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# LANDOWNERSHIP AND POPULATION IN POMERANIA

BY ARTHUR OSBORNE



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TORUŃ (POLAND)



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# LANDOWNERSHIP AND POPULATION IN POMERANIA

BY ARTHUR OSBORNE



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**Wyższej Szkoły Polit. - Wych.**

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Wyższej Szkoły Polit. - Wych.

## CONCISE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BALTIC INSTITUTE

### I. Its Purpose and Activities

The Baltic Institute is a social institution whose purpose, as stated in article 2 of its statute, is "the investigation of economic, political, national and other conditions on the Baltic coast from the point of view of Poland's interests". The Institute was founded in 1926. In spite of its youth it has already achieved much both in the organization of research work and in the editing of a number of treatises, discourses and popular scientific works.

Its research work and editorial activities are based on the contributions of its corresponding members, who as a general rule are professors or instructors in Polish higher educational institutions. The first five years of the Institute's research work were devoted to study of the essential historical and cultural connection of Pomerania with the rest of Poland. The Institute has also investigated problems of overseas trade, harbour organization and the influence of access to the sea on the economic, cultural and political life of a country.

As the work of the Institute progressed it widened its studies to embrace Baltic problems in general, paying special attention to Poland's relations with other Baltic States and particularly with East Prussia.

### II. Its Methods of Action

All action towards the accomplishment of the above tasks is conducted in accordance with article 2 of the Institute's statute, viz.

1. collecting and filing research material relative to the Baltic coast

2. employment of this material for the publication of studies, treatises and general literature serving to defend Poland's rights and interests on the Baltic

3. placing the results of these investigations at the disposition of the authorities, commercial organizations and Polish citizens engaged in trade or industry in Baltic States

4. maintenance of libraries, reading rooms and museums to be employed for study relative to Poland's connection with the Baltic

5. organizing debates and discussions.

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The relation between the Board, who represents the Institute in social action, and the body of students working in the various research committees and in the Management is regulated by the Institute's statute in the following manner:

A. ultimate control of the Baltic Institute rests with the general meeting of its members, which, in accordance with article 25 of its statute, acts as a supreme authority and elects a Board of Trustees, a Board of Managers and a Committee of Auditors

B. the Board of Trustees consists of 5 members and, in accordance with article 19 of the statute, appoints a director who is an ex-officio member of the Board of Managers

C. the Board of Managers consists of 7 members and executes all administrative and financial business

D. the Director, appointed by the Board of Trustees and an ex-officio member of the Board of Managers, supervises, in accordance with article 35 of the statute, all the scientific and research work of the Institute

E. the special committees in which all the research and social work is centered are appointed by the Director, in accordance with article 32 of the statute.

### IV. Its Publications

The "Records", the official organ of the Baltic Institute, appear in four series.

1. *Dominium Maris* consisting of publications dealing with the problem of an outlet to the sea, as being the principal economic problem of restored Poland

2. *Balticum* consisting of papers on physiographical, ethnographical and historical problems of the Baltic coast, with especial reference to Polish Pomerania and East Prussia

3. *Assemblies of the Students of Pomerania* series consisting of the lectures and papers given at these assemblies, the minutes of the assemblies and reviews of research material collected by the members

4. *Pomeranian bibliographical series*.

To date the following volumes of the "Records" have appeared:

In the *Dominium Maris* Series:

Wojciech Stopczyk: "International Trade on the Baltic". Toruń, 1928, pp. 192 + VIII, 71 tables and 6 graphs. 6 zł.

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A. Siebeneichen & H. Strasburger: "The Question of Gdynia". Toruń, 1931, pp. 180 + VIII, 43 tables. 7,50 zł.

Casimir Świątecki: "The Development of the Port of Danzig". Toruń, 1932, pp. 309 + XIV, 148 tables, 5 maps and 8 graphs. 20 zł.

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In the *Balticum* Series:

"Polish Pomerania". Vol. I. Land and People. Collective work edited by J. Borowik containing treatises by: A. Fischer, J. Kostrzewski, J. Mikołajski, M. Orłowicz, M. Rudnicki, K. Stołyhwo, J. Wąsowicz, A. Wodziezko. Toruń, 1929, pp. 326 + X, 118 illustrations, 17 maps and graphs. 12,50 zł.

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Bożena Stelmachowska: "Pomeranian Traditions and Festivals". Toruń, 1933, pp. 271 + XI. 10 zł.

Władysław Łęga: "The district of Malborg". Toruń, 1933, pp. 254 + XVIII, 180 illustrations. 12 zł.

*In the Students of Pomerania Assemblies Series:*

"The National Problem in Pomerania". Toruń, 1931, pp. 130, 1 map and 1 graph. 5 zł.

"The State of Land Ownership in Pomerania". Historical and Legal Problems. Toruń, 1933, pp. 242. 10 zł.

All these works, with the exception of the book by Sobieski, which was published in German, were published in Polish. Certain future volumes of the "Records" will also be published in English and German. The Baltic Institute also publishes a series of popular instructional pamphlets in English and French under the title of the "Baltic Pocket Library".

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All information regarding the work of the Baltic Institute and its publications, together with catalogues and price lists can be had by addressing:

The Baltic Institute, Toruń, Żeglarska 1, tel. 878.

## PREFACE

*Germany has been loudly complaining for some years past that Poland is violently de-Germanising Pomerania. German populations have been driven out of the two provinces of Pomerania and Poznań; German landowners have been and are being expropriated; such are the complaints which have have been brought before the ears of the world.*

*The following is an attempt to probe into such unjust accusations levelled at Poland and to sift truth from exaggeration or misinformation. It is based on official statistics of both Poland and Prussia and on the studies of eminent scholars of the question.*

*Pomerania is not merely a "Corridor"; it is a province of 16,386 square kilometres — larger than, for instance, Alsace-Lorraine — and with a population of over a million. It is therefore a point of prime importance in any discussion of revision of frontiers whether this population and province are Polish or whether they are indeed German territory and are being at present violently Polonised.*

*In the main, Pomerania is an agricultural province, and therefore this pamphlet will be directed mainly to the question of the ownership of land in Pomerania and its relation to the general population.*

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE GERMAN EXODUS FROM POMERANIA

In starting any discussion about Pomerania the first thing is to be quite definite as to what this term covers. It is used to signify the maritime province of Poland, voivodship "*Pomorze*", a large agricultural and industrial province with a population of over a million. This province was Polish up to the time of the Partitions of Poland, that is to the end of the 18th Century. It was then conquered by Prussia.\* In the latter 19th Century it was incorporated (except for the district of Działdowo) into the German administrative area of West Prussia.

The Polish character of Pomerania is not disputed. It is manifested even in official German statistics and nationality maps of before the War.

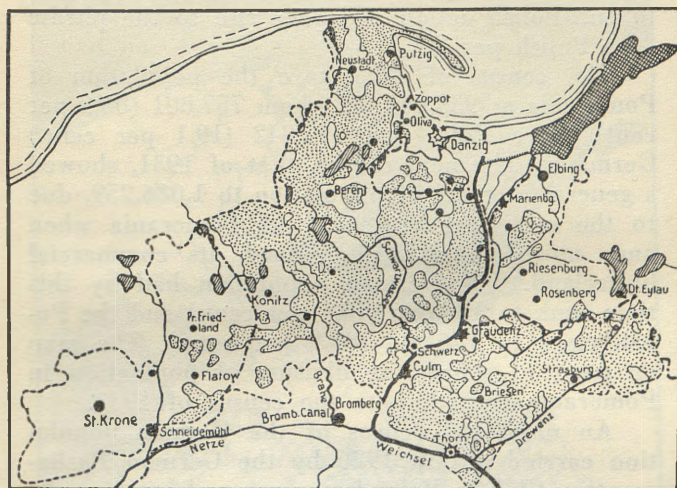
German revisionist propaganda, however, complains that Pomerania is being violently Polonized and that Germans up to the number of some 600,000 have been compelled to leave the province.

Such estimates of the German exodus from Pomerania are obtained presumably by deducting the German population of Pomerania according to the census of 1931 from the German population of West Prussia according to the census of

1910. This ignores a considerable difference in area and population between "*Pomorze*" and "*West Preussen*". Pre-war West Prussia occupied an area of 25,554 square kilometres and had in 1910 a population of 1,672,423. Of this population 949 thousand were Germans. Comparison of this figure with the number of Germans in present-day Pomerania would give an even larger decrease than 600 thousand but one must remember that only 62 per cent. of West Prussia (15,864 square kilometres) went to form Polish Pomerania. The Free City of Danzig absorbed 7.5 per cent. and 30.5 per cent. — nearly a third part of the whole province — remained in Germany. Naturally the same holds also with regard to population. 55.9 per cent. of the population of West Prussia passed under Polish rule, 19.1 per cent. formed the Free City of Danzig, and 25 per cent. remained in Germany.

Comparisons of the German population of West Prussia with that of Pomerania are therefore devoid of all value. The point which requires investigation is fluctuations of population in those districts of pre-war West Prussia which form present-day Pomerania. According to the official Prussian statistics of the "*Gemeindelexikon*" the total population of these districts in the year 1910 was 990,000, of whom 437,412 were counted as Germans. This number, however, included 16,000 "bilinguals", that is Poles who, being educated in German schools, spoke also German. The actual division of population, therefore, was: Poles 568,000 and Germans 421,000.

# POLISH POPULATION IN POMERANIA BEFORE THE WAR<sup>1</sup>



Districts with a Polish majority are shaded  
 - - - - - present Polish-German frontier  
 ..... frontier of pre-war province West Prussia.

The map given above is an official Prussian map of the year 1905, illustrating the division of population in West Prussia. It shows also what parts of pre-war West Prussia remained outside the frontiers of Poland. No attempt was made at that time to deny that in the greater part of present-

<sup>1</sup> According to a map in the official paper of the Prussian Statistics office: "Statistischer Atlas. Berlin 1905". Plate 9. Based on the census of 1900.

This map is also used by Fritz Braun in his "Landeskunde der Provinz Westpreussen", published by Goeschel Collection. Leipzig 1912.

day Pomerania the Germans were in a minority. On the contrary this was used as an incentive to anti-Polish action and gave rise to the phrase "the Polish peril."

The census of 1921 gave the population of Pomerania as 935,643, of whom 757,801 (80.9 per cent.) were Poles and 177,842 (19.1 per cent.) Germans.<sup>2</sup> The next census, that of 1931, showed a general increase of population to 1,086,259, due to the increased prosperity of Pomerania when once more united with Poland, its commercial hinterland. The German population had by this time sunk to 109,696 (10.1 per cent.) and the Polish risen to 976,563 (89.9 per cent.). The map on page 11 shows the division of population in Pomerania according to the census of 1931.

An unofficial census of the German population carried out in 1926 by the German Parliamentary Club in Poland may serve also as corroboration of the enormous Polish majority in Pomerania. According to this census the Germans amounted to only 9.7 per cent. of the population.

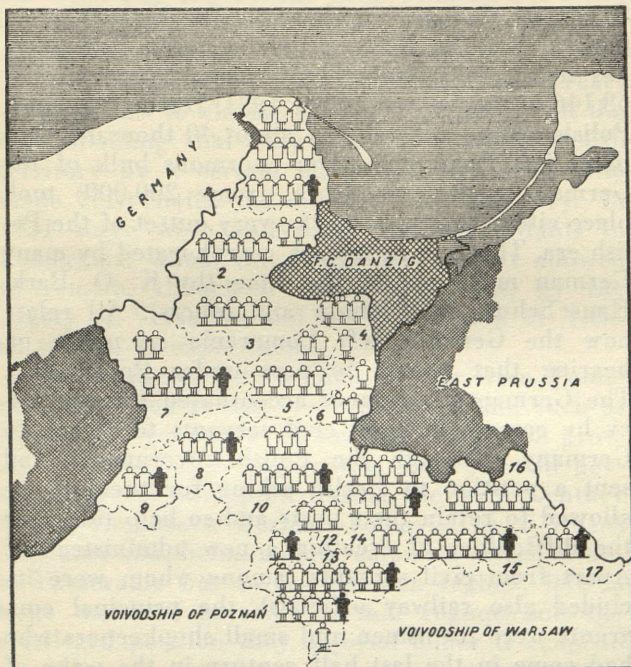
The actual decline of German population in Pomerania, in contrast to the somewhat fantastic figures given by German propaganda, can be seen from the following table:

|                                 |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| German population in 1910 . . . | 421,033 |
| German population in 1921 . . . | 177,842 |
| decline . . . . .               | 243,191 |
| German population in 1931 . . . | 109,696 |
| further decline . . . . .       | 68,146  |
| total decline . . . . .         | 311,337 |

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<sup>2</sup> The total given included inhabitants whose language was other than Polish and who in 1921 amounted to 2,071.

## THE PRESENT POPULATION OF POMERANIA



White figures = 10,000 of population whose native language is Polish (in the nearest round figures).  
 Black figures = 10,000 of population whose native language is other than Polish.

The dark-shaded portion of the map is that part of pre-war West Prussia which after the War remained in the German Reich and to-day composes the province of Grenzmark Posen-Westpreussen and the regency of West Preussen belonging to the province of East Prussia.

The light-shaded portion represents that part of pre-war West Prussia which composes the Free City of Danzig.

Three hundred thousand is still a large enough figure to give some colour to the German complaints that the German exodus from Pomerania has not been voluntary. Of these, however, only 68,146 left since September 1921. During the short Polish regime before 1921 about 40 thousand Germans left Pomerania. The enormous bulk of the German exodus, therefore, (some 200,000) took place either before or at the very outset of the Polish era. This fact is, indeed, corroborated by many German memoirs of the time (by K. O. Bark, Hans Schulz, G. Cleinow and others). All relate how the Germans left Pomerania *en masse* on hearing that it was to pass under Polish rule. The German government accentuated this tendency by commanding all civil servants to return to Germany, although the Polish government had sent a petition to Berlin asking for them to be allowed to retain their posts and so help tide over the difficulties of creating a new administration. Apart from civil servants (among whom were included also railway officials), the principal emigrants were townsmen and small shopkeepers who had come in the last half century in the wake of German colonisation of the land, retired officers and civil servants who found life in a conquered and colonized province cheaper and more pleasant, and landholders who had been attracted to Pomerania by the special privileges held out to them as members of a colonizing race.

There remain to be considered, then, the 110 thousand odd Germans who have left Pomerania between 1921 and 1931. Not a formidable num-

ber even had the exodus been compulsory. Such, however, is not the case. 56 per cent. of these emigrants were German optants, Germans, that is, who availed themselves of the permission of the Treaty of Versailles to choose German citizenship on the understanding that they were to abandon Polish territory by a certain date. Indeed not all who made this choice did leave Polish territory. In 1931 there were still 5,743 German optants in Pomerania, whom the Polish government allowed to remain, though it had every right, by the Treaty of Versailles and the Convention of Vienna (1919), to expel them.

In summary, the German exodus from Pomerania has been greatly overestimated, and such as it was, was voluntary. Pomerania is a Polish province with a Polish population. The German government had attempted during the 19th Century to superimpose a German colony. The Germans in Pomerania, being mainly colonists attached not to Pomerania but to the German régime, left in large numbers as soon as that régime and the privileged position they enjoyed under it came to an end.

The most stable part of the German population in Pomerania was that settled on the land. A large proportion of the landholders also were newcomers specially protected and privileged by the German government, and many of these made haste to leave before Pomerania became Polish. Many German landholders, however, remained, and these will be discussed in more detail in the ensuing chapters.

## CHAPTER 2

### POLISH SETTLEMENT OF THE LAND IN POMERANIA

The Polish State carries on the pre-war German agrarian policy of establishing a settler population on the soil. In order to provide land for this purpose the greater landowners (owners, on the average, of around 800 hectares, though the exact area varies according to the situation of the land) can be compelled to sell a certain amount of their land. This policy is not confined to Pomerania or any single province but is being carried out year by year over the whole of Poland. It is nationalist only in so far as the colonists settled on the soil are Poles, and is not carried on more energetically in Pomerania than in any other province of the country. A German complaint has been raised before Geneva and carried to the Hague International Tribunal of Justice, where it is at present pending decision, that the proportion of Germans to Poles compelled to sell a part of their estate in Pomerania under this law far exceeds the proportion of German to Polish landowners. This complaint is based on an inaccuracy of data. The pre-war German policy was, as will be shown later, to amass the land of conquered provinces in German hands. So well did this succeed that at the beginning of the Polish era the amount of the land in German hands was altogether disproportionate to the per-

centage of German population. Especially was this the case with large estates. In 1926, when the Germans numbered some 10 per cent. of the total population of Pomerania, of estates over 180 hectares there were 175,685 hectares in German hands and only 114,496 in Polish. In some districts in former German provinces a large number of Germans are affected by the land law, even while strict proportion is maintained. This is due merely to the pre-war German policy of Germanising the soil.

When Pomerania came into Polish hands an entirely artificial state of things held in the utter disproportion between the relation of German population to Polish and of German-held land to Polish. The Polish Government decided to rectify this so far as could be done without infringing rights guaranteed to the minority. Certain categories of land could be obtained by the Government and were so obtained for farmer settlement. These sources of land have ceased to be used, but as they are mentioned in German complaints which do not always sufficiently distinguish past from present, they will be here briefly catalogued:

1. By the Treaty of Versailles all property and rights — "*biens et droits*" — by which one must understand also mortgage claims, in Pomerania belonging to the German Crown or to members of the German Royal Family were to pass into the possession of the Polish State. It was also an article of the Peace Treaty that the German Government was to do nothing to impair the value of any property to be handed over to the Allies.

Between the years 1918 and 1920 the German Government, anticipating the passing of its property in Pomerania into Polish hands, made haste to alienate as much of its land and rights there as possible. The Polish Government, on taking possession, considered this a breach of the Treaty, as it very seriously impaired the value of the State "*biens et droits*" at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. The Polish Government declared legal, therefore, the state of possession which held at the time of the Treaty in 1919, annulling these later contracts. This placed in the Government's hands a certain amount of land for use as peasant settlements. The Germans, however, protested at this action, and in September 1932 their protest was approved by the International Tribunal of Justice at the Hague. This source of land therefore disappeared and the Polish Government incurred the expense of several million zlotys which, were paid over to the International Tribunal of Justice to be distributed as indemnity to German landowners, whose claim had already been declared null.

2. A further source of land existed in the purchase by compulsion of certain German estates. The German pre-war Colonisation Commission had given land for the most part not as property but as "perpetual lease", reserving to itself the right of repurchasing should the holder show himself unfitted for the work of cultivator; the purpose of this being mainly to prevent land from passing into Polish hands. This right, together with the other "*biens et droits*" of the German State, passed to the Polish Government by the Treaty of Ver-

sailles. It was used in certain cases—mainly on the death of a holder — though never to any great extent. German holders naturally protested. Legally and theoretically the right remained the same; in practice it had been created to forward Germanisation and was used to impede it. A right that had been good in the hands of the Colonisation Commission became unjust in the hands of the Polish Government. In October 1929 Poland declared her readiness in return for the signing of a commercial treaty, to abandon this right except in cases where a holder was criminally convicted, did not fulfil the conditions of the contract by which he held his land or died leaving no immediate heirs. The commercial treaty, however, was not signed and this right of compulsory purchase remains to the Polish Government, although it is at present in abeyance.

3. A third source of land lay in the right accorded to Poland by the Treaty of Versailles to liquidate all the goods, rights and concerns (*tous les biens, droits et intérêts*) of German citizens in Poland. This concerned only such Germans as had come to Poland since the year 1908, earlier arrivals being accorded Polish citizenship. Later, in 1924, the Convention of Vienna still further reduced this number, according to many the right of option of citizenship. Owing largely to lack of funds, little use was made by Poland of this right until 1929 — some 1500 Polish settlers being established. In that year the right was signed away in return for certain concessions on the part of Germany.

Taken as a whole Polish land colonisation may be characterised as being social not political, extended over the whole country and not confined to any province or provinces, and exceedingly gradual, partly as a matter of policy and partly also for lack of funds on the part of the Government.

In this it differs fundamentally, as will be shown, from the German pre-war and post-war agrarian settlement policy. The German pre-war agrarian settlement policy will be treated in a separate chapter as it consists of a ruthless and undisguised attempt to uproot Polish landowners and establish Germans in their place, and was successful at least in so far as to leave a wholly disproportionate number of German landowners in Pomerania at the beginning of the Polish era. The post-war policy does not fundamentally differ. Enormous sums are spent on establishing German peasant settlements both along Poland's western frontier and in East Prussia. The agriculture question is treated in a completely different manner here from in the rest of Germany. Every effort is made to Germanise the soil.

### CHAPTER 3

#### "OSTHILFE" IN EAST PRUSSIA

The policy of establishing peasant settlements on the land is not a Polish invention. It came into being in 19th Century Germany as a result of the emancipation of the peasants. Peasants usually indemnified their overlord for emancipation by payment in land and this tended to produce a large landless proletariat or proletariat of labourers possessing insufficient land to maintain their family. This social evil was combated by the large scale establishment of peasant settlements, a policy which still continues in Germany.

While being in Germany proper a purely agrarian policy, this serves also in the eastern provinces as a means of uprooting Polonism. The Germans are frequently faced and have been faced in the past by the problem of the larger increase of Polish population than German. A means of counteracting this has been and is the amassing of the soil in German hands. That enquiries have been made into the policy of buying up land and establishing small settlers only on the Polish side of the frontiers is due to the fact that the League of Nations undertakes the protection of minorities in the new States of Europe but not in Germany. A short study of the "Osthilfe" will show that nationalist agrarian policy is certainly no less vigorous on the German side.

Even before the War, Germany had begun to entertain projects of carrying the Germanisation of the soil beyond Pomerania through all the Baltic States up to the Russian frontier. During the War a special Ober-Ost Commission was created for this purpose. The whole of Eastern Europe as far as Russia was to be a German dependency, with the bulk of the land in German hands and with German settlements wherever possible. Poland was to be merely the first State to be civilized by Germanisation.

After the War the 19th Century policy of creating peasant settlements was continued in Germany as in Poland. State lands are used for this purpose, together with land purchased for the purpose and land compulsorily purchased in cases where the present cultivation is inefficient or under-staffed or the land under-developed. This policy is carried on with particular energy along the Polish frontiers in order to check that advance of Polish population, which always threatens, by a settler barrier on the German side of the frontier. The modern system is to allot land as property, not as "perpetual lease," but all the same under the condition that it is not to be alienated without the special permission of the "*Landeskulturamt*," which means not to Poles. In a way Germany's eastern problem was simplified by the loss of Pomerania and Poznań as she was so enabled to concentrate her efforts on districts where the Polish population was smaller and more scattered.

Post-war Germany has spared no effort to enhance the prosperity of her eastern provinces and at the same time to Germanise them more thoroughly. In 1922 was elaborated an "*Ostpreussenprogramm*" for the building of new roads and railways in the eastern provinces, the establishment of aerodromes and the enlargement of the port of Königsberg in East Prussia. In 1926 a special "*Ostfond*" was created to carry through a programme of action, which became known as the "*Sofortprogramm*" for the building of schools, hospitals, sports-grounds, swimming baths, churches, — for a general raising of the standard of life, at the cost of the Reich as a whole, in order to counteract the German tendency of emigration to the western provinces. This tendency is quite natural seeing that East Prussia is a poor province with unfertile soil, in constant need of bolstering up by Berlin. Already in 1929 when the state of agriculture in general was still satisfactory, an "*Ostpreussenhilfgesetz*" was passed, dedicating 60 million marks from the budget to the conversion of agrarian debts in the East, that is buying up private claims and mortgages and converting them into a single long-term, low percentage debt to the State.

The "Osthilfe" programme was still further strengthened in 1930 partly in alarm at the agricultural crisis which was making itself felt most in the poorer lands of the East, partly also in fear of German emigration to the West and an increase of Polish population.

The new project embraced five separate points:

1. colonisation of the land;
2. conversion of agrarian debts and granting of
3. tax relief; [credits;
4. building of roads and railways;
5. legal procedure for the conversion of debts.

This project was, however, not passed through the Reichstag, which was at this time dissolved, but was brought into being in July 1930 by a Presidential Decree, but in a somewhat weakened form. A similar project was passed through the Reichstag in 1931, but limited strictly to East Prussia and a narrow belt along the Polish frontier, although the agriculturalists of other German provinces began to look with envy and dissatisfaction at the enormous loans granted to their brethren of the East at a time when all were suffering from the crisis.

It is difficult to form an exact estimate of the funds dedicated by post-war Germany to „Osthilfe“. The law of 1926 allowed 250 million marks for this purpose in yearly quotas of 50 million. Over a hundred million marks yearly is devoted to „Kriegslasten“, which includes Reparations, Disarmament costs and “frontier expenses.” How much of this flows to the eastern frontiers cannot be estimated. From the Prussian budget 110 millions have been devoted to “Osthilfe” in the years 1924—30 inclusive. Another ten millions from state banks in the way of credits; 80 million for new settlers; 15 million for immigrants from Poland, 5 million for army settlements — 470 million marks between the years 1924 and 1930. The

law of 1931 decreed that funds for "Osthilfe" were to be disposed of to the same extent as formerly. Also 500 million marks was obtained from German industry for the conversion of agrarian debts in the East. German industry had paid 330 million marks yearly towards Reparations under the Dawes Plan. In 1930 this became unnecessary owing to the adoption of the Young Plan, and the Government converted it to a payment in instalments till 1937 of 500 million marks to be spent on agriculture in the eastern provinces. From the same source has also to be paid by 1937, 150 million towards the support of industry in the East. A further 75 million was to be advanced by the State Agricultural Bank (Rentenbank - Kreditanstalt).

These sums are destined almost entirely for the building of roads and railways and the support of agriculture, which means the establishment of new peasant settlements at the cost of the State and the purchase of claims and mortgages on existing estates. This is definitely a national and exceptional policy not, like Poland's agricultural policy, agrarian and uniform over the whole country. The eastern provinces of Germany are agricultural and comparatively poor. Germany's constant aim is to prevent emigration from them to the West and to keep the land in German possession, to build up a numerous class of small holders interested to resist any increase of Polish population, property or influence.

#### CHAPTER 4

### THE PERIOD OF PRUSSIAN COLONISATION OF POMERANIA

The statement made at the commencement of this paper as to the disproportion between German population and German-owned land in Pomerania needs some explanation. This can be found only in the history of Germany's 19th Century agrarian policy.

During the years 1816—56 the Prussian peasants were being freed of servile labour for their landlords. For this relief they paid with a percentage of their land, so that these years witnessed a diminution both in the area and in the number of peasant holdings. 5.1 per cent. of the total peasant holding of land passed into the hands of the large landowners. Special Commissions were set up in various parts of Prussia to counteract this tendency.

This tendency was the most marked in the province of West Prussia where had been the largest number of small holdings. In 1886 the Government established a Commission here also to remedy the evil, but with political as well as agrarian purpose. The real aim of this Commission was rather to increase the area of German owned land.

In the year 1885 out of the area of 2,553,490 hectares of the province of West Prussia including, it must be remembered, the Free City of Danzig

and some districts now on the German side of the frontier<sup>3</sup> German privately owned land amounted already to 719,948 hectares as against Polish 257,557. When one adds to the German side of the scale the State domains, the difference becomes overwhelming. It was not, therefore, fear of Polish ownership of land which prompted the Prussian Government in 1885 to set up the Colonisation Commission. During these years, however, while the land was passing into the hands of the Germans, the German population was diminishing in relation to the Polish. In 1861 the population of West Prussia consisted of 67.6 per cent. Germans and 32.4 per cent. Poles. Thirty years later these figures had changed to 65.5 per cent. and 34.4 per cent.

It must be remembered always, that, as explained on page 9, the pre-war statistics as to the population of West Prussia are dealing with a larger area than present-day Pomerania, an area from which the most German districts have been abstracted to form the Free City of Danzig or have remained in Germany.

This is to say that those parts of West Prussia which were Polish were becoming increasingly so. Polish insurrections had already convinced the Prussian Government of the danger of a compact Polish population. War with Russia appeared a constant probability to Germany at this time. In such a war Polish support and insurrections would be of such value that it might prove necessary to proclaim a restitution of the Polish State.

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<sup>3</sup> See chapter I, p. 8.

With this possibility before their eyes the Prussian Government decided to Germanise their provinces of Poland so thoroughly that in the event of the resurrection of Poland there could be no talk of their restitution. The aim was to reduce the Polish population and to subject it to German overlords. Hoetzsch<sup>4</sup> writes in 1912: "The time must come when material and spiritual pressure on the Poles will be so strong, that the conviction will arise in them: whatever may happen in the Russian and Austrian provinces, we cannot escape either materially or spiritually from beneath Prussian domination." The main instrument of this policy was the Colonisation Commission.

Bismarck himself saw danger only from the Polish landed gentry, always leaders of the Polish insurrections. He intended to devote a fund of 10 million marks to buying up their land, believing that the peasants and small farmers were not a source of danger. The rest of the ministers, however, under the leadership of Miquel, finance minister, carried through in opposition to Bismarck a scheme for devoting 100 million marks to the acquisition of Polish land from all possible sources and its division into German peasant holdings. This fund was to be used to settle 40 thousand German peasant families in Pomerania by the year 1907, in which year it was to come to an end.

In order to solve the problem of endowing German families with land and yet retaining a cer-

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<sup>4</sup> "Zur Einführung" — an article in "*Ostland — Jahrbuch für ostdeutsche Interessen.*" 1912.

tain hold over them, a new form of tenancy was created. The tenant received land sufficient to support a family and he worked by it without outside labour. He was also provided with a homestead and the necessary farm buildings. The rent was exceedingly low, and nine tenths part of it could be paid off, the remaining one tenth remained as a perpetual rent. The tenant could sell or mortgage or bequeath his land, but the rent remained, ensuring the Colonisation Commission the right of supervision over methods of cultivation, politics and nationalist integrity. Should these be open to criticism the land could be declared forfeit. These estates were bound in case of inheritance by the law of primogeniture, division by any means being forbidden. In case of sale the Colonisation Commission had the right of pre-emption.

The Polish landed gentry saw the danger that threatened them and determined to fight it to the best of their ability. The landed gentry formed a league, supported by Polish Banks in Poznań, with the purpose of coming to the aid of Polish landowners who were indebted or in financial straits, in order to avert the necessity of selling to the Colonisation Commission. In addition to this the Polish League also bought land for Polish peasant settlers. Such rivalry naturally inflated the price of land.

According to the scheme of 1886 half the fund of 100 million marks was to be used for the purchase of 100 thousand hectares of land. Owing to the rise in the price of land this amount was

purchased by 1898 for 60 million marks. For the other 50 million marks were to be established 5 thousand farming settlements and 3 thousand workman settlements. This was to account for 40,000 persons. In 1898 another 100 million marks was added to this fund which was made permanent, not merely to 1907. This second 100 million lasted only four years, as its employment was now extended to a general combat with Polishism. This included the founding of schools, churches, public libraries, reading rooms, academies; in short placing German culture and education within easy reach while excluding Polish.

The German offensive was nothing if not thorough. The Polish danger was fully recognized. An atmosphere of haste pervaded the actions of the Colonisation Commission. No expense was spared in the attempt to Germanise the Prussian provinces of Poland before general European disturbances should bring forward the question of a restored Poland. In 1902 a further 225 million marks was added to the funds of the Colonisation Commission, 275 million in 1908 and in 1913 230 million. 125 million marks from the quota of 1908 were set aside for a new purpose of which more will be said below, the perpetuation of German holdings. Of the 1913 quota 155 million marks were devoted to this purpose, only 75 million being used for the acquisition of peasant holdings. It was also declared by the Prussian Government in 1913 that after the exhaustion of the 75 million marks so allotted no further funds would be devoted to the purchase of land. By

this time the income of the Colonisation Commission from lands already divided up amounted to 22 million marks yearly and this was to suffice in future for purchase of new land. It was estimated that it would be sufficient to acquire 15—16 thousand hectares of land and create 1200 new settlements yearly.

Taking these figures as a whole we have the sum of 955 million marks voted by the Prussian State between the years 1886 and 1918 for Germanising the Polish provinces of Poznań and Pomerania. Moreover each of the settlers had to possess 5000 marks at the time of taking possession of his land. 21 thousand families were settled on the land up to the end of 1918 so that this private contribution amounted to another 100 million marks. A 100 million marks from the rent paid in to the Colonisation Commission was also devoted to the perpetuation of German holdings, so that the total expense of Germanisation amounts to one milliard, 155 million marks; one milliard, 55 million marks if the last 100 million be deducted as proceeds from the action.

The land bought up by the Colonisation Commission was not immediately divided up but first subjected to extensive drainage and improvements. When divided up it could be leased or sold outright but almost exclusively the above mentioned system of permanent lease was adhered to. As already mentioned, this was calculated to perpetuate the work of the Commission as land so distributed was bound by primogeniture and the Commission had wide powers of supervision

and the right of pre-emption in case of sale. The rent amounted to 3 per cent. of the value of the land plus 2—3 per cent. of the value of any buildings erected by the Commission. The settler was bound to build a house on the land within the course of a year and to live there permanently. He was also obliged to equip the farm with all that was considered by the Commission necessary. He received building material at cost price from the State and had the free use of State transport and conveyance. Also for the first two or three years he was free of rent.

The Commission cared no less for the welfare of the entire settlements than for that of individual settlers. Settlements were provided with schools, churches, water-supply, fire-stations, public barns and sheds and hospitals. In mixed villages these benefits were reserved so far as possible for the new settlers, the Polish inhabitants being excluded from enjoyment of them. Moreover, as the cost of such equipment was met from the funds of the Commission, the settlers were practically free from rates.

So far as possible Protestant settlers were chosen, as being less likely to assimilate with the Poles. They were taken from the various States of Germany, each bringing their own agricultural speciality. The Commission was driven to choose its settlers more and more from the proletariat classes, as those who bettered their lot by becoming farmers were more likely to remain on the land they acquired. Colonisation was not resorted to in districts which were almost

exclusively Polish or in those which possessed already a large German majority as in the former it was considered purposeless in the latter unnecessary. Those districts were colonised which possessed a large German minority or a slight majority, the purpose being to make the district as a whole pro-German. This is to say that many of the districts of present-day Pomerania were passed over as being too Polish for colonisation to be worth while.

Measures on such a scale should have sufficed to Germanise Pomerania long before its incorporation into a restored Polish State but were thwarted by two important factors. The first of these was the large and increasing fluidity of German holdings in Pomerania. Land could be acquired on exceedingly easy terms from the Colonisation Commission and sale fetched artificially high prices owing to the competition of the Commission with Polish societies for possession. The practice even grew up of contracting to sell land at high prices to Poles in order to blackmail the Colonisation Commission into purchasing it at still higher prices. So far did this fluidity of German holdings go that most of the outlay of the Colonisation Commission went not to the acquiring of new land but simply to the preserving in German hands of land already possessed by Germans. For instance in 1912 out of 407,000 hectares acquired 71 per cent. was purchased from Germans and only 29 per cent. from Poles.

The other factor nullifying the work of the Colonisation Commission was the organized coun-

teraction of the Polish societies already referred to. Until the year 1891 the Colonisation Commission had fairly easy work buying up heavily mortgaged Polish estates. Then was formed a Polish Land Bank, coming to the assistance of Polish land-owners who were in financial difficulties, in order to avert the necessity of a sale, and also buying up land to divide up among Polish settlers, thereby creating a Polish yeomanry to counterbalance the German. This land Bank had insufficient capital to continue its work and was liquidated, but in its place arose various Unions working to the same end supported by Poznań banks and by the Polish landed gentry.

As already mentioned, the liberation of the peasants over the whole of Germany was accompanied by a shrinkage of peasant holdings and the creation of a landless proletariat. To counteract this and create a new yeomanry were formed Commissions in the various provinces of Germany. Such a Commission situated in Pomerania at Bydgoszcz, carried out work parallel and similar to that of the Colonisation Commission, only agrarian and non-national. The Polish Unions worked in alliance with this Commission, and between 1891 and 1897 2,292 Polish farmers had been settled on the land, cancelling out almost the whole work of the Colonisation Commission. In 1896 the Bydgoszcz Commission refused to work longer with the Polish Unions on the grounds that these settled only Poles and not Germans on the land. By this time, however, the Unions were strong enough to continue working on their own. So successful

indeed, was their enterprise that between the years 1896 and 1904 they bought up 267,400 hectares of German land in Pomerania and Poznań, 59,177 hectares more than the Polish land acquired by Germans, and by 1906 there was more land in Polish hands than there had been in 1886.

The Polish unions had not, of course, anything like the capital of the Colonisation Commission to dispose of. Their successful opposition and counteraction was due to the fact that the Poles who acquired land did so as settlers and cultivators on soil which they considered their own, whereas the tendency to speculation of the German settlers exhausted the funds of the Colonisation Commission in buying land from Germans for Germans. In desperation the Prussian Government permitted in 1908 the acquisition of land by compulsory expropriation of Poles (See appendix).

Mention has already been made of the increasing percentage of the funds of the Colonisation Commission devoted to the purpose of preserving existing German estates. For this purpose, apart from the funds of the Commission, special banks were created in Poznań, Danzig and Berlin. Their method of action was to buy up claims, credits and mortgages on German landed estates, whether large estates or peasant holdings, converting all into a single mortgage at low interest. The German landowner so found himself indebted only to a single creditor, a Bank whose duty it was to protect him. In return the land was converted from absolute property to the type of "perpetual lease" mentioned above. Such land was "perpetuated"

in German hands as a condition of the permanent lease was that it should not be sold to Poles.

From the beginning of the 20th Century the Prussian Government began to be seriously alarmed not merely by the increasing amount of land in Polish hands but also by the constant increase of Polish population in Pomerania, both absolutely and in proportion to the German. A method of counteracting this and at the same time of perpetuating German estates was sought by the Colonisation Commission in introducing colonies of German agricultural labourers on to large German estates in Pomerania. This shows how completely national ends had obscured agrarian in the eyes of the Commissions. It had begun its life parallel with Commissions in other German provinces, with the purpose of creating a new yeomanry and preventing the formation of a landless agrarian proletariat. In the struggle for German predominance in Pomerania the Commission now undertook to introduce a German landless proletariat. This scheme, however, did not meet with great success as for the most part the incentive of a plot of land was necessary to entice Germans to Pomerania.

Up to the year 1913 235,397 hectares of German land had been "perpetuated" in Pomerania. Together with 521,847 hectares belonging to the Crown — 757,244 hectares. Apart from this was also 2,100,000 hectares of German land. Polish land amounted to 1,700,000 hectares — slightly more than in 1886 when the Colonisation Commission began its work.

With regard to population the action of the Commission had greater effect. In the period 1856 to 1900 Polish population increased by 362,000, German by 87,000. From 1900 to 1905 the Polish increase was 57,000 and the German 41,000. This larger German increase was very largely due to the settlement of proletariat colonies.

In summary, Germany's policy with regard to land having a Polish minority or majority was, up to the end of the War, one of implacable Germanisation, with no consideration for the rights of others. The German tender conscience regarding the treatment of minorities is of recent growth and even now is intended only for foreign not for home application.

In December 1907, when the Prussian Parliament began to discuss the project of forcibly evicting Polish landowners in Pomerania in order to install Germans in their place the novelist Sienkiewicz, author of "*Quo Vadis*" and Nobel Prize winner, not content with the general condemnation of such a measure by the European press, addressed a letter to many of the leading figures in the culture and literature of different lands requesting a statement of their opinion of the policy. His intention was to perpetuate a protest of the civilized world against what he considered an act of barbarism. We give in an appendix this letter of Sienkiewicz with a selection from the replies received.

## CHAPTER 5

### LANDOWNERSHIP UP TO THE PARTITION OF POLAND

A brief historical survey up the year 1772 (the first Partition of Poland) will serve to show that up to the time when Prussia began spending millions of marks on Germanising the soil of Pomerania, this was a Polish province. Had it been indeed "*Unser deutsches Land*" these millions would never have needed to be spent. Prussia worked at enormous expense and with true German thoroughness to convert a Polish province into a German. To a large extent success was attained so far as the holding of land was concerned, but apart from this Pomerania remained, as it has always been, predominantly Polish.

At the dawn of history Pomerania was inhabited by Slavonic tribes. The richness of the Polish language in old and indigenous agricultural terms in itself refutes the suggestion sometimes put forward by German historians that the art of agriculture was only later introduced into Poland by German settlers. Most of the interior of Pomerania was, however, uncultivated forest and waste. Population was thickest along the sea coast, where it made a livelihood from fishing, the export of amber to the south and the profits of ship-wreck along the coasts.

Pomerania is first mentioned in the ninth century as a province with a Slavonic population by the Anglo-Saxon sailor Wulfstan. The chronicles and annals of early missionaries also testify to a purely Slavonic population between the mouths of the Vistula and the Oder. There was considerable Scandinavian influence in the northern part of Pomerania, but no Scandinavian settlements.

The thirteenth century was one of political independence, Pomerania being but loosely connected with the main Polish state. During this century there was a considerable inflow of Germans into Pomerania, to monasteries, mainly of the Benedictine Order, and as merchants to the towns. Apart from monastic lands, there were very few cases of German land-ownership or of German settlement on the land. At the same time German law of land tenure was gradually being adopted not exclusively in Pomerania, but over the whole of Poland, as this law was better suited to the feudal order of society.

At the commencement of the fourteenth century, in 1309, Pomerania passed for the first time for any lengthy period under German influence, being conquered by the Teutonic Order of Crusaders, who were already established in East Prussia. From this time mention is found in legal documents of "German" and "Polish" villages. The distinction is not, however, an ethnographical but a legal one, differentiating villages with German and with Polish law. The names of tenants or of litigants in a village classified as "German" are sometimes found to be exclusively Polish. The Crusaders

did not colonise the land, they merely occupied the positions of authority and governed it. Actual German settlement appeared only in the extreme West, in the towns and around Danzig, and in certain districts hitherto uninhabited. There was no struggle to de-Polonise the province. Indeed our simple-minded ancestors of the 14th Century had not yet learned to hate a man for choosing his parents from another race.

The eastward flow of German settlers passed farther south through Upper Silesia, only a very small stream going so far north as Pomerania.

During the Crusaders' tenure of Pomerania the Papacy, the Geneva of the Middle Ages, proclaimed as the result of two solemn law-suits Poland's right to the province. In 1466 Poland made good this right by arms. By this time the upper classes in some towns, notably Danzig and Toruń, were almost exclusively German though the proletariat remained mainly Polish. There was also a large sprinkling of German nobles as large landowners. On the whole, however, landed estates in Pomerania were small, comprising often only one village, and a large amount of free, paid labour was used in working them.

The attempts of a certain school of German historians to represent the 15th Century as a period of Polish oppression of German landowners is in effect an anachronism. No thought was taken by the suzerain of this time of the nationality of his tenants. The Polish Kings, like most feudal kings, found themselves in opposition to the greater landowners and sought means to weaken

them, but this was independent of nationality. The lesser landowners, both German and Polish, stood for the most part on the side of the King.

The greater nobles also preferred the suzerainty of Poland to that of the Teutonic Order, exhibiting merely an inclination common to feudal nobility in all lands towards no government at all.

Special mention must be made of the attitude of the towns at this time. Pomerania was then, as it is to-day, Poland's sole avenue of oversea trade. Town life was therefore naturally important. The greatest town was the port of Danzig; in the second place stood Toruń, which formed a stage on the transport route of goods to and from Danzig. The population of the larger towns was, with the exception of the proletariat, almost exclusively German. The smaller towns were strongly in sympathy with Poland. The greater betrayed that tendency toward independence noticeable in the later Middle Ages among the large towns of most European countries, notably of Italy and the Netherlands. They fought valiantly for Poland so long as it was a question of freeing themselves from the yoke of the Teutonic Order. Danzig observed with great festivity the centenaries of her escape from this yoke. Its commercial prosperity was dependent as it is to-day on its Polish hinterland. Ethnographical considerations did not play a role in its policy at that time. Having succeeded in becoming a part of the Polish State, however, it devoted its efforts to making the allegiance as fictitious as possible, to cloak

a real independence. The ban, for instance, on foreign pupils in the schools and foreign merchants partaking of the privileges of the town, was directed whenever possible against Poles no less than against Germans, Dutch and English. At the beginning of the Polish Rule in 1454 Danzig exhibited her Polish sentiment by fighting against the Teutonic Order; at the end of it in 1793 once more by resisting to the last Prussian aggression. Danzig and Toruń in fact succeeded in remaining Polish until 1793, where the rest of Pomerania fell to Prussia in 1772. It is of note that even during the period when Polish students and merchants were seen with ill favour in the town, there were in Danzig a Protestant church and a number of Catholic churches with service and sermon in Polish, which shows that the exclusiveness with regard to Poles was extended only so far as commercial rivalry dictated.

During the 17th Century Pomerania was wasted by Swedish Wars (1626—'29, 1655—'60, 1701—'21). The whole land was impoverished; many villages were entirely destroyed and many estates went out of cultivation. At the close of the wars it was necessary, if the land were to recuperate at all, to undertake large measures of colonisation. This was not carried through by the State but by landowners individually. On the royal estates mainly German settlers from Brandenburg and Western Pomerania were taken, on those of the Church mainly Poles; private landowners chose colonists at discretion. Apart from Poles and Germans there were also introduced large numbers of

colonists from Holland. In other parts of Poland also colonisation of the land became necessary at the close of the Swedish Wars and was effected by increasing the size of holdings and acquiring fresh supplies of peasant and paid labour. In Pomerania a different system was adopted; settlers were attracted by offering them small holdings capable of being worked without the assistance of labourers. By this means the foundation of a farmer class was laid. The ownership of land was not changed by this colonisation and the colonists, although numerous, had for the most part become Polonised by 1772, as they were surrounded by Polish neighbours and there was lacking the spirit of national hatred and the support of a home government which would have been necessary to make them resist Polonisation.

In his work published before the War Bär<sup>5</sup> gives, district by district, a list of the Polish and German landowners in Pomerania in 1772, when, on the first Partition of Poland, Pomerania came for the first time under Prussian rule. These statistics are based on legal documents of the Polish government and on a Prussian survey of 1776. In all districts there is an overwhelming majority of Poles; in several no German names appear. Other German historians, seeking to uphold the thesis that there was a large German landed element in Pomerania before the time of the Partitions, have taken figures from 1799

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<sup>5</sup> Bär: „Der Adel und der adlige Grundbesitz in Polnisch-Preussen zur Zeit der preussischen Besitzergreifung.“ Leipzig, 1911.

or even 1825, asserting that to that date no radical change had taken place. As a matter of fact Frederick II immediately after the first Partition began to introduce colonists into Pomerania in large numbers, partly as a cheap method of rewarding his soldiers and officials and partly with the idea of establishing a Prussian garrison with vested interests in the new province.

The purpose of this German thesis as to land-owning before the Partition is to make out that the new Polish State has been and is violently Polonising a German, or at any rate mixed province by exmitting German landed families established for centuries on the soil. If all the German families which acquired land in Pomerania since the year 1772 had done so with the intention of settling on it, this claim would still have a large measure of justification. The principal difficulty of the Prussian Colonisation Commission, however, was to make the German colonists remain on the land that they acquired. For the most part they did not come to settle but acquired land as a speculation to sell again. This state of affairs continued right up to the outbreak of the Great War. The "*Handbuch des Grundbesitzes*" published in 1903, taking the various districts of Pomerania separately, showed changes in the ownership of land during the previous nine years ranging from 22.6 to 53 per cent. of the total number of land-owners.

The Prussian agrarian policy, however, left considerable effects on the ownership of land in Pomerania. A large proportion of the greater Polish

landowners were induced to sell their land, especially during the early years of Prussian rule, before the Poles had awaked to the danger of this proceeding, and after 1908 when they could be forcibly expropriated. Although Polish peasant and yeoman settlements increased in number, the bulk of the large estates passed into German hands — and land which had once fallen into the grasp of the Colonisation Commission could not again be sold to Poles.

## SUMMARY

Pomerania is a Polish Province which began to be Germanised in 1772 after the first Partition of Poland. Germany's method of spreading her influence to the East differs fundamentally from, for instance, the English or the Austrian method of dealing with colonies or acquired territory. Austria permitted the nationals of her various provinces to own land, to hold office, to conduct their own national life undisturbed, and was rewarded with a fair amount of political loyalty. The German system was that acquired provinces must become German. All officials, all schools were German; the public use of the Polish language was forbidden; over a milliard marks was spent in establishing German ownership of the land. The policy, carried through with German thoroughness, met with a considerable amount of success. By inevitable reaction, however, it evoked an inveterate and persisting hostility in the Poles and a feeling, both in Poles and Germans, that the Germans in the Polish provinces were a privileged caste in a foreign milieu.

When Poland took possession of Pomerania, according to the provision of the Treaty of Versailles, German officials left the province *en masse*, recalled by the German Government, although the Polish Government had requested them to be allowed to remain in the positions they al-

ready held. Pomerania became at once, as it is to-day, overwhelmingly Polish in population, as it is in tradition. The Germans in Pomerania amount to less than ten per-cent. However, as a result of Germany's long and expensive campaign of colonisation, over half the land of the province remained in German hands even after the transference to the Polish Government of Prussian Crown Lands.

Since 1920 the Polish Government has been buying up German land whenever possible and creating Polish peasant settlements. This process, however, has gone on very slowly, partly owing to lack of funds and partly to the protection with which the Germans in Poland are surrounded by the Treaty of Versailles.

Polish Pomerania has, during little more than a decade, reverted almost completely to its natural and thousand year old Polonism.

At the same time Germany has been spending millions on the development and Germanisation of her eastern provinces on both frontiers of Poland (where is an extremely large and virile Polish minority).

## APPENDIX

*Circular letter of Sienkiewicz, dated December  
10th 1907.*

Dear Sir,

The 20th Century is witness to an outrage which is an insult to civilisation, to law, to justice, to all the conceptions of humanity which are the foundation of the life and civilisation of modern societies.

For a long time there has existed in Prussian Poland a Colonisation Commission with the purpose of buying up Polish landed property and establishing there Germans, paying the Polish landowners from funds to which the Poles themselves, as Prussian subjects, are forced to contribute by taxation. If one consider in addition the martyrdom undergone by Polish children in German schools and the law recently passed forbidding the use of the Polish language at public meetings, it would seem impossible for the iniquity and contempt of equality before the law to be pushed further. And yet the government whose principle is "might is right" does not intend to stop there.

There has just been presented to the Prussian Diet the project of a law for compulsory expropriation. The Poles subject to Prussia are to be at length uprooted from the soil which is their homeland, their beloved land on which for a thousand years generation after generation have been born, have lived and now lie buried.

Official news of this has already been spread through the whole world, and it is to the honour of humanity that it has provoked a universal cry of protest and indignation. The whole European press, without distinction of party or colour, and with it the whole independent press of Germany, has condemned the action of the Prussian government as an ignominious assault on the natural rights of humanity and a violation of the Prussian constitution.

Even such a government cannot ignore this indignation and universal contempt.

But we Poles wish this protest at such barbarity to endure as long as possible and to assume the largest possible

proportions. We are not therefore content with the voice of the press, obliged as it is to occupy itself from day to day with new events. This voice cannot have either the permanence or the immense authority that the views of the leading representatives of science and literature and the arts throughout the world would have if expressed individually. Such an expression would be the definite judgement of the universal conscience on an unprecedented crime, and at the same time it would be the most powerful plea in defence of an important part of a civilized nation well deserving of humanity.

For this reason, Sir, I appeal to you most earnestly to declare your opinion of the project put forward by the Prussian government for despoiling the Poles of their land by forcible expropriation. We do not address this appeal to you because we suppose for a moment that your opinion could be any other than one of indignation and reprobation but because a public condemnation coming from a man so eminent as you will brand the greatest iniquity and outrage of the 20th. Century. It will also give spirit and hope to the Polish nation and be a powerful aid to all honourable people in Germany who are firmly opposing the infamous project of the Prussian government, lest they should see their country dishonoured in the eyes of the whole world.

HENRY SIENKIEWICZ

*The following are extracts from some of the replies he received.*

*George Brandes.*

I doubt whether the forcible expropriation of the Prussian Poles will be considered by any single educated man outside Germany just or right. On the contrary I see it everywhere condemned as a daring means of vanquishing a resistance invincible by legitimate methods. For myself I consider it above all impolitic. The same measure will be applied to the Germans outside Germany, where they are in a minority, and their own example will be invoked.

*Emil Durkheim, professor at the Sorbonne.*

I am not acquainted with the details of the law which is at present being submitted to the Prussian Diet, but the

principle on which it is based can only awaken a universal reprobation, with which I consider it my duty to associate myself.

*Knut Hamsun.*

It is hopeless for the Poles to fight longer against German State brutality. Political Prussia with its cannon and its stone-age mentality is unconquerable by your people.

But there is a method: to make every single German speculator who comes feel that his life is not safe on Polish ground. That would mate them in the end.

As German subjects the Poles should take on a German mentality and not be ashamed to let the world see it.

Long live Poland!

*Maeterlinck.*

Your eloquence says all that needs to be said about this infamous project. I still hope, for the honour and happiness of a great people whom I love, that it will recoil at the last minute from such an iniquity.

*George Meredith*

Not until the Reichstag shall have published Prince Bülow's Bill for the expropriation of the Poles in Posen shall I believe that the German people have made forfeit this claim to the respect and esteem of Humanity. In that event the patriotic cry of "Deutschland über alles" will have sunk to its basest interpretation.

*Tolstoy.*

As to the details of the question you raise, namely the preparations which the Prussian government is making for despoiling landowners of Polish nationality, there also I have more pity for those who will organize and execute this spoliation than for those who will be its victims. These latter have the fine role. They will be, on other soil, in other conditions, what they have been hitherto. I pity the despoilers. I pity those who belong to a nation and a State of brigands and are in solidarity with them. I think that for every man gifted with a moral sense there can be no doubt as to the choice whether it be better to be a Prussian in solidarity with his government or a Pole driven out from his home.

*l. n. w. 1125*

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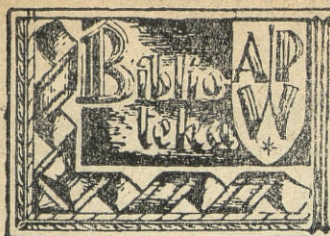
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