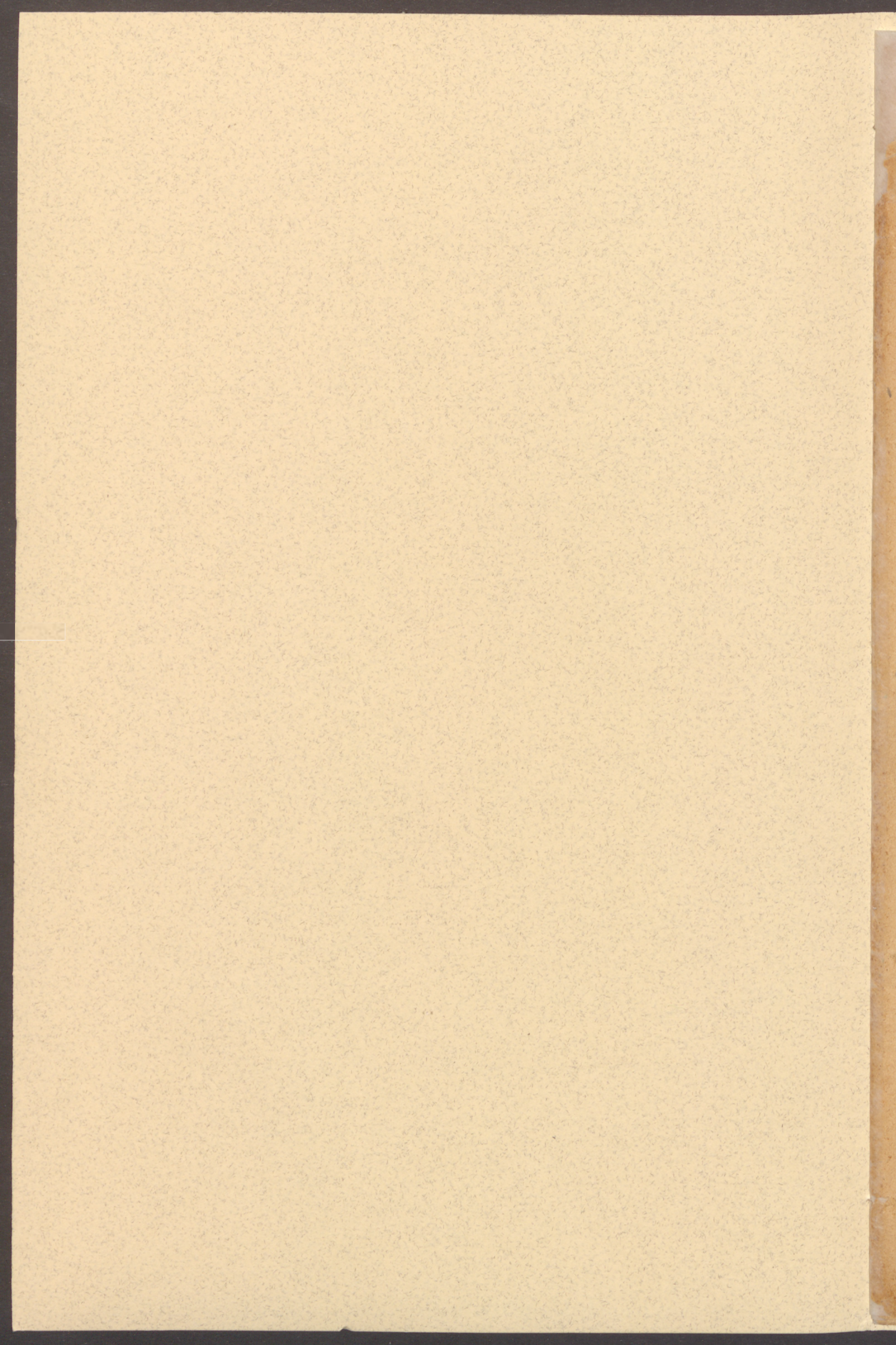


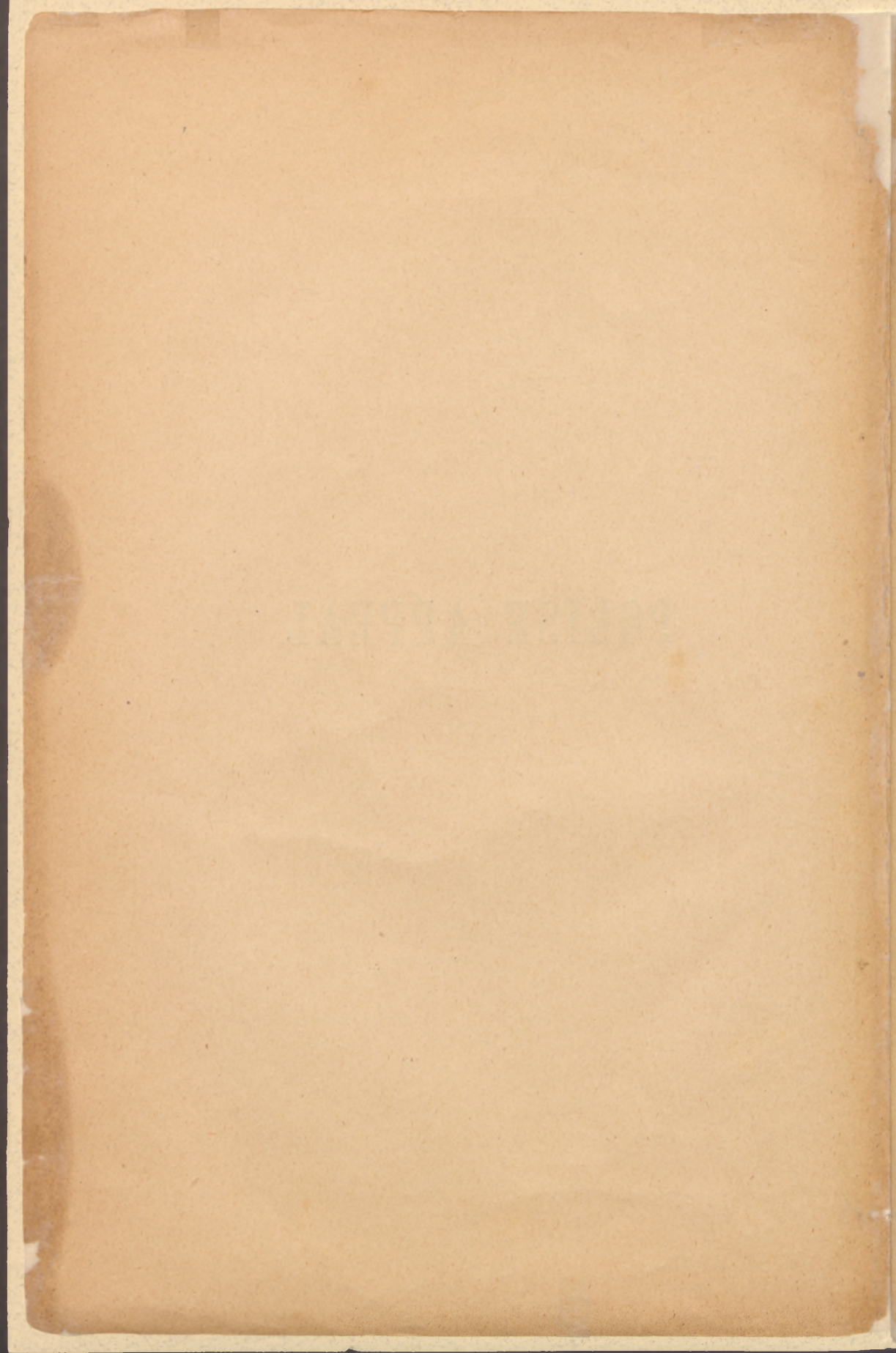
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ZAKAZ UDOSTĘPNIANIA



POLISH APPEAL



POLISH APPEAL

To all Governments
Political Parties and Clubs, Statesmen
Newspapers, Associations, etc.



PARIS
IMPRIMERIE G. MAURIN
71, RUE DE RENNES, 71

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1905



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POLISH APPEAL

To all Governments
Political Parties and Clubs, Statesmen
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Each time its conscience awakens from its heavy drowsiness, Europe perceives rising up before it in the midst of horrible vampires, the threatening phantom of Poland. In vain invaders and tyrants try since a century, to suppress every manifestation of its existence and every trace of their crime; in vain they stifle the echo of its lamentations, and that their cruelty perfects more and more its proceedings; in vain they try to infringe the rights of their victim, to oppose false pretensions and paint their violence in seeming equity; in vain even time, that compliant servant of every infamy rubs out the stains of blood and obliterates the recollection of all the bad actions to which it ensures the benefit of prescription, from the depth of those subterraneous prisons of Europe, from which even the lowest, and least prepared for their independence have been delivered, Poland that remains alone reminds the world continually, through the bars of its dark cave, of the iniquity it suffers and claims justice.

Its cry forms a quire of twenty million of men some in torture because they live, others scattered over the entire globe, because in their own homes their place has been usurped by intruders, and expresses the protestation of a thousand years culture of a great nation which has given and still gives in spite of their oppression proofs of its genius and its vitality.

The present appeal coming from that portion of Poland which Russia has appropriated is a prolonged lamentation of an old misfortune, and a shriek of present pain.

Gradually as society throws off its barbarous character, the conceptions which might permit civilised nations to understand the horror of our slavery, and believe in the sincerity of our claim, become more and more extraneous to the understanding thereof. To them we seem to recite the most chimerical fables, when in reality we only expose the most positive truth.

Since the time of Catherine the second, who treacherously reduced us to the state of prisoners of war, till the time of Alexander the third, who looked upon us more as slaves and culprits condemned for life, each russian monarch has solemnly sworn to respect our rights, and not one of them has kept his oath.

If during the last hundred years humanity had gone backward, such a recoil could not have taken us so far back in the political and social sense as Russia has succeeded in doing. Even in our remotest annals there is no exemple of a tyranny such as weighs on us at the present time. A nation which was the first apostle of liberty, and was the first to give its citizens a uniformity of freedom even now unknown to many european societies, granted itself four hundred years ago an autonomy of government and granted every individual certain securities of inviolability to which many constitutional states dare not yet pretend; that nation is as I say obliged today to wallow in such conditions of oppression of illegality, of arbitrariness, which could hardly be understood in a semi-savage agglomeration. Those who inflict this torment, try to justify it in presenting it as the punishment of an insurrection in arms.

Rarely was there a more shameful abuse of power. When in the eyes of history, the purest glory is that which nations obtain by their struggles for liberty, the policy of robbers stigmatises it by the name of crime, and that simply because our heroic

efforts to recover our independence which has been wrenched from us, have been unsuccessful. If our revolt had ended in a triumph, the world would have admitted and accepted it, as it has hitherto done for all victorious rebellions. But Russia, who considers as the most glorious epoch of its past history, that in which it overthrew the subjection of Mongolia, has no right to blame us for wanting to shake off an infinitely heavier yoke than that of the Tartars. Even Alexander the first acknowledged the generosity of our national character, shown in our efforts to recover our country; but those same efforts which gained us praise were judged by Nicolas the first and Alexander the second as deserving gallows; and numbers of our countrymen escaped the hangman only to fill prisons or be sent to Siberia.

Our existence still bears the sorrowful stamp of the inveterate animosity of the russian autocracy for a subdued and unarmed nation; until now the victims are sent off to tread the distant land of exile. In supposing even that the love of independence and the wish to throw off servitude be the worst crime a nation can commit, has ours not dearly paid for it? Has our nation not been massacred after our revolution of 1830? Have our villages not been burnt down as an example? and how many persons have been burnt to death in the forests of Lithuania simply as an amusement? Have Poles not been punished only for looking at a Russian? Have those who refused to serve as voluntary spies and informers not been deprived of all they possessed by the imposition of enormous taxes and the confiscation of their estates? Have, their bones not been broken? their flesh wounded with a gimlet? Have spikes of wood not been driven in under their nails? and at last have the wounded not be buried alive? In six month's time, have not one thousand persons been put to death, thirty thousand more exterminated, and fifty thousand condemned to the prisons and mines of Siberia? And finally have the russians not forced us to erect monuments to our executioners and oppressors on the very place of their crimes?

If our nation consisted only of parricides they would by this time have redeemed their crimes by such a long and dreadful martyrdom; but it has not lasted long enough to atone for the disobedience of orphans yielded up to the cruelty of the most ferocious, hard-hearted Keeper.

Our long abnegation has not quenched Russia's thirst for revenge; it sees in our aspiration for liberty such an abominable crime, the perpetrators of which could not be forgiven after years of captivity; our sacrifices have not effaced the repulsion inspired by our ideal.

Not the slightest shudder has betrayed the faintest velleity of a political revolt, and still, the administrative machine which has destroyed our nationality has not, for one instant, interrupted its murderous work. It is precisely during this period that the most essential foundations of our national existence were sapped; their destruction, was less the consequence of our rebellion, than the satisfaction of government lust, without the least co-relation to our rising up in arms. The loyalty of Finland has never suffered the least doubt; besides the nation showed us during our insurrection a real ill-will. That has not prevented their having in time to suffer the same fate as we did, and as we, to be responsible for it, to their high culture.

It is therefore evident that had we not once, during our secular servitude, tried to break our chains or threaten our enemy by the loud clanking there of, we should by no means have escaped the fate that has been imposed on us. Russia does not know to assimilate foreign nations, but tears them to pieces.

Nobody yet taking as basis european civilisation, has exposed minutely the picture of our servitude.

Perhaps some day historians shall find therein touching insights, and artists dramatic matter. Till then, the image of Poland disappears under the accumulation of its sufferings, to its own great detriment and to that, of all the civilised world in great measure ignorant of our anguish.

It is not aware that Russia that secular swamp of despotism produces seeds of tyranny which propagate rapidly and provoke epidemics quite unfavorable to the least improvement. It is quite necessary the world should know, that in an empire comprising one sixth part of the continent and with a population of one hundred and thirty millions, the predominating religion stifles all others ; converts not only the living but the dead which they maintain belonged to it, and thus they enslave their successors and punish unmercifully the slightest derogation to their religious principles. There does not exist nowadays on the whole surface of the Globe except in Russia a country however small, where people are flogged, imprisoned, exiled and massacred because they refuse to pray in orthodox churches ; and such punishments are inflicted even now on our unhappy Uniats forsaken by all, even by the catholic priests, heroic victims of such awful persecutions that in their own churches they are looked upon as revered and true saints. This humble branch of the greek faith, grafted in the sixteenth century on the trunk of catholicism took a solid root. Poland where it found liberty and protection having been favorable to its development.

Russia sempiternally busy in « retrieving » different brethren makes use in preference of this euphemism, when it in reality submits them by violence just like tartars, and never hesitates to boast of acting « with God's help » each time the government has recourse to violence, plunder or murder, began in the reign of Catherine the second to redeem the *Uniats* with « the help of God » that meant to convert them willing or not to orthodoxy, and that aim was attained by exposing the refractory people to the most awful physical and moral tortures. Though in reality the roman circuses with their wild beasts were missing in that debauchery of persecution, the most horrible torments did not fail, and still exist, exceeding in refinement all the brutality of Nero.

Since 1870 there have been a number of laws more and

more exacting, excesses more and more cruel, crimes more hideous on the part of the government; but on the otherhand, proofs every day more sublime of the heroism of the unhappy population. When the catholics who were sincere in their religion, refused to enter the greek church and receive the sacrament from priests who had denied their faith to become greek, the greatest cruelty was shown them; and the villages of Spikalosy, Drelowo and Pratuline quailed, by the glory of their martyrdom, the suburbs of pagan Rome. Those that made any remonstrance were publicly flogged, were thrown into prison, or deported to the farthest extremities of the country. They were overwhelmed with taxes; cosacks were installed in their houses and were allowed to plunder the estate, to flog the men and violate the women. As according to the religious toleration of the President of the Holy Synod Podbiedonostsef, one member of a family however distantly related, being greek, made ipse facto, the whole family orthodox, a numerous gang of greek priests, police agents, etc., fell upon those unfortunate people to find out among the living or the dead, some misled sons of the « tender mother » (as they call the greek church.) The intimate links which existed until 1864 between catholics and *Uniat*s in the kingdom of Poland, brought them to an exchange of good proceedings and formed many ties between them.

The members of both creeds were baptised and contracted marriages, their mass was performed in either church as was most convenient.

The persecutors laid hands on the children that linked together the two creeds. The most ancient acts of birth, marriage, and death were copied from the parish registers; all documents drawn up by *uniat* priests, though they concerned catholics, were considered as so many proofs of orthodoxy; on the other hand, all documents drawn up by catholic priests, as soon as the sound of the name, the slightest relationship or even a denunciation could give the least pretext for forgery or

violence, it was at once taken as a reason for confiscating the property of those who were not orthodox. Whole families that had belonged to the catholic faith for numerous generations were suddenly « *converted* » because the act of baptism or some epitaph on the grave of one of their ancestors showed some connexion with the uniat rite. The whole space of country inhabited by the *Uniates* became a large cemetery where the orthodox hyenas, even now, dig up and devour the bodies of the dead. It is impossible to foresee where the investigations of those impure animals will cease. At every moment, and with the rapidity of lightning one discovers people, who were beyond the limits of such usurpations, and who had never even seen a *uniat* being obliged to become orthodox.

The phantom of terror hovers over every body, for in no matter what part of the country, in every home, the demon of orthodoxy may rise up with a chirograph found or fabricated to give him a right on the unfortunate soul of the first best man.

These torments have been too awful and have lasted too long not to end in bowing down the will of many victims, however strong that will may be. Overcome, with sorrow, wounded, loaded with humiliation, ruined, threatened with futur punishment, having experienced the rupture of ties most sacred to them, sent off one by one to immense distances, some of them yielded. But a large contingent still remained that resisted all the wicked attempts of their persecutors.

In 1903 the number of these heroes coming for the most part from the governments of Siedlce and Suwalki was officially estimated at 87995 men. In the very centre of civilization and in the name of Christ these people had an illegal situation unknown elsewhere and which has remained unknown.

The *Uniates* born after 1875 are deprived of baptism and of every consolation of their faith, of any union blessed by their religion and acknowledged by government. They celebrate their marriages in the woods, in some inaccessible retreat

beyond the limits of the russian empire, hide the birth of their children and bury their dead by night in the catholic cemeteries. For want of priests they themselves perform the marriage sacrament, and draw up the different acts of their life and take the trouble to keep a register of their genealogy.

The Holy Synod has not only broken up such families and separated husband and wife by immense distances and depriving them of the benefit of that article of the Code which legitimates births provided the union has been contracted with perfect sincerity, they have declared the children born of catholics married in a foreign land, bastards and therefore excluded from the inheritance of either father or mother, and thrown their fortune to distant and grasping relations. The unhappy parents have recourse to the most ingenious expedients of law in order to save their children from misery; but the oppressor always finds means to cancel their efforts. And when the unfortunate people fall on their knees before him imploring pity, he remains mute, like an Ahriman in stone. During the emperors stay at Warsaw several thousand martyrs addressed him supplications, but got no answer. Now, the number of *Uniates* that are not baptised attains according to official statements 29235, the number of unconsecrated marriages 10737. These numbers point out in ciphers of fire the shameful barbarity of the empire, and the indifference of our time for these abominations.

And that is not the only characteristic example of their infamy. Could we only erect in the centre of Europe a post on which we could nail a board and point out to universal indignation the fact, that a language spoken by twenty million of men and whence has sprung the richest literature of the *Slaves*, one of the richest in the world and which continues to produce works admired by all nations, is not only banished from all public and from many private institutions, excluded as obligatory language from all schools in its own country, forbidden

among children in their games in all scholastic establishments! In Poland the polish language has less importance in any official and public statement than any negro dialect; people are authorized to apply to government in every comprehensible language except polish; that language is not accepted, it is a crime to use it.

The proportions established by statistics in the distribution of public situations between the polish Ilotes, and the russian Spartans shows off admirably the hardness of the oppressor. No superior place, well retributed is ever accessible to a Pole; a few secondary places are still allotted them till the death of the incumbent; they are also only tolerated in the lowest places as long as these places do not belong to the official manufactory.

On 11003 clerks in the kingdom, in the different Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finances, Justice, Agriculture and others, there are 3285 Poles which is 23 0/0. All proportions kept they are the most numerous at the academy of Music at Warsaw where they attain 94 0/0; they are the lowest in the Chancellors office, only 1,8 0/0. From all that touches the Ministries of Justice and public Instruction the Poles have been radically excluded in favour of Russians. On 558 presidents and vice-presidents of the tribunal, judges examining magistrates and attorneys-general there are but twenty-one Poles or 3,76 0/0. The court of appeal for the Kingdom has at Warsaw but one Pole (a deputy-sollicitor). The commercial tribunal at Warsaw has also one Pole. Certain district courts, Kalisz and Plock, the court of the justice of peace in town have not a single Pole.

The Poles are estimated only at 62 0/0 among the inferior badly paid clerks, junior clerks, in the chancellor's office, secretaries, under secretaries and the candidates for all judicial appointments, which they will never obtain in the country.

Schools present the same facts. There are still thirty two Poles on one hundred and sixty one functionaries in the many offices of public instruction, the direction, the libraries: but in the sum

total of one thousand five hundred and sixteen ordinary professors, higher professors, directors of establishments of superior, secondary and primary instruction there are but one hundred and sixty four Poles. There are schools (the progymnasium of Sandomir, Hrubieszow and Zamosc; the superior gymnasium for boys at Warsaw; for girls at Piotrkow, Kielce, Lomza, Suwalki, Plock) where only one Pole remains; and even so he only gives secondary lessons such as dancing. There are other institutions entirely given up to Russians; the agronomical institute, the veterinary school; such gymnasiums for boys as: the first and sixth at Warsaw, Chelm, Siedlce; those for girls; the first and third at Warsaw, Siedlce and Lublin.

Nine seminaries for primary professors and even the professional schools at Radom and Olkusk as well as the horticultural school at Warsaw have not among their masters one single Pole. We have exclusively possession of the drawing school, and are in majority only in the special institution charged with the keeping of the fiscal interests in the courts of Justice.

Those are two very characteristic exceptions to the general rule. They give over to Poles such places as have no social influence, or others where the interests of State require the most scrupulous probity.

The government which has taken to heart our material ruin, and our national metamorphosis, has not stopped at the reduction of the polish element in all public services; it has interfered in all the most important societies and in private undertakings such as railways, private schools, etc., where they have imposed as directors and in reality as spies their own well paid agents. The different fractions converge towards the one principal point on which all is bent. As the entire organisation of government administration in the Kingdom of Poland has no other aim but the fiscal imposition and the russification of the population it is evident that all the state institutions no longer answer their primitive design, and have become instruments for

political purposes. The tribunal no longer attends to the preservation of justice; the schools no longer attend to instruction; the functionaries and magistrates of the governments, districts, commons, municipalities no longer attend to their duty; they think only of russifying. They russify the catholic church, the social institutions their clients, the culprits, the children, the peasants, the gentry, in a word all who are apt to receive the antipolish virus.

Though the civilised world has not suffered such trials, or if it has gone through similar periods, it has in its development left them far behind, nothing is easier than to understand and to represent approximately what a chaotic existence the national one is, that rests on no legal basis, constituted as it is by a heap of incidents superposed at random. That is the reason why every prescription can be changed or cancelled at the will or for the benefit of those to whom their application is entrusted; that is why an individual placed even in the lowest degree of hierarchy is able, on account of his birth and his religious faith to be legislator and omnipotent. In reality no institution accomplishes the functions that devolves on it; all together present a system of large and small wheels in a gigantic mill, which crushes the polish grain to make russian flour.

The civilised world will easily comprehend what happens, when a nation can no longer bring up their children, but is obliged to confide them to their enemies, who demoralize and deprave them, who is not allowed to administer her own property but must give over that duty to thieves who steal and waste it, who in every respect instead of enjoying any latitude is deprived of every right and to whom every security is refused.

The lowest russian tchinovnik, simply because he is a russian can with his plough share of servitude make such furrows in our lives that the surface can never recover its level; he can at will suspend the exercise of every right considered elsewhere as inseparable from the name of citizen of the civilised world, that

of subsistence and of property. As for our feelings and naturalities we must pay their ransom in humiliations and money. The noble attributions of human nature are annihilated or atrophied in the miasms of such an atmosphere of injustice and cruelty. The fact of depriving us of our country and our liberty, is but half the harm done us; the other half consists in our demoralization.

Russia who has never had the frankness of a bandit who openly commits pillage, but who reduced by dint of corruption, or terror its future slaves to implore their subjection by forcing them to renounce formally every claim against it, tried from the beginning to pervert us. During the whole time of its domination it has carefully cultivated on a vast scale a number of characters, viciated as regards nationality, and cankered morally speaking.

All polish traitors, persecutors and detractors of their nationality, all renagadoes, who went over to orthodoxy by interest; all creatures caring only for their advancement, found a good place in his heart and received from him a profusion of gifts. Though carrying its pretended love of religion to idolatry, the government loaded with favours the dissolute catholic priests, who like Kopciuchowicz sealed their letters to their mistresses with holy wafer.

Mouravieff has not only hanged by hundreds, imprisoned or sent to the mines of Siberia thousands of Poles but has given a free scope to all bad instincts of oppressors and oppressed.

We can recognize today, by a greater corruption of both, what a long path that evangelist of crime has followed and the reform of the emancipation of the peasants, deceitful in spite of its alluring mark, though it constituted a first rate financial operation had as aim, on account of the drudgery which the peasant was bound to do on his master's estate, to keep up a constant irritation and a bitter conflict between landlord and labourer.

The ideal of russian policy in Poland is to keep up a hatred which in penetrating by every pore into the social organism, leaves no part free from that moral infection. To attain this aim all means are good and all are employed. Whenever some social injustice brings on an insurrection the russian government incites the people to plunder the Jews. During the manifestations which took place in November at Warsaw against the convocation under arms of the soldiers of the reserve sent to the East, the police underhand urged the crowd to sack all jewish shops. By thus misleading every revolutionary tendency, they get them mixed up with crimes of common law and discredited. The energy of their action is diminished and once weakened are easily mastered. An empire naturally rapacious, desirous of gain, incapable of establishing legal order; where the superior police officers are often little more than leaders of robbers, and priests are spies condemns to death the citizen who has tried to oppose these abuses even with the most lawful resistance. A Pole who when a child at school, when a grown up man does not lie or cheat in his dealings with the authorities finds himself by that very fact in the position of a stag assailed in the open air by wolves and finds his end.

The ignorance carefully entertained in an empire the extent of which is so vast, and of which the budget of public instruction is so small, is a great help for developping corruption. The polish nation who sees his own language and religion prescribed from all schools, does not send his children to school preferring they should be totally ignorant than russified.

If in our country private instruction were not a crime severely punished by government; if instruction had been left to the resources of society alone, our nation in ten years, with very few exceptions would have known to read and write; where as today we have 80 0/0 of our peasants who do not know the alphabet. For the greater part they are poor wretches who feed principally on potatoes, breathe the unwholesome air of the



little huts in which they wallow barefooted half the year; and now owing to the stagnation caused by the war, they go abegging by hundreds of thousands or die of hunger on account of their forced idleness.

This crucified nation has been deprived of its last right that of complaining aloud. Scarcely if this censure, cursed by every human soul allows breathing time; it intercepts their cries as they pass. In the country, these stifled lamentations are changed into low conversations; the stranger does not hear them; or if they reach his ear, are as on afar off echo or a sad whisper. The world does not suspect our anguish nor does it recognize our national genius; all that is seen as through the bars of a cage in the keeping of police-men. And now that nation, formerly independent, proud, thrifty enlightened, now condemned to slavery, humiliation and poverty, whose intellectual genius has been crushed, and who through their rags show the wounds inflicted by the knout, has again been summoned to make another sacrifice and pay the awful tax imposed by war; the Poles have specially been exposed by Russia to the Japanese canons. Though the inhabitants of the kingdom of Poland form but the thirteenth part of the soldiers of the empire they were obliged to contribute 30 or 40 0/0 of the soldiers. On the plains of Mandchouria thousands of Poles have fallen hastened by force into the abyss where death awaited them obliged to fight against an adversary who could but inspire them with sympathy, kindness, gratitude and respect. The beloved of free nations must consider as their enemy, and fight against the nation which has struck with a mortal blow the dragon in whose den it now lies chained, that is Japan; the best among Russians bless it for having conquered their government; by its humanity on the battle field it now shines with unequalled splendour.

Is that not one of those imposing tragedies of fate, the catastrophies of which result from the conditions of a situation created by the most awful tyranny? When we should wish that each canon

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ball were a messenger of life for those sor send them death. But if we fire without t do as much with our sufferings. Theref our pardon of the Japanese because we obligation imposed on us by Russia th polish bullets.

May this account of our woes have the an immense bell of which the powerful the extremities of the earth, calling forth and terror! For our claims expose not only our sufferings, the danger which the decomposition of russian despotism, and the amount of infectious miasms which comes there from, threa- tens the civilised world. Besides Russia has fixed no limits to its latest encroachments; nothing prevents its pushing still farther the boundary of its frontier. Its pretensions aim at immense regions of slavonie nations where the adherents are numerous to whom it shows an open hand while the other holds a chain.

As long as Russia remains the chief den of plunderers, and that its tyranny bows down with a rod or by threat of the sword a multitude of Poles subjugated and chained, Europe the imme- diate witness of this iniquity has no right to invoke its honour or consider itself in safety.

Our present protestation will be sent far and wide and will meet with many blind, deaf or indifferent people. But it is sure also to fall under the eyes of persons who will attentively weigh the words and will take in the meaning. They will de- cipher at the end of this document millions of signatures of the members of a society whose complaints though powerless must remain anonymous.



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ball were a messenger of life for those sons of the rising sun, we send them death. But if we fire without taking aim, we can not do as much with our sufferings. Therefore we cannot implore our pardon of the Japanese because we suffer more from the obligation imposed on us by Russia than they suffer by the polish bullets.

May this account of our woes have the echo of the clapper of an immense bell of which the powerful sound will resound to the extremities of the earth, calling forth stupefaction, horror and terror! For our claims expose not only our sufferings, but the danger which the decomposition of russian despotism, and the amount of infectious miasms which comes there from, threatens the civilised world. Besides Russia has fixed no limits to its latest encroachments; nothing prevents its pushing still farther the boundary of its frontier. Its pretensions aim at immense regions of slavonie nations where the adherents are numerous to whom it shows an open hand while the other holds a chain.

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