent of her

trade, and one of the chief nerve-centres of the quickly growing commerce of the Baltic, competing with the best German ports, but also Poland's dearest child, loved like the sea itself with a passionate attachment. This feeling cannot be understood by nations who do not know what compulsory inactivity in one's own home means, who have never experienced the intoxicating joy of retaking the full possession of their own land, and organizing its strongholds, the inner as well as the material fortresses of its Spirit, by the voluntary enthusiastic effort of all citizens. No one can imagine the intense emotion felt by us during the first years of our regained freedom at the sight of a train with Polish inscriptions, of a regiment of our own Army, or of an aeroplane with a pilot of our own; when the first Polish ship touched the sea-waves, the first batch of Polish sailors left the naval school.

Poland has proved her love for the sea by deeds, not only by emotions and ceremonies. Her Navy serves now the common cause of the Allies and of human freedom. Its heroism and skill is recognized and praised. A new chapter in our culture was opened by the access to the sea, and a new chapter in the glorious history of Polish valour is being written by our seamen since September 1939.

THE MOUNTAINS

Who can describe the ineffable glory of the mountains, those spear-heads of our earth, the frozen fountains of her proud aspiring dreams! Who can express the enchanted, magnificent world of the Polish mountains, more wild,

more virginal and lonely than the Alps, where man has penetrated with his impertinent ugliness, desecrating with the signs of his selfish civilization (advertisements, hostels, etc.), this temple of the living Gods?

The Tatras—the highest part of the Carpathian Range—may be rightly called the very heart of Poland. Quiet and grand, severe and austere, they represent a world of their own, where those who can sense and “speak” with the Devas may live for months never feeling alone.

When we came first with Dr. Arundale and Rukmini Devi to the marvellous lake, “the Eye of the Sea,” in the Tatras, it was said: “How like that of the Himalayas is the atmosphere of this place!” We were unable to understand what these simple words implied; how could we? We only felt something grand behind them and were happy. Now that the writer knows the Himalayas, that she has touched their exalted atmosphere, and believes that if Svarga can be located somewhere on earth it is certainly in the Himalayas, she now fully understands Dr. Arundale’s exclamation, and agrees with it whole-heartedly.

The second impression of Dr. Arundale’s struck us likewise, and for years remained a riddle; it was: “What a strange gravity, one would say deep sadness, is here. Is it the trace of the nation’s past sufferings?” We could not understand. It was in 1925, the seventh year of Poland’s independence, one felt in places not yet visited since the war, a kind of relief in the whole of nature, a deeper and more luminous smile of joy, unknown in the times of

slavery. Why here, in the one spot which had been least touched by its oppressive burden, should its vestiges still persist? When we learned that the Tatra mountains are the chief dwelling-place of the National Deva, we still wondered, for His life seemed now so rich in joy. . . . We understood it only in 1939. Was He—the Deva—aware of the impending fate of His land in the near future?

The Tatras . . . on the rocky shores of the mountain’s clear, snow-fed lakes, limpid like crystal, surrounded by a ring of different shades of green, from the dark, nearly black of the “Limba,” Polish variety of mountain pine, to the light green of the wilderness of different kinds of ferns, closely embracing the deep blue jewel-lake; and on the barren wild and stony shores of still higher lakes, one learns what Silence is. There are only two spots in Poland where such silence reigns, the Tatras, and one particular chapel in the Cathedral of Wawel, where the Polish Kings used to come through a private gallery to attend Mass, or to pray in solitude at any hour of the day or night before the Most Holy Sacrament ever present in this chapel. What a Silence. . . . A grandeur which takes away one’s breath. A peace so infinite that one feels small as dust, yet vibrant with some fiery power which seems to touch the heart with a magic wand, changing it into a motionless pool.

The infinite perspective of ages. Depths inconceivable to the average men. The Tatras and Wawel—two temples, two sacred altars of the nation’s shrine, and a mysterious legacy for all humanity.



HIGH TATRAS



THE CASTLE OF WAWEL, CRACOW

The influence of these mountains on the life and culture of Poland has been incalculable, greater than that of the sea, not only because of the fact that they have never ceased to belong to Poland, but also because here generations of poets, thinkers, painters and musicians have found solitude and communion with the Infinite, which has been manifested afterwards in their creation. Works of art inspired by the Tatras are innumerable. Zakopane, the chief mountain resort in the valley of the Tatras, was for years the intellectual centre of the whole country.

The mountain peasant is a unique type among the Polish provincials. He has never known what serfdom means nor any dependence on lords and nobles, he has always been his own master, free like the wind, with a peculiar fantasy, pride and humour. Extremely poor, as only oats can be grown on a rocky soil, he used, in former ages, to rob the travellers on the highways of the plains and bring the booty proudly home. Independent and stubborn, artistic and brisk, always in love with his mountains, he has enriched Polish culture; the art of wood-carving and wood architecture has spread all over Poland, and is known under the name of the "Zakopane Style." There were several museums of old mountain art in Zakopane, where we could see beautiful specimens

of ancient peasant paintings on glass, as well as embroidery and lace. The dances in the mountains, the songs and musical instruments are very different from those of the plains. The famous dance and songs of the "Zboyniki," (those brigand adventurers, who disappeared only in the nineteenth century), have a peculiar rhythm and a somewhat wild beauty. Their songs not at all appreciated by the town-dwellers, who are much despised by the mountaineers, are similar to some of the songs of India. This part of Poland is probably the richest in legends, tales, myths. The culture of the mountaineers, their style of life and language—a quite original Polish dialect from which a host of poets have profited—has an expression and dignity of its own.

The Germans have well appreciated the latent qualities of the Polish mountaineers, and have done all they could to awaken in them separatist feelings, by bribery, by all kinds of special favours, and by a "scientific" theory that they do not belong to the Polish nation.

All Poles who were not natives of the mountains have been driven from the whole province, together with all Jews. No Pole is now allowed to enter the Castle of Wawel, no Pole can worship in this greatest of Poland's temples—the Tatra mountains.

Through our Nation must come to the conscience of mankind a realization that God's temple on earth is not in this or that place, in this or that ritual, but on our whole globe, and in mutual relations between individuals as well as between nations.

KRASINSKI

THE POLISH THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

BY WANDA DYNOWSKA

THE strength of our Society was not in numbers, but in the active realization of Theosophy ; of course not in all its manifold aspects, but in those which most appealed to the national temperament ; it was active Brotherhood and a sense of responsibility for our own nation's life, and a keen interest in the life of other nations.

The comparatively small number of members was in itself the expression of the Polish approach to great Truths and idealistic organizations. There was not even one member who would have joined The Theosophical Society out of mere intellectual interest ; everybody considers he has first to achieve in his life some revaluation in the light of Theosophy, to begin the practice of its principles, and serve The Society before joining it. Its membership was treated with earnestness and reverence, as implying a great responsibility, and a duty of active co-operation. That was the chief reason of the high level of our general meetings, the earnestness, harmony and an almost esoteric atmosphere which were recognized by every visitor from other Sections.

The second reason of it was Brotherhood realized "down here," not only "up there," practised and lived as a matter of course, as a kind of simple, cordial comradeship, taking sympathetic interest in everything concerning other members, ever ready to help in small matters of the physical plane as well as

in all others. It had also a specifically Polish touch of reverence for the human Soul in itself, which was expressed not only during some acute differences of opinions and methods, resulting often in keen opposition and struggle between members of opposite temperaments, in a common sincere endeavour to "work together differently," but also in continuance of good relations with those who—for various reasons, chiefly seeking new aspects of Truth in Krishnaji's teaching—left The Society. The degree of deep friendship, harmony and unity realized in a group, numerous enough, of workers, was the occult basis of all our Theosophical movements, and has been recognized and blessed by an Authority higher than anyone we could quote.

If other Sections were rich in learning, in knowledge, in research work, big libraries, buildings, wonderful lecturers, propaganda arrangements, etc., the Polish was rich in youthful enthusiasm and in the typical Polish quality—conformity to the Ideal with practice. That was probably the reason of the fact that Poland was the only country in Europe where the Order of the Brothers of Service was allowed. Started on general lines, similar to the one working in India, it soon developed specifically Polish characteristics. It was an invaluable training-ground for character, a reservoir of true power, an experimental field where we were

unconsciously led to face the inner problems which were most important and vital for Poland, stumbling blocks on her historical path, concentrating all the ardour of our young enthusiastic hearts on their solution. The problems of obedience and of freedom of the individual conscience; of the hierarchical rule of the one, or—according to the democratic principle—of the majority; the problem of creative and harmonious co-operation of very different psychological temperaments, of born leaders, of the great Manu type, and of revolutionary poets, whose flights often disregarded and broke order and plans, or on the contrary hurt themselves and felt their inspiration vanish, their creative faculties crippled, under the heavy weight of some misunderstood principle. Even if we did not succeed in finding a completely satisfactory solution and a method of fully harmonious co-operation of both these extreme types, we achieved a degree of mutual reverence, love and even admiration for the very differences, which may be in the long run even more important. With time the artistic group understood that it had to submit to a certain extent to the one in which the power aspect prevailed, and that the only key to every difficulty is wise love.

The Order of the Brothers of Service with all its grades, with its Community, passing through different stages, from that of a monastic type, with no private property nor personal will in matters of work, to a very free common living, creating a centre of attraction for outside people in search of an Ideal, was a real service done to

the spiritual life of Poland, a valuable contribution to her inner creative endeavours.

The Community being brotherhood in practice, and a social experiment too, has interested more people in Theosophy than any other form of propaganda could have done. The Poles can never be "converted" by lectures; they dislike all kinds of leaflets, pamphlets, etc., regarding them as below the dignity of an idealistic, spiritual society; but example, lived experiment and sincere endeavour can work miracles with their hearts. It is through the heart, through the inner sense of the Right and the Beautiful, and through action that one can spread Theosophy in Poland.

One of the most interesting activities of our Society was a farm in the country, where every year two or three gatherings were held; summer schools for workers, for members and for outside people, and these last were the greatest success. People could come to lectures and meditations—these were generally much liked—they lived with us, learned to know us, and we tried to make them happy, free, feeling friendship around them; and the greatest pride of our members was the invariably repeated opinion: "One can agree or not with all your Theosophical theories, but one thing one must admit: you have realized a degree of brotherhood rarely, if ever, seen in any other organization." That was the best form of our propaganda; the links remained, the subtle radiance worked, and the Light of that which is the very heart of Theosophy touched hundreds of people yearly.

Another characteristic of the Polish Theosophical Society was its deep identification with the life of the nation. The words of Dr. Arundale that we are, or rather should be, the spiritual vanguard of Poland, were understood literally, and we could honestly say that we were feeling the pulsation of the nation's life so intensely that we were not far from being identified with her heart. Not one of Poland's problems left us indifferent; there was no activity—idealistic, mental, social or political—which did not attract our attention, our study or such help as we possibly could give.

We had a Branch studying the Jewish problem; a group working on the friendship and understanding with Lithuanians; another, with some prominent people in it, trying to create an atmosphere of cordiality, frankness and mutual confidence with Ukrainian intellectuals; there were endeavours to unite the youth of all parties and opinions, and to create in open social gatherings in The Society a tribune for a free discussion of every new movement, idea, tendency, quest, etc., etc.

There was also a group called "Servers of Poland," which tried to do some active, practical work and had achieved remarkable results; there was a meditation group, called the "Amaranth Group" (amaranth is the Polish national colour) which was in touch with idealistic movements and people all over the country, trying to serve as a channel for the vivifying and inspiring power, strengthening their work.

We were in touch with Marshal Pilsudski, who was deeply interested in occultism, and there was a time when

he used to summon some of our members to discuss spiritual and occult matters, to enquire about the progress of our work, and many times he gave us invaluable psychological advice; he sometimes visited incognito our Community, staying for the night to the joy of the members. We were in touch with many social and political workers, since our Order of Service, preaching no philosophy, had a larger membership than The Theosophical Society and included some outstanding people.

Another characteristic of our Society was care and need of beauty, in the Headquarters; at every meeting and public lecture we consciously used music, flowers, recitation, songs, to create an atmosphere of pure and lofty beauty, attracting the Devas and Gandharvas. This was bound to influence the sensitive artistic Polish nature. At our country farm we also used some improvised rituals, invocations, fire ceremonies, dances and plays in the midst of the enchanted harmony of the spot, in the woods, on the bank of a big river.

One of the activities in which much was accomplished, was the propagation of new ideas about health, diet, rest and healing; the League of Healing was known in Warsaw, where it secured the co-operation of some professional physicians, and with coloured light, massage, psychological methods and special exercises was helping hundreds of patients. And the Healing Meditation group was the oldest in our movement, started at the very beginning in 1920 and working since then without interruption. Another meditation group, the "Shakti" group, meditated on

different aspects of Cosmic Shakti, and Her influence was the source of lofty inspiration, sunshine, delicate refinement and "motherly" devotion. Meditation groups were one of the strongest points of our Section.

Lectures and study classes were, of course, a part of our work. We had at least half a dozen very good lecturers, some of whom could capture and influence the largest audience, in spite of the fact that a Polish audience is far more critical and exacting than in many countries. One more group was engaged in creating a permanent link with the Centre and with other countries. The interest in the life of other people being one of the Polish characteristics, our members were only faithful to this tradition when they vividly felt their link with other Sections and interest in other national cultures.

HISTORY OF THE POLISH T.S.

Before the Great War there was in Warsaw a T.S. Lodge, attached to the Russian Section, composed chiefly of half-Poles. It dispersed or joined the Steiner movement before the end of the war, and when we met some of its old members for starting our work, we were told: "Even a Master, if He could come to Poland, would not succeed in gaining her to Theosophy." Of course we found that the reverse was the truth.

Our Society began its existence after the return of our delegate from Paris at the end of 1919, with Dr. Besant's authorization, her handwritten personal message and blessings, with Mr. C. Jinarājadāsa's encouragement, speaking the first time about the Apollonius of

Tyana Centre located in Poland, with a big box of books, which however wandered for one year till it reached our hands, and a firm resolve to found the Polish Section of The Theosophical Society in the shortest possible time. We had nothing to start with, no books, no room, no money. Several hundred pounds, voted by the English Section, were not allowed to be sent, and never reached us; a few pounds were brought by Miss Dorothy Arnold, who came with the best intentions, but not knowing the Polish character and conditions could do little, and soon left. Our few members, ruined by the last war, gave all they possessed—even wedding rings and watches—to send the delegate to Paris and had nothing more to offer; but enthusiasm and fervour were boundless and they carried us through.

On the 1st January 1920 the first organizing meeting was held, the first meditation group started. The conditions of life were tremendously difficult, Warsaw was overcrowded with refugees, our workers living in the suburbs, often preparing their lectures in the streets, under the light of the street lamps, delivering them to one or two persons, in some drawing-room of an unknown hostess, but they were not discouraged, for energy and devotion conquered all obstacles. In spring there was a Lodge in Warsaw, another one in Cracow, and in Wilno. When war came, all the members went to the front, the girls to the Red Cross or canteens for soldiers. Some most promising men fell in the defence of Poland's freedom, other members lost their nearest and dearest ones; in September everything had to be started anew.

It was an epoch-making event when the first books were purchased, when the first room was offered for our exclusive use. Lectures were gathering more and more people, discussions were lively, questions were deep and interesting. Not one of our workers had any experience in Theosophical work, one had joined in Italy, the other through correspondence, the rest were admitted by us. Often the lecturers had to postpone the answer to some difficult question till the next meeting, and having very few books for reference they simply went to sleep with an earnest request for the elucidation of the matter, and invariably woke up with a clear perception of the problem. Soon some money was collected and the publication of a magazine was possible. In spite of extreme difficulties of an occult pressure making often every effort doubly exhausting, in spite of lack of means and competence, the work was growing and spreading. In 1923 the Section was ready; it was inaugurated on Whitsunday, under the power of the Holy Ghost, the most appropriate and auspicious day for Poland—in the friendly presence of Mme. Kamensky, as a symbol that all the past between the two countries, Poland and Russia, had been forgotten. And the Charter was received at the Vienna Congress, July 1923, from the hands of Mr. C. Jinarājādāsa.

The work went on growing in strength. The second most memorable date in the history of our movement was Spring 1925, when Dr. Arundale with Rukmini Devi paid us two visits, winning the special and unique devotion of our people, and “discovering” Poland and our work, which till then

had been going on with no help or encouragement, save the invisible help often vividly felt by us. It was a boundless and unforgettable happiness, it was also a most vigorous impulse to the expansion of all our movements—the Order of the Brothers of Service and the Community were then started.

Soon Bishop J. I. Wedgwood paid us several visits and also Mrs. Adelaide Gardner, who became one of the most faithful friends of our Section. Some other visitors also came; we were now “discovered” and known. The period 1925-27 was the golden age of our activities, of our expansion and influence in the country. The farm was purchased and organized, publications started, extensive lecture-tours carried out, etc. Our General Secretary was invited on a Central European lecture-tour—Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania were visited and links made with countries and members—and to Great Britain for 25 lectures on Polish culture, England, Scotland and Wales were visited. The expansion of the work in Poland itself was marvellous.

Autumn 1927 brought an unexpected “catastrophe”—the resignation from all our movements of three prominent workers, who had been for several years in the very heart of our activities, under the influence of Krishnaji’s teaching. Till then both lines had been parallel and developing harmoniously. The Star Self-Preparation group was a real power and Star lectures were arousing the greatest interest of the public. It was a hard blow, the gap for years was difficult to fill; the Community lost its headquarters and had to undergo the first reform. The bewilderment and

pain of the members were indescribable. It was in this state of chaos, like after a bomb-explosion, that Dr. Besant paid us a visit. She helped us to rebuild, reorganize and heal the inner wounds; but it took a very long time till all the traces were transmuted, and our only victory was the unchangingly friendly attitude towards those three, and an unflinching perseverance in our further work. But the first period of youthful enthusiasm and almost childlike flight of inspiration was over, we were now as old soldiers knowing the strain and stress of exhausting battles, holding on by manly qualities more than by the fire of youth.

It was the time of growth of the Liberal Catholic Church, the Order of

Service with its different Leagues, of provincial Branches, of study courses, summer schools, etc.—a steady, quiet, deep growth, which lasted with different happenings, some reverses, many successes, till the war. The Society grew in depth, in earnestness, in quiet and heroic steadiness in spite of all the sacrifices the work often required. Art was fostered. During the last years an amateur theatre was going round the villages under the lead of a member. Some members had leading positions in social work, in education, and in politics. One can say that, although not numerically strong, the Polish Theosophical Society has exercised a considerable influence on the life of free Poland, and on the whole has well performed its Dharma.

THE KARMA OF POLAND

AS SEEN BY POLISH THEOSOPHISTS

WHAT is behind the Karma of Poland? What is its inner meaning? This question has been faced by the greatest men of our land, it has been also faced by Polish Theosophists. It is not easy to give an answer to it, even for a Theosophist, as there is a kind of a riddle, of a mystery, in the fate of Poland.

The Polish thinkers and poets have seen in this strange fate an indication of Poland's spiritual mission, a sign of a need for her to undergo an intense purification, to become in the shortest possible time worthy of being a Messen-

ger of a New Era for Humanity. Thus one of the famous triad of our poets says: "Through our nation martyred on a cross of history must come to the spiritual conscience of mankind the realization that religion has to influence the sphere of politics as much as any other sphere of life"; and: "in a nation whose outrage is the greatest sin against humanity, the Ideal of Humanity must shine with the brightest light." Another says: "Poland has been destined to reproduce for the community of nations the mystery of mediation, by proclaiming through her life the

Gospel of Freedom, by bridging the gulf between the fallen plane of political life and the original plane of life divine." That was the understanding of Messianic philosophers.

There was also another extreme of thought in the so-called "positivistic" school of history, which attributed all the misfortunes of Poland to her own unpractical idealism; it had its source in the conception of the fight for existence and the survival of the fittest in unscrupulous might, but also in an utter despair after the failure of the last fight for freedom.

Thesis and antithesis. Polish Theosophists have tried to find a synthesis. First of all many of them thought that the present Karma of Poland is the result of her past incarnation, which is supposed to be linked with Etruria and Greece; it is of course a hypothesis, far more perfect inner faculties would be necessary to determine it with precision.

The other conception is that there are individuals as well as nations, of a dramatic type, (of the fourth or seventh Ray, and those who are near the path of the Mother), who need, to fulfil their Dharma, a greater pressure, a heavier hammering, a more intense fire, in which the metal must become not only red but white, to be transmuted into alchemic gold. The nearer one is to the dangerous, creative powers of the Mother (Holy Ghost) the greater must be the purity and integrity of the soul, individual and national alike, the more disastrous is every error or deviation from the straight path.

It may also be that some paths being the preparations of qualities which will be necessary only after many centur-

ies in their full development—in the seventh sub-race or seventh Root Race—have to be awakened, and to a certain extent unfolded, far earlier. This can be done only in a peculiar atmosphere, in a great intensity of suffering, under a tremendous strain of struggle for life itself, with no assistance from outside, when all the power of resistance has to be drawn from the very depth of our own being, as the indestructibility of its inherent Divinity has to be discovered by a living experience never to be forgotten. And Poland has to follow this path. On the dramatic path life is bound to be tragic. It is no use to ask why, nor to compare one destiny with another. Our own Dharma is always the best for us.

Some of the Polish Theosophists believe that the MONADS of nations (Devas) have, like human ones, a free choice of their own Ray for a given Manvantara; they imagine that the Eternal Spiritual Entity behind the Polish nation has deliberately and freely chosen this path of chivalry, of heroic dramatic activity and tremendous suffering. The mission of a bridge-maker between heaven and earth, in which one has oneself to become a living bridge, requires a great love and an intimate knowledge of both, and this can be gained through hard experience only.

In such Dharma they see the explanation both of the Polish history and of the Messianic ideas, which were only dim forebodings of a far-off future. The poets and the thinkers have been right when they have felt that Poland's "King-Spirit" (Deva) has to soar higher, to touch heaven more

immediately and fully—in sudden, tremendous flights and uplifts, not through slow gradual effort—than those of other Rays; and those who have seen that there are strange paradoxes in the Polish nature, greater heights and lower depths, have been also right. If the vanguard of the nation is often in advance of some others, the rearguard may be at the same time behind, on the dreary plains of earth, on roads full of dust and mire. The extremes touched by souls in Poland are more marked, the scale of actual experiences larger, but the happiness of fulfilment is felt only when the two extremes are linked together, when “heaven” and “earth” (masculine and feminine forces) are, at least for one moment, blended into one indivisible whole.

The reason of the peculiar ferocity of the Nazis displayed in Poland is seen by our Theosophists in the fact that there exists in our land a spiritual and occult Centre, established by Apollonius of Tyana, founded not for Poland's sake but for the great part of the Continent of Europe. Of course its radiation, although not yet in full activity,

for only the future will see its marvellous expansion, is more felt in its vicinity, and this is bound to create in all dark forces a tremendous reaction of rage and hatred, which unloads its dynamic power of destruction on the poor, innocent inhabitants, unconscious guardians of the common treasury of European humanity. It was often wondered if this fact was not influencing the whole Karma and Dharma of Poland; if the knowledge of it was not one of the reasons of our Messianic poets' beliefs. In any case Polish Theosophists have always felt it deeply, and proved their gratitude and reverence for it by lives of utter dedication and service in which—in a purely Polish way—there was no room for any other thought, any other devotion.

Something of the splendour of the Rishis may touch in blessing even the humblest guardian of one of Their treasures, one of the tokens of Their love for mankind. And if our sufferings are great in fulfilling the guardianship and the duty of defence, it is only a sacred trust accepted by us with gratitude, joyous courage and faithfulness.

W. L. B.

SOME SYMBOLS

IT is in some symbols that the deepest tone of Poland's Soul is revealed, too subtle to be expressed by any word. In all the countries it seems that Poland alone has the *White Eagle* as her emblem.

The ancient colour of her standard was not ordinary red, but amaranth,

the same that is found in the bearings of the princely family of Rakoczi, as the author was able to discover during her stay in Hungary.

Polish Theosophists believe that a special link binds Poland to Master the Prince; they quote many proofs: The Poles' exceptional love for and skill

in rituals; the age-long friendship between Hungary and Poland, with much mutual service and co-operation, like the common fight of the Chief Hunyadi Janos and the Polish King Wladislaus against the Turks in 1444; some mysterious contacts of our greatest poets with the Comte de S. Germain in France (as recent researches indicate); signs of Master Rakoczi's interest in some spiritual and Theosophical activities in Poland during the last twenty years and the encouragement He gave in messages sent to a group of workers. But a still more striking proof is found in the fact that the only great symbol that renders almost perfectly the prominent tone of the Seventh Ray—that élan of chivalry—like the inspired flight of wings, that inexpressible, majestic and fiery impetus, is to be found in Poland in the unique figure of her winged knights—the Hussars of the sixteenth century, whose regiments were invincible, for the strange sight of their wings fluttering in the winds and the rush of their charge was unbearable to the enemy's men and horses alike. To these regiments were due the greatest Polish victories over overwhelming forces of the Turks and Tartars. Thousands of these unbelievable figures, having something of the heavenly hosts, spread a kind of solemn awe in the ranks of the bravest fighters.

Was the Polish Winged Hussar not a mere symbol, but a real link between the human Knightly Order and its angelic counterpart, a living bridge between the fiery flight of the ethereal spheres and the self-sacrificing soldier's toil, a channel for the power of the

august Chief of all knights? Who can say?

In one of Chopin's Polonaises (As Dur) the same ineffable heroic simile of broad, intoxicating forward flight sings in mighty tones—the flight of the Nation's Deva to His goal.

Great living symbols of another type are to be seen near Cracow: two small ancient mounds ravaged by time, and two others enormous and new, dominate the whole country. The first are memorials of prehistoric heroes—Princess Wanda and Krak—links with the pre-Christian Slavonic life of Poland; the others are in memory of the two greatest sons of modern Poland—Kosciuszko and Marshal Pilsudski. Raised by a million hands, each bringing a handful of earth in spontaneous offering of love and veneration, millions of hearts glowing with their highest emotions during the sacred labour, no wonder that they represent to clairvoyant sight huge ethereal blazing hills of many-coloured light, like fiery rainbow-hued volcanoes. They have been raised by the power of Poland's collective heart, and stand there visible for miles around, influencing all her present and future generations, as the embodiment of the spirit of immortal Greatness, the everlasting longing of the Polish Soul.

In 1935, the memorable year of Poland's most cruel loss—the death of Marshal Pilsudski—when the presence of the great Deva was felt nearer than ever before, one of our clairvoyant Theosophists saw Him and described Him thus:

"I was alone in the Tatra mountains, lost in contemplation, in close communion with the spirits of this sacred

spot, meditating for hours ; leaving my body and remembering after my return what I saw. One night I found myself in the enormous hall of an ancient castle ; a solemn ritual seemed to be imminent, and august guests were assembling. I understood that the Devas of different nations were coming. I remember some : Great Britain's—grave, strong, majestic, with very definite features and a kind of feeling of ages of experience behind ; Russia's—with far less clear delineations, enormous, mys-

terious and grand, but somewhat vague in colour and shape ; then suddenly the brightness of a smile shone—I recognized it—it was the Deva of Poland. Without weapons, yet the very essence of chivalry, almost childlike in His freshness, His unutterable exalted devotion, His inspired élan ; all His adoration seemed to flow in two streams in an ineffable youthful dedication. I followed His worshipping gaze—it was directed to the Holy Queen and the Master of all Rituals and Knights."

D. Z. W.

O man, didst thou but know how great thy power !
One thought of thine, like hidden lightning flashing,
Through gathered clouds can send the thunder crashing
In wasteful storm or pour down fruitful shower.
Didst thou but know that o'er each thought of thine
There wait, as earth and air await the thunder,
Demons and angels held in breathless wonder :
Wilt thou plunge to hell or rise divine ?
And thou dost glow like clouds that wander high
Yet know not what they do nor where they fly.
Men ! One of you, in chains, by thought alone
Can overturn or raise the loftiest throne.

MICKIEWICZ

THE WOMEN OF POLAND

SINCE pre-Christian times woman has been greatly revered in Poland. She has been priestess in the Slavonic temples, sybil and prophetess; the last Vestals were massacred by Germans in the famous temple of Arkona on the Rugia Island in the twelfth century. She was guardian of the sacred fire; magician in the mystery-rituals of the Goddess of Love and the Goddess of Nature. She was singer and poet, "the white servant of the Gods," whose voice—through her—reached the mortals.

She has also been fighter and ruler, like Sigrida Storrada the Proud, daughter of the first King of Poland, mother of King Canute of England; like Wanda, the first Polish Queen, who led her troops against a German invader and suitor, and who, seeing his great power, sought death in the waters of the Vistula to save her country from further bloodshed. After the spread of Christianity, the woman of Poland found the field of her activities restricted, her priestly and prophetic authority wrested from her. The excess of her physical strength and prowess changed gradually into an inner power of will; now saintliness became her goal, and the nunneries her field

of action. In the royal dynasty of Piast alone we find fourteen nuns and several saints. In the fourteenth century there lived the famous youthful Queen Yadviga, canonized some centuries after her death.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Polish woman was the source of health and vigour of society; she was shaping Polish life, filling it with that quality of attraction which constituted the ineffable charm of Polish culture, and made it always prevail over any other with which it came into touch, even in periods of bitter political defeats. If the nation has remained always invincible in the domain of custom and tradition, and proved an unconscious conqueror influencing the forms of living even of her oppressors, her cultural values being higher, the merit belongs to the Polish woman. She was also the mother and protector of villagers, as early as the fifteenth century, their doctor, nurse and adviser; she has moulded the moral and physical type of the nation, ennobling the whole race, creating its spiritual *tone*.

Self-sacrifice and courage, fortitude and perseverance, in public as well as in private life, dignity,

pride, liveliness, love of beauty and a peculiar charm have always been the characteristics of the Polish woman. She is unshakable in her faith, in her duty, in her love, and in her romantic dreams too. Dreamer and realist, unconscious mystic and practical worker, she embodies the Ideal of the nation, and influences the life of Poland more than women do in any other country of the world, except perhaps in India.

But her greatest moral strength was shown when Poland lost her independence. She helped the insurgents by hiding arms and soldiers at the risk of her life; by carrying orders through the enemy lines; by preparing lint and bandages for the Polish guerilla groups during long anxious nights; by keeping up the high spirit of the menfolk in the home, often insisting upon their joining the insurgent army. When defeat has come, she has never despaired, in those times in the nineteenth century as well as now, the force of her spirit being almost greater than that of the men. She has cheered them, in the darkest hours, with an ineffable love and an unshakable faith. Hundreds of women voluntarily accompanied their menfolk into exile in Siberia, in spite of incredible hardships and infinite sufferings. And those who remained shouldered the illegal education of the younger generation; organized

underground schools and courses, under the very nose of the oppressors, in towns, in manor houses and in the villages. Many consecrated all their youth to this work, not knowing what leisure was; they often renounced even marriage for the sake of the service of Poland. It is from the mother that the child learned patriotic songs and prayers for the Motherland; from her it imbibed a fiery love of the country and a devotion to her Spirit. That Poland has survived, that her culture has not been polluted and her language corrupted, that denationalization was impossible, that marriage with representatives of the foreign rulers or even social intercourse with them has never taken place, was due to the Polish woman.

Mr. Charles Phillips writes: "The life of Polish women was one long fight. It was in the home that they had to put up the greatest struggle during the dark hundred years of the partitions; pressing ever closer, heavier and more insidiously into the very precincts of the fireside, the strength and power of Poland's oppressors worked to destroy the soul of the nation. If the language of the Poles remains a living force, the richest of all the Slavonic tongues, if the songs, and music and art, and all the treasures of the land have never died out, but kept remembered and alive, it is because the women of Poland have been both

true and strong. Like a great Mother, Poland through her women, has kept her children warm against Her breast, and gathered close about Her knees."

When the fight for Polish schools began, after the first Russian revolution of 1905, and there were children's strikes in Warsaw, the woman was in the forefront; when private Polish schools were at last allowed, she rushed to start them. When the underground work of the Polish Socialistic Party had been launched, she went out organizing workmen and youth for the coming armed fight. In this active struggle—in 1905—women were liaison officers, printers, distributors of proclamations and leaflets, carriers of arms and bombs. They were everywhere where the life of the nation was throbbing, from the terrorism of the revolutionaries to the sweet charity of nuns. The Legions of Marshal Pilsudski in 1914-17 contained a host of active women. Let us quote once more Mr. Phillips:

"In Poland the story of the Catholic Sisterhood is an epic in itself. Polish nuns, long before Florence Nightingale, were the first nurses ever known to go out on the battlefields to care for the wounded and dying. All the energies of Polish women were turned to cultural, patriotic and educational activities during the time of subjection, they worked in any imaginable form for social welfare, often taking the lead.

The result was inevitable; when freedom of political action was regained, the women of Poland were ready for leadership in it. They have achieved a higher position and have held an ampler field for a longer time than any other I have heard of, not even excepting our own America. Complete equal suffrage is only one item. Eligibility to the highest office in the land is another—for a Polish woman could be elected to the Presidency of the Republic. The emancipation of the woman of the land has had nothing sudden about it, nor did it happen overnight. They have been public leaders for centuries; leaders, workers, builders, only they have not been heard of in the outside world; or if heard of, often labelled by the names of other nations.¹ They are working now in National Legislatures, in Municipal Councils, in Political Parties and in Ministries. Their associations count hundreds and thousands of members. There is also a fighting woman. I knew the type well, as

¹ E.g., Dr. YOTEYKO, the first Director of the first Pedagogic Institute in Europe, author of *The Science of Labour*; working in Belgium, and therefore known as a "Famous Belgian Sociologist"; later professor of psychology at the Collège de France.

Dr. M. ZAKRZEWSKA, who founded in 1853 the New York Infirmary and the New England Hospital.

H. MODJESKA, the great dramatic artist of the nineteenth century, famous by roles in Shakespeare.

W. LANDOWSKA, the famous musician, specialist in ancient music, living in Paris.

M. CURIE-SKŁODOWSKA, the modest discoverer of the greatest scientific achievement of our times; etc., etc.

guards and patrols; I knew their records, how they had fought as bravely as any men and had introduced a high idealistic element into the army's life. I knew that men were glad to serve not only with them but under them. I knew about their heroism in the defence of Lwow against the Ukrainians under German influence in 1918. Lwow was almost unmanned, and women and children had to defend it, and they did it with such courage and heroism that one has the strongest impulse to stand and salute when one hears the very name of Lwow. After Lwow they organized a regular Legion in Wilno, under woman command, who fought bravely during the Bolshevik invasion in 1920. Four thousand women were fighting by that time. Some names are immortal. There is really no end to Poland's list of heroic Jeannes."

But the Polish woman is not only a social worker and fighter, she is an artist and a poet too; from the village girl, whose delicate paper-cuttings have no equal in Europe; whose embroidery, weaving, lace are appreciated and sold all over the world; whose spontaneous love-songs are full of charming freshness, to a host of distinguished writers, novelists, poetesses, of whom modern Polish literature can be rightly proud. Some are of great fame and talent. There are also many first-class

actresses, dancers, sportswomen and aviators, painters and sculptors, professors of arts and crafts, and architects of remarkable capacities, many of great achievements. The Polish woman of all classes loves beauty, joy, dance, movement in every aspect; she is also a passionate lover. During the whole period of the twenty years of independence women were in the first rank of all creative work in the country.

And during the war of 1939, we may ask, and now? Words fail to express all that one knows. They have fought and are fighting with the same courage and absolute self-abnegation, with the same fire hidden under an impenetrable mask, in secret and in the open, in danger every minute, unaware of their almost superhuman strength. They are falling by the rifles of the executors, and suffering with a martyr's smile and the proud dignity of queens, deportations, dishonour, brothels, forced labour; great and pure even in the mire, where the monsters of iniquity cast them by force, often with the words: "This also is a part of the general fight for Poland and for Righteousness; we shall endure it to the end." When one falls, hundreds of others are ready to sacrifice their all, death is not dreaded. One of them told me: "We are accustomed to death, it is our constant companion since many

months, it is blessed when it comes suddenly. Worse than death is humiliation and dishonour. With these we shall fight to the last breath." And they are fighting

every day, every hour. They will never submit. And the Soul of Poland will be once more saved by their fortitude, their heroism, their grim determination and their pride.

JANUSZ DLUZEK

"A DUEL"

WHAT is the face of Poland since 1939? Much is written in the press of the world; many voices reach us "from the other side," and yet Poland of the present is still little seen in all her reality even by our friends. We often hear words of pity: "Oh poor helpless Poland!" They sound like insults to us. The pity of our well-wishers may be directed towards those of the Poles who are like homeless wanderers scattered in all parts of the world, whose lives, although spent in outer freedom, are more crippled, poor and bound than the lives of those who bear the chains of slavery on their wrists, blows on their backs, insult and starvation, outrage and torture, with heads high, hearts inflexible, in a greatness and a pride that does not bow. These do not need anybody's pity. To send them anything less than homage, than a profound obeisance of reverence, seems to us almost a sacrilege.

They are far from being "helpless." They *could* submit and co-operate with the Nazis, and immediately the pressure would be eased; if they do not

relax their grim resistance, their continual fight, their indomitable active protest, it is their own *choice*, the free decision of their wills.

Were those schoolchildren of Bydgoszcz "helpless" when they refused to shout "Heil Hitler" under the severest threat, and were shot one after another—136—not one afraid, not one bursting into tears on seeing the dreadful spectacle of their companions falling, not a shudder of awe, nor a desire, even in this last moment, to obey the order and save their lives; were they "poor helpless children" slaughtered thus like sheep?

No! They were examples of fortitude for heroes.

And those boys, newspaper-vendors of Warsaw, who run at the greatest speed with prohibited leaflets, shouting scornful jokes at German officers, knowing they use their revolvers freely, and shoot well—are they helpless?

And those hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, yes! of all classes, who belong to organizations of active fight, well realizing all the risks—living day and night engaged in

conspiracy, harder than any normal open war—are they to be pitied?

And the messengers who serve as "couriers" to despatch news to other countries and to bring news back, smuggling it through well-guarded frontiers. Recently a manifesto signed by 2,000(!) delegates of different units of this organization—who managed to gather in Conference, to discuss, write and print the appeal—was sent to all occupied countries and still further, reaching England, America, India. Are not these messengers heroes greater even than the valiant soldiers at the front? Are they not all worthy of Victoria Crosses, for personal bravery, initiative and cleverness under constant danger for weeks, sometimes months?

And those who clandestinely print leaflets, pamphlets, regular newspapers (30 are now published in Poland), and even small volumes of poems—underground, in the utmost secrecy, knowing that sooner or later they will be discovered and hanged?

We could quote pages of examples, all proving how utterly wrong are those who imagine that Poland defeated, crushed, starved, is helplessly submitting to the triumphant foe, not rising in opposition against the all-powerful might, not trying the impossible.

The truth is the reverse. Poland is fully armed, with physical as well as moral weapons, actively resisting in every corner of her land, in every city, town, village, by every possible and impossible means. Poland is like one huge well-organized underground camp; one great Collective Man, whose force is inexhaustible for it comes from the one source which never fails; who, living

in close companionship with Death, bears a peculiar imprint of gravity, unknown to us, but who in spite of that has not lost his humour, his laugh, which serves also as a weapon.

The calm manly pride at having no Quislings to Poland's discredit, in spite of all the efforts of the Nazis, of all temptations and promises, is felt by all. The deep conviction that one is not fighting for Poland alone, but for values infinitely broad, sacred and universal, is equally alive. It is expressed in every communication which reaches us from Poland.

In the small volume of poems spoken of above, we meet a strange form of art-expression, hitherto unknown in our twentieth century. It may shock the established canons of æsthetes. The words are sore and sharp in their glaring naked truth, in the simple eloquence of bare facts; they are almost immobile in their cool pathos. These verses are more like prayers addressed directly to the Almighty, like ancient books of lives of martyrs, than anything we know as conventional poetry. It is the awe of life that speaks. But we also see in every line a dauntless stubbornness, the inflexibility of "steel souls" who feel their foundation in the Rock of Ages, immutable and changeless. Above the ever-present poignant memory of defeat, above the heart-rending awareness of the surrounding dreadful reality, hovers a conquering power of faith in the historic, organic unity of the nation, in the communion of the living with the dead, in the unbreakable all-powerful continuity of existence, individual and national; untranslatable as they are we shall try to

convey something of them in a few lines:

"The tanks are gone; the bombs do not whistle; death amidst fire and smoke no more touches every Warsaw home. The foe is here, yet he has not crossed Poland's barricade, he has not conquered and conquer will he never."

A soldier fallen in defence of Warsaw rises from the grave on the September anniversary and reports: "Poland lives! in every street, in every home the battle for Poland continues; from every drop of our blood new fighters, new soldiers of freedom, are rising."

"Time has stopped. It seemed it would never move. Suddenly over the execution field, Chlapowski's cry sounded high: 'Long live England and France, Poland's Victory hail!' With a sign of the cross made over the assembled crowd—he fell. Like a sacred Host we received this death."

The little volume begins with a "Credo"—in "the almighty Motherland and her sons martyred for the rights of Man," and through a pure, hard simplicity of expression it reaches the final universal accord: "I believe in Beauty Supreme, in Justice Universal, in the Communion of Nations, in mutual forgiveness of sins, in the Resurrection of the Spirit, and Peace everlasting, Amen."

These words written in normal times would have been only beautiful; rising from the bottom of hell, where the very opposite forces reign, where Beauty and Justice seem as distant as the farthest star—they have the quality of a new spiritual Revelation.

September 1939—the lightning stroke, the avalanche of steel and fire, met with an exaltation of heroism by the whole nation as one man. It was an epic; it was a full manifestation of Poland the real. Now, after two years of unequal underground fight, the nation looks back to that bloody September almost with envy as to the "bright time of glorious exploits and happiness." (Manifesto 1941.)

Rightly so, an open manly fight, no treason, no defection, no vacillation, no dishonourable deed.

There was no more difficult thing to bear for a proud race like the Poles than the suspicion, not only of hostile critics, but even of Allied friends and many Poles—refugees who have seen only a small fragment of the campaign—that some weakness, some incapacity, must have existed in the Polish ranks, some shadow on our honour; the Nazi technique being unknown, the fight too short, the defeat too quick for people to believe in the flawless, unyielding bravery and honesty of the defenders. Poles themselves—only abroad, thank God, not in Poland itself—in utter despair and amazement, bewildered by the incomprehensible bending under the unbearable, instinctively sought relief in charges and accusations, trying feverishly to find the guilty one, two, ten, the visible culprits, the enigma seemed intolerable. Oh, the tragic misery of the defeated; the sad psychology of the weak! The same was seen in France after the collapse.

Only some impersonal witnesses, high officials of Embassies of friendly Powers, were there emphatically to deny the rumours and reveal them as slander.

They had seen the whole campaign, they knew of the plans of the Commanders-in-Chief of the Polish forces to form new armies in Rumania and France, they knew of King Carol's personal message, of a letter with guarantees. . . . One day the truth will be established by history in all its fullness—documents do exist. But during that long winter, we had nothing in our defence, we had to bear the little ironic smiles of foreigners—the author knows how they taste—Dutchmen, Frenchmen, Rumanians—what was the future to show? It was only in the spring, when Holland fell in five days, when the full might of the Nazi army was felt in Belgium, and when France collapsed, that we were freed from the burden, that suspicion changed to appreciation, often even into admiration.

The facts known to the author suffice to his exacting conscience for him to state most emphatically that all these rumours were false, born of weakness and shattered nerves. No dishonourable deeds were ever committed by the Poles in the glorious September of 1939. If there was insufficient preparation, that was common to the whole of Europe, but innumerable were those of German origin, polonized for several generations, trusted and regarded as our own, who formed the vanguard of the Fifth Column covering the whole country with a devilish net.

The deeds of valour of the Polish army in the September fight with the Germans are not unknown—the defence of Westerplatte and the Hel Peninsula by a small force, for twenty-eight days; the battles of Kutno, of Lowicz, of Modlin, and Warsaw's thirty days'

defence; but how many know that the guerilla warfare lasted till April 1940, when the last division that had managed to spend the whole, exceptionally severe winter in the woods, helped by villagers, after troubling the enemy, with many sallies was surrounded by three times larger Nazi forces, and after a hopeless fight, finished with not one man remaining, while all the neighbouring villages were burned and their inhabitants massacred for their co-operation? Even less is known of the resistance to the Russian army, though its sudden entry sealed the fate of the Polish forces, just then trying to regroup for further resistance. There was the defence of a town by a group of sailors of the river marine—whose bravery made the opponents think they were facing a whole division, and there were only 300 boys, who in the end shut in a Church as in a fortress, defended it to the last man, to the amazement of the enemy. Little is known of those small boys who used to rush with bottles of kerosene to break them and light it over the advancing tanks, thus putting them out of use. The inevitable loss of life was regarded as an honour. Nor of those village women who used to cover fallen bombs with their thick skirts to try to prevent their explosion, succeeding in some cases, paying for it with their lives in others.

The glory of the open, proud September fight ended. A new struggle began.

If "in the story of national disasters an awful primacy belongs to Poland," it is "because the Nazis nurse a special hatred of Poland, she is all that

offends them; no Quislings, Seiss-In-quarts, no Lavals, no nation of ready and obedient subjects." Yes—"a primacy of sufferings, a first rank among martyred nations belongs to Poland." But—"Poland is an old unconquered fighter." These words of Professor Gilbert Murray at the Royal Institute of London to commemorate and pay homage to the professors of the Cracow University, interned and tortured by the Germans in November 1939, express the truth. The Nazis cannot bear Polish pride, they cannot suffer the dignity of fearlessness which stands erect in spite of all; it is a challenge that provokes their elementary rage in response; they see that they can kill, but not bend them to their will, and this arouses their fury. That is the psychological reason of the unbounded savagery of their acts. It is a duel, a kind of race as to who will prove the stronger. Unequal one would say, and yet. . . .

Their first goal is to break the spirit, to destroy all that feeds and sustains it, or that can serve as inspiration or relief. Hence the torture of the intellectual and cultural élite—the nation's professors, scientists, artists, leaders, priests, and prominent men or women; the closing of all academic and higher schools; the closing or limiting of the freedom of religious institutions; the prohibiting of all private teaching; the proscribing of Polish books. There is a list 49 pages long of authors and works prohibited, about 4,500—5,000 volumes; not only patriotic poems and novels, but works of history, geography, economics, history of art and culture, of songs and even pictures of

Polish landscapes; and everything which bears the imprint of Polish thought. A splendid testimony it is indeed to the value of Polish literature. Not only are these books forbidden in libraries, bookshops and in private hands, under heavy penalties, but they are destroyed on a large scale. Proscribed is Chopin and all serious music, as well as good cinemas; only pornography is fostered. Some of the best pictures of Matejko, representing the glories of Polish history have been burned. Everything which speaks of Poland's life, in any domain, is mercilessly and logically destroyed or taken to Germany. Monuments, museums, private collections, manuscripts, archives, old architectural specimens, memorials of Polish Kings and great men, etc., etc.

The second method is the endeavour to corrupt and degrade the character specially of youth, by the most ingenious and "Satanic" means. An elaborate plan of subtle spying and reporting of the names of friends as having betrayed others to the Gestapo, is constantly resorted to, to undermine mutual confidence and break national unity. Special posts of propagators of immorality—drink, games of chance and debauché—have been introduced. Their duty is to become friends of the youth of both sexes, to gain their confidence and draw them slowly into the most abject corruption. These agents speak good Polish, bear Polish names, play well their role, make lavish offers. Youth is unemployed, deprived of study, of books, of any healthy occupation, often starving. Clever methods are used to obtain news from still younger children;

food, sweets, gifts are given to small hungry ones, if they will praise Hitler or repeat sordid things about their Motherland. In elementary and vocational schools—the only left—German teachers receive prizes for the best methods of vilifying Poland, of awakening in the children contempt for their land and admiration for the might of Germany, for crushing their self-respect and self-confidence and bringing them up as docile slaves. What cannot be extorted from comparatively healthy, normal children and youth, is tried again after beating, starving, torture, after breaking all physical resistance. Yet, even then in most cases all attempts fail just as much as with grown-up people. One wonders at the almost superhuman strength. "Steel souls" indeed are being hammered out.

The third method, best known abroad, is physical oppression, torture and the terror. Methodical starving of the whole population with ostentatious differences made for the "Volksdeutsche" and for co-operating Ukrainians. When a delegation of the inhabitants of Warsaw met a high German official to present the impossibility of subsistence on the small wages and poor rations allowed, the answer was: "I agree that for free citizens it is too little to live on, but for slaves even that is too much." And Greiser said: "Any Pole who dares to raise his hand against a German will be exterminated at once; there are enough trees in the land to hang all the Poles if they resist further." And yet every day Germans mysteriously disappear, estates administered by "treuhänders" are set on fire, trains with troops and ammunition are derailed

throughout the length and breadth of Poland. And the underground organization with its strongholds and "fortresses" grows in silence and darkness, slowly, calmly, irresistibly. Can we wonder at the helpless rage?

Destruction of the health of the race by sterilizing injections, by methodical infection with venereal diseases, by systematic underfeeding, by cold, due to a calculated lack of fuel for the Poles; tuberculosis, and all kinds of cruelty, like expropriations, depriving people of their lands and homes, cannot unfortunately be overcome by fortitude alone. But there is a stoicism even in this respect. Some private letters received by friends in Switzerland in January 1942, say: "All of us have hands and feet with frost-bites; we mostly sit in the kitchen, the only place where water does not freeze, with a small candle for us, no other light being available. We sleep in our clothes, and never have warm water for a bath or for a wash. People are dying by thousands, but they cannot all die out, so we may hope to meet again one day." This stubborn, stoical attitude works like a shield.

What we know about the state of the average man and society as a whole is imposing and heartening. Solidarity in suffering has created a new sense of brotherhood, innumerable are the associations for mutual help; everybody cares for others and shares the little he has with those who have still less. Hundreds of examples of Jews protected by Poles at the risk of their lives, prove how empty are the charges made against the Poles of active anti-semitism. (The joyous cordiality of the

Jews meeting the Polish troops in Palestine and their mutual friendly relations, is another proof.) And innumerable are the examples of workmen on their own initiative sharing foodstuffs with unknown families of intellectuals, being in a somewhat better economic situation than they are. The whole society is one strongly cemented block. Unity is a spontaneous inner need.

The picture of Poland's trials would not be complete if we did not refer to the Russian occupation which lasted from 17 September 1939 till the Russo-German War. This is not the time to appraise the results of this occupation, the more so since we all admire Russia's magnificent bravery and stubbornness in fighting and beating the Nazis. We recognize her tremendous sacrifices in the cause of the Allies; we are in military alliance and co-operation with her. But when the war is over the history of Poland will be seen to have been gravely affected by the intervention of Russia. It must suffice here to say that more than three millions of the population have perished since the war began—almost 10 per cent of the total, a larger percentage than in China during four years of savage war.

* * * *

Some words about the Poles abroad must be added. First of all, our Government is not a provisional one, but one legally constituted according to the Constitution. It represents the continuity of the Polish State, and this fact has a great historical significance. It does its best to represent Poland well, and General Sikorski, our Prime Minister, has achieved most remarkable results in organizing the Polish Army,

Navy and Air Force. The Army fought heroically covering the French retreat in the Vosges, and French refugees near the Swiss frontier, where 3,000 Polish soldiers fell, and 18,000 had to cross into Switzerland where they were interned; it was active in the battle of Norway. It is now in England and Scotland, in Libya—Tobruk—and Palestine, in Russia and Iran. It is the largest of the forces of occupied countries fighting with Britain. It is growing every month and its valour is recognized by all their comrades-in-arms.

The Polish Navy, like the former Merchant Marine which escaped from Gdynia at the very beginning of the war, is valiantly co-operating with the British; it takes part in convoy and patrol work, in attacks on U-boats; it was active in the pursuit of the "Bismarck" and the bombing of Petsamo; it has sunk one German destroyer; and the submarine "Orzel" (Eagle), whose escape from Tallin in spite of the confiscation of maps and instruments of navigation was an Odyssey, sank the German troop-carrier "Rio de Janeiro" near Norway in March 1940, and thus disclosed the imminent plan of a German attack. It perished in action.

For exceptionally brave deeds in the Mediterranean, some units were awarded decorations, and Admiral Forbes some time ago paid a tribute to the knowledge and skill as well as character and fighting spirit of the Polish Navy, saying that he learnt the value of the Polish sailors in the heat of common fighting.

The exploits of the Polish Air Force are famous. Innumerable are the praises they have gained; congratulations

from the King, Sir Arthur Sinclair, and others; they have the reputation of "dare-devils" in Britain, more than a match for the toughest foe. From the time of the arrival of the Polish Fighter Squadrons in Britain till November 1941, they have destroyed for certain 528 enemy aircraft, probably 109 more, and damaged 52. They have taken part in over 300 raids, with 1,495 aircrafts. One squadron has scored the record figure of 165 enemy planes. To appreciate this figure let us quote Mr. P. Z. O'Grady writing in the magazine *The Wings*: "Only two British squadrons

can claim more than 150 enemy planes each, in two years' active fighting. The Polish figure 165 covers only one year." The Polish squadrons are constantly taking part in the bombing of Germany and factories in France.

In Poland itself and out of it, the Polish nation, united and strong, is fighting, according to the words of the "manifesto" quoted above—"true to the Ideal which inspired our insurgents and revolutionaries of the past century, we fight for *your freedom and for ours*, for the Independence of all nations."

JAN BRZESKI

THE FUTURE

WHAT will be the Dharma of Poland when the war is over and in the following New Era so much longed for by humanity? If it really will be the Era of the Paraclete—of the Mother—with a new outpouring of His divine power, as not only the prophecies of Polish seers seem to indicate, we must hope that Poland will have to play in it her role, being so deeply linked with this aspect of the Divine. This is the further radiant future. In the immediate future she will have once again—to forgive. And this means more than we can conceive today. Yet Poland would not be true to herself if the flame of vengeance should last when the

foe is lying in the dust utterly defeated. The time for revenge is during the fight, not after victory—such is the code of chivalry.

One may venture to say that there are already signs of this possibility; in the "Credo" of a Polish underground fighter we read: "I believe in mutual forgiveness of sins." The author may not have thought of the Nazi power in writing these words, he may not yet have included this dreadful foe in his all-embracing feeling, but it will come, it must come.

The next, no less tremendous task—once more to heal the nation's body and soul. Not to betray the nation's dignity in any

diplomatic compromise or concession, wherever honour and self-respect are concerned with friends or with foes alike. To care above all for the Soul, the honour, the dignity of the nation; and this will be a tremendously difficult task.

To rise to a degree of national unity not yet known in the country and to bring back the religious spirit of old into the work of Reconstruction, into the new political life, minimizing the fanaticism prevailing in it—the foundation for this unity is being now laid amidst the deadly struggle for existence in Poland itself.

And last but not least to create such a tremendous faith in the nation's inner mission that no deviation may be possible. Then only Poland's Dharma can be properly fulfilled in those most exalting years that will succeed the war. We can enter into federations and unions with other countries, but never must we forget that in no case can these stand in Poland's way to the fulfilment of her Ideals, nor limit her way towards them.

What is, what will be, Poland's mission for humanity?

To strive for and with time to achieve a new Freedom—most of all freedom of action; action for its own intrinsic moral value, not as a reaction to anything from outside. This, practised in the life of a nation, is a task for centuries.

To follow her way of linking up extremes, bridging gulfs, seeking ever the synthetic, the most creative path. Whoever will impartially study the Ideals of ancient and eternal Poland—the free citizen in a free State, the brotherhood of classes and religions, based on respect for human dignity in every man; social conscience, aiming at the enlargement of the rights and opportunities of all, not by the revolts of the poorest, but by the voluntary sacrifices of the richer, the co-operation of nations on federative principles, bringing ethics and brotherhood into international relations—will have to admit that they are yet far from being realized by humanity, they still remain the Ideals of the future.

That a country which for centuries has actively stood for these Ideals, and realized them to a certain extent in her life, will be called to take them up again and express them in a new form, adequate to changed times and conditions, seems logical and obvious.

Modern experiments have utterly failed. Fascism as well as Bolshevism in practice deny the freedom of conscience, of opinion and of the all-round free development of every citizen. The tyranny of Capital, be it centred in private or in State hands, is as cruelly exploiting individuals as ever. Scientific or even humanitarian approaches, not based on a deeper

spiritual outlook, seem insufficient. Till moral force becomes as the motive power of reforms, there is little hope of finding a just and lasting solution. The problem of the relations of the individual to the community, of the limits of personal freedom and rights versus the rights of the nation and the State, how a free man can evolve in a free society—is the vital problem of modern humanity. Not one country, not one system, actually in operation has solved it. Not even America or Great Britain; yet on the proper solution of it depends the immediate future of mankind. "Europe will not attain social and spiritual unity unless and until she transforms the States—those idols of modern times who enslave people instead of serving them" (Gorski).

Poland with her ingrained idealism and her ancient experiences is especially fitted to bring to the solution of these problems a noteworthy contribution, and it seems that it will be one of her chief tasks in the New Era. A creative combination of hierarchy and democracy, of the moral authority of the few with the right to self-expression and responsibility of the many, have to be blended in some new forms of government, and Poland may be able to find them. If. . .

Through ages Poland has aimed at the development of nobility,

nobility of thought, of feeling, of action; a new nobility must be evolved for the future. Centuries ago Poland was speaking of the rights of the peasants, feeling instinctively that the rod of power which had slipped from the hands of her nobles had to be seized by the people, who must soon be called to the great task of a conscious realization of the collective Dharma.

The small peasant Republics of Lithuania and Latvia have shown in their interesting experiments that the type of citizen they evolved was a kind of small bourgeois, whose civilization may be considerable (radio, gramophone, piano in villagers' houses, electric lamps, stoves, etc.), but whose inner culture was poor, whose ideals did not rise much above material welfare. This is totally foreign to the Polish temperament. Poland's way lies in evolutionary changes in which nobility of race and culture will not be submerged by rough and crude elements, but will penetrate by infiltration, and permeate even the lowest strata of society. This has been the purpose of all the idealistic work, education, art, social service during the last twenty years. But Poland was, and probably will be, faced by serious dangers on this path.

Although her working class is on the whole on a higher cultural (but not material) level than that of many western countries, in her

peasantry there are two distinct types: One is strong, stubborn, hard-working, clever, but rather materialistic, and though attached to the forms of religion, bowing before the principle "might is right" and the "end justifies the means," with its sense of reverence dimmed—the ordinary, rather selfish and unidealistic type, in spite of its passionate attachment to the soil and strong nationalistic feelings. The second is fine, honest, idealistic and self-sacrificing, dreamy, although no less stubborn, practical and realistic, longing for high truths, clean methods, with a deep sense of reverence and responsibility—a purely Polish, beautiful type, heir to the best tradition of the nation.

If the latter could be strengthened and should prevail, then a new form of socialism would be created, with a touch of spiritual-

ity, in true harmony with the Polish genius.

But what changes in every class of our society these dreadful years will bring, what type of citizen in the majority of the nation will emerge from the furnace of tragedy—we cannot foresee.

The war is not over; Poland may be soon—once more—the field of gigantic military operations of two armies. . . The strain, the physical and moral agonies may still increase. How can we foresee what traces will be left when both tides recede? We feel it to be too tragic to allow any speculation on our part, we can only see clearly the immortal, the permanent Ideal of Poland before us and have an unshakable faith in Poland's Spirit that will rise triumphant again in spite of all, ever faithful to her Dharma.

ZOFIA TORWID

The world has already understood where the course of history is tending. It knows that its guiding power is the wisdom of God and its purpose is the evolution of mankind in tune with God's will, in constant endeavour to discover and to live according to the Law of God. Nations are means to this end, tools in God's hands, living vehicles through whom the different, well-pronounced characteristics of the human race are expressed and are unfolded to their highest blossoming. They are in Humanity what musical notes are in an accord—they have to reveal harmony in difference.

KRASINSKI

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