

## LITTLE RUSSIA AND ITS CLAIM FOR INDEPENDENCE.

BY THE EDITOR.

PANSLAVISM is an ideal. It is based upon the kinship of all the Slavs and may be described as the hope that all Slavs shall be unified in one great empire. The most powerful of the Slavic peoples are the Russians, and so Russia regards herself naturally as entitled to have the leadership and the Czar as the rightful head of all.

The Czar (an abbreviation of Cæsar) is not only emperor, i. e., the worldly head of Russia, but also pope, i. e., the spiritual head of the Russian church. Thus in him is united everything that means authority, whether worldly or religious, secular or ecclesiastical. The march of civilization has proceeded from nation to nation, from the east westward and northward; from Babylon and Egypt to Hellas; from Hellas to Rome; from Rome to France and Spain and Germany. And now the Russians believe it will turn to the northeast. They regard Russia as the land of the future and watch the advance of its empire. They expect a new standard of Christian orthodoxy to be established—the faith of Grecian Christendom—and a higher realization of a state, the dominion of a Slavic Czar, vicegerent of God on earth, a faithful Anointed One in whose empire the highest ideals of mankind will find their fulfilment.

Such is Pan Slavism as it appears to a pious and patriotic Russian; but the ideals of Russia mean slavery to other Slavs and dangers to Russia's non-Slavic neighbors. Poland is a Slavic country and the greatest part of Poland has been a Russian province for more than a hundred years. Ask the Pole what he understands by Pan Slavism. He is not satisfied with it, for Russia has been to him the *non plus ultra* of tyranny. If Poland could be freed from Russian dominion she would hail the day as the beginning of a new era of her political glory.

There are three Russian nations, the Great Russian or Muscovite, the Little Russian or Ukrainian, and between them the White Russian which is much smaller in numbers as well as in inhabited territory. They number but six millions according to the latest census. There are other Slavs in Austria-Hungary and in the Balkans. There are Czechs in Bohemia, there are Ruthenians in Galicia, there are Croatians and Slavonians, and further south of these the several Balkan nations. The Muscovite speech is the accepted language of the Russian empire, and the Ukrainian dialect has been doomed to extinction by Russian authorities.

Before me lies a book entitled *Ukraine's Claim to Freedom—An Appeal for Justice on Behalf of Thirty-five Millions. Published by the Ukrainian National Association and the Ruthenian National Union, New York, 1915.* It contains a number of articles by several scholars who unroll before our eyes pictures of a national misfortune showing a desperate struggle for the development of their own language and for the existence of a literature of their own. In Russia the most harmless poets and authors who dare write in their Ukrainian mother tongue are treated as traitors and rebels, while in Austria-Hungary although in theory they enjoy personal liberty and the right by law to the use of their own language, yet in actual fact this is not the case. In the Austro-Hungarian empire the Ukrainians are called Ruthenians, and they number 500,000 in northern Hungary, 300,000 in Bukowina and between three and four millions in Galicia. They are Roman Catholics, but have adopted some Greek rites. They are tillers of the soil, but not owners of it. The soil belongs to a Polish nobility, and these severe task-masters know how to make use of the liberalism of Austrian legislatures for their own benefit.

The preface of our book describes the situation thus:

“In Austria, having in theory the rights which the Constitution of 1867 gave to the nine nationalities of the empire, and being entitled to equality before the law, *de facto*, the Ukrainians, on the one hand, find themselves to a great degree deprived of the practical exercise of these rights, and on the other hand, have become the actual slaves of a nobility alien to them in origin, historical traditions, and future aspirations. We refer to the Polish nobility who, by a coincidence of historical events, have intrenched themselves in Eastern Galicia, and, strange as it may seem, continue as of yore, with privileges and monopolies, their existence as a feudal aristocracy. Thus we see, in the beginning of the twentieth century, a state of affairs entirely foreign to modern ideas. The predom-

inance of this aristocracy has resulted in the absolute control of all organs of public life, as well as of all sources of information. It is because of this that the cry of Ukraine and its dramatic struggles have not reached the ear of the world."

In the first chapter Mr. Edwin Björkman explains the origin of the Ukrainians in the south of Poland and Russia as follows:

"Ukraine means 'borderland.' The name was first applied to the steppes along the southern Polish frontier, where the Tartar was a constant menace. Large numbers of peasants fled to these steppes to escape the tyranny of Polish *pans* or Russian *boyars*, and there they began to form nomadic organizations with a minimum of discipline. From their hostile neighbors, the Tartars, they borrowed the name of *kazak*, which comes from the Turkish *qussaq* and means adventurer or free-booter. As they grew in numbers and became hardened by their strenuous life, their former masters conceived the idea of granting them land and a large degree of self-government under elected *hetmans*, on the condition that they should furnish an ever-ready force of defense against the marauding Tartar. Both land and freedom were taken back long ago, the Tartar menace having disappeared, but the man of the old frontiers still dreams of the bygone days of free fighting. Still he likes to call himself a Ukrainian, and still he insists on considering himself a man having a race, a language, a history, and a future of his own.

"One of the main reasons why all efforts at assimilation have proved futile, must probably be sought in the numerousness of the Ukrainian people. Exact figures are hard to find, as the falsifying of census reports has been one of the favorite methods employed by the oppressors. Nevertheless official figures have had to admit that, as far back as 1897 there were 22,000,000 Ukrainians in Russia alone. It seems safe to place their total present numbers in all the world at 35,000,000, distributed as follows: Southern Russia, 28,000,000; the rest of European and Asiatic Russia, 2,000,000; Galicia, 3,500,000; Hungary, 500,000; Bukowina, 400,000; the United States, 500,000; Canada, 300,000; South America, 50,000.

"The European territory where the Ukrainians constitute an overwhelming majority or a considerable percentage of the population is larger than Germany and twice as large as France. It is divided between three powers—Russia, Austria, and Hungary—and stretches from the Carpathians to the Black Sea and the Caucasus. Through the middle of it runs the river Dnieper like a spinal cord. It embraces the eastern two-thirds of Galicia and the entire governments of Podolia, Volhynia, Kiev, Chernigov, Poltava and Kharkov

in Russia. In these districts the Ukrainians form 70% or more of the population, while they average 40% in northwestern Bukovina, in four of the Carpathian districts of Hungary, and in several Russian governments. They have a large colony by the river Kuban in the Caucasus, where the Zaporogian Cossacks of Byron's "Mazepa" were finally permitted to settle, after Catherine II had rooted them out of their stronghold on an island in the Dnieper.

"The original and principal home regions of the Ukrainians are among the richest known to man. Since the days of ancient Greece they have been one of the world's main granaries. They comprise the better part of that black-earth belt (*chornozem*) which reaches from the foot-hills of the Carpathians to the Ural Mountains. The peculiar color and almost unequaled fertility of its soil are caused by the presence in its upper layers of an unusually large proportion—from five to seventeen percent—of humus, or decaying vegetable matter. As the climate is milder, too, the Ukrainians are able to harvest immense annual crops of every sort of grain, of Indian corn and beet-root, of water-melons and pumpkins, of tobacco and grapes. And their territory is also rich in mineral resources. Left to themselves, they would be as wealthy as Iowa farmers. Instead they are poor—beyond description in some districts—and getting poorer every year.

"Official Russia has sedulously fostered the impression that, no matter how many races or nationalities may be represented within the empire, the Russians properly so called form a homogeneous ethnic and lingual group. This, however, is merely a political theory, developed to serve the centralizing and leveling process which, for good or ill, has made Russia what it is to-day. . . .

"The Little Russians differ from the Great Russians not only in language but in physical type, customs, domestic architecture and folklore," says the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. The physical differences are marked enough to be noted by every traveler. The Ukrainians have broader and shorter heads, for one thing. They are darker, looking more like Serbs than Russians, and they are considerably taller, although they don't equal the short-set Great Russians in muscular strength. An English writer, W. Barnes Steveni, has described them as 'bullet-headed and bull-necked.' And I have heard it said that the late Prince Bismarck, though sprung from a northern Slavic strain, looked the typical Little Russian.

"The psychological differences between the Ukrainians and the Great Russians are equally marked. 'They seem to surpass the

Great Russians in natural intellect, good taste and poetical fancy, but they are less practical, solid and persevering,' writes the noted French geographer, *Elisée Reclus*. They are gayer and gentler than their brothers to the northward. Their women are soft-voiced and picturesquely dressed. Art and poetry, music and craftsmanship have always been at home among them—in so far as their rulers have permitted. They love the theater. Their folk melodies are admired throughout Russia and ought to be known everywhere. 'The national poetry of few languages excels that of the Ukrainians in energy of expression and depth of feeling,' says *Reclus*. They are good workmen, too, and great gardeners. Even a very poor Ukrainian home looks like a house rather than a hut, is kept scrupulously clean, contains some touch of beauty, and possesses a garden patch that yields flowers as well as vegetables.

"Love matches, so rare among the Great Russians, are common among the Ukrainians. Their whole outlook on life is democratic. There is a strain of the nomad in most of them, and they are likely to over-estimate freedom of movement and external equality. . . .

"When we turn to the Ukrainian tongue, we find that its position as an independent language—not a mere dialect—was officially recognized by the Imperial Russian Academy of Sciences in 1905, when that body, after a most careful study of every question involved, recommended that the people of Little Russia be granted the long denied right of using their mother tongue for educational, scientific, social and artistic purposes. At the same time the myth of the 'Pan-Russian' language, of which Ukrainian had been declared a dialect, was unequivocally denounced. When analyzed, Ukrainian shows radical deviation from the Great Russian, both in grammar and vocabulary. The words for many common objects or actions are totally different. Still more confusing is the fact that words common to both languages frequently have different meanings. Thus, for instance, the same word means 'charming' in Ukrainian and 'ugly' in Great Russian. Consequently, a peasant from *Poltava* or eastern *Galicia* can no more understand a man from *Moscow* than a *Pole* or a *Slovak*. In fact Ukrainian has more points in common with *Serbian* than with any other Slavonic language.

"The nature of the differences enumerated above suggests that the initial point of divergence from a common Slav stock must be placed very far back in time. . . .

"The earliest efforts at state building among the new settlers were made by Swedish vikings, who first established themselves .

[among the Great Russians] at Novgorod and [among the Little Russians] at Kiev. From the ninth to the eleventh centuries, innumerable small states of this kind sprang into being, all of which formed a loose confederacy with the Grand Duke of Kiev at its head. For several centuries Kiev was the political and intellectual center of eastern Slavdom, representing the entire territory in its dealings with the outside world. It was from Kiev that Christianity spread eastward and northward. And to-day Kiev is still the 'holy city,' to which thousands make pilgrimage annually from all over Russia. It is also called 'the mother of the Russian cities.'

"With the advent of Jenghiz Khan's Tartar hordes, the glory and power of Kiev came to an end. The city was razed in 1240, and the fertile plains along the middle Dnieper were laid waste and depopulated. The southern Slavs were again driven westward, where independent principalities remained in Galicia and Volhynia. These regions were the first to be named Little Russia, and in 1334 we find a duke of Halicz and Vladimir proclaiming himself 'Lord of all the Little Russians.' As the Tartar invasion ebbed, the Slavs flowed back once more, carrying the new name of their country with them. But meanwhile their chance of ever building an empire of their own had been lost. Poland and Lithuania had been growing rapidly, and the Grand Dukes of Moscow were already laying the foundations of modern Russia. Galicia soon fell into the hands of Poland, while Volhynia and Podolia became Lithuanian. Then (about the year 1400) a union was formed between Lithuania and Poland, and Little Russia became a part of that Greater Poland which for a time reached from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

"The Lithuanians made Little Russian the language of their court and of their public administration. The Poles tried to force not only their language but their religion on all the peoples subject to them. . . .

"For a brief while, however, it looked as if the course of events might take a new turn. The first Cossack organizations appeared as autonomous communities in the sixteenth century. By the beginning of the next century they had increased tremendously in numbers and power. At that time already they were able to raise an army of 60,000 men, and had established a strongly fortified central camp, the *sitch*, on an island below the Dnieper Falls, whence their name Zaporogians, or 'men living below the falls.' Among them the religious intolerance of the Poles was deeply resented, and about the middle of the seventeenth century an unusually able and popular Hetman, Bohdan Khmelnitzky, succeeded in arousing all

Ukraine and wresting it from the Poles. But he found his people too weak to stand alone, and was thus forced to arrange a union with Moscow (in 1654). The step proved fatal, and it was only rendered more so by an effort to undo it. In spite of the guarantee of autonomy given the Ukrainian people, the rulers of the rising empire in the north proceeded quickly to make a mere province out of their new territory. A Ukrainian attempt to win freedom through an alliance with Charles XII accomplished nothing but the reduction of Sweden to the position of a minor power. Before the end of the eighteenth century Russia was absolute master of the main parts of Ukraine. After the final division of Poland, it held all the Little Russian territory except Galicia, which had fallen to Austria.

“As soon as the Russians had the upper hand, the work of Russification began. The native tongue was prohibited, the first ukase against its use being issued in 1690. The schools were closed or forced to adopt Russian. The indigenous literature was destroyed as far as possible. The final resistance of the Cossacks was beaten down with force, their fortified camp was destroyed, their autonomous institutions were abolished, and they themselves were deported to new homes in the Caucasus, or sent northward to die by thousands in the swamps of Lake Ladoga, where the new capital was being built. The magnates were easily coaxed into siding with the new rulers by grants of additional power over the peasants. The Polish policy of creating a commercial and industrial middle-class of imported Germans and Jews was continued, thus widening the distance between the mass of the people and those who should have been their leaders. Many scholars were lured or driven into adopting the Russian language and moving to Moscow or the new capital in the north. In this connection we must remember that the Ukrainians, up to the very last, had remained ahead of their conquerors in many matters of learning.

“The first Little Russian version of the Bible was printed in 1580-81, while no Great Russian edition appeared until 1663. While we know of sixty-seven prints in Little Russian dated prior to 1600, we have records of only sixteen such prints in Great Russian. Normal schools were established at Lemberg in 1586, at Kiev and Vilna in 1588, and so on. In 1631 the school at Kiev was developed into a university that long remained the finest in Russia. A higher school of any kind was not established at Moscow until 1679. When Peter the Great began his enormous task of turning Russia into a civilized country, he had to draw his staff of Slav assistants almost

wholly from Ukraine. And up to the middle of the eighteenth century there was hardly to be found a single Great Russian bishop in any part of the country (cf. Harald Hjarne Oestanifran, Stockholm, 1905) . . .

"The Finlanders, whose fight for national self-preservation has been followed with intense interest all over the world, were left unmolested until a couple of decades ago. The efforts to turn Poland into a truly Russian territory did not begin in earnest until after the rising of 1830. But the Ukrainians in Russia have been the object of a merciless process of Russification for nearly two hundred and fifty years, while their brothers in Galicia have successfully resisted a no less desperate process of Polonization for six centuries.

"The stronghold of the Zaporogians was destroyed in 1775. Ivan Kotliarevsky, whose travesty of the 'Aeneid' in the vernacular may be regarded as the starting-point of the neo-Ukrainian movement, was already born at that time. At first, however, the assailed nationalism of the Ukrainians found its only refuge among poor and ignorant peasants, who seemed to cling to it out of blind racial instinct. From those layers nearest the soil it spread gradually upward, gaining in clearness and intensity as it took new hold of the intellectual classes that had once deserted it. The earlier movement had been political. But the futility of resistance along such lines had become thoroughly realized, and so the new movement took a literary and spiritual aspect from the first. It was a question, above all, of preventing the people from ever losing its sense of racial distinction. With this purpose in mind, the songs and tales and legends of the Ukrainians—their *kazky* and *dumy*—were collected and studied. The language itself was analyzed and assigned its proper place in relation to other Slav languages. Scientific societies were founded to carry on the new work—and were generally dissolved as soon as they began to show any genuine activity. Finally, groping efforts were made to build up a new indigenous literature, and not without success.

"At the very heart of this movement we find the picturesque and pathetic figure of the poet-painter Taras Shevchenko, its foremost prophet, martyr, and genius. Born a serf in the government of Kiev, he was of age before he was set free—and we should bear in mind that his freedom was obtained by the generosity of Russian literary men who had come to admire his gifts. Yet the one object of his glowing poetry was to make his own people realize and cherish their essential distinction from the ruling branch of eastern



Slavs. For this purpose he pictured their life as it had been and as he found it. His poems were spread broadcast. Then the inevitable happened. He was arrested, put into a disciplinary regiment and sent to Orenburg in Siberia. On the order for his deportation the Czar wrote with his own hand: 'Must not be allowed to paint or write.' Set free after ten years, he returned to his native land a mere ruin of his former self, within which hardly a spark of the old flame could be discerned. Three years later, in 1861, he died at the age of forty-seven. But his work had been done. His name had already become the rallying cry of his people. On the banks of his beloved Dnieper they raised a simple monument in memory of his faith, his martyrdom, and his achievement. When, a year ago, the Ukrainians wished to celebrate the centenary of his birth, the Russian government placed a military guard around the monument.

"Many others have worked in the spirit of Shevchenko—political writers, historians, philologists, folklorists, poets. It would be meaningless to mention their names here. Some suffered as did Shevchenko; some grew tired and surrendered; some went abroad or moved into Galicia in order to be able to continue their work. Always the work went on and gained in momentum—until the war broke out."

A few more facts. A Russian minister of state declared in 1863, "There never has been and never will be a Ukrainian language or nationality," and when, in 1887, a Kiev philologist submitted the manuscript of a Little Russian grammar, the censor forbade its publication on the ground that "it would be impossible to print the grammar of a language doomed to extinction."

"During the war against Japan, the government would not let the British and Foreign Bible Association distribute New Testaments in Little Russian among the soldiers speaking no other language. Not even circulars issued by the health authorities to instruct the people how to meet a possible cholera epidemic have been allowed to appear in the only language understood by the population concerned. An exception has been supposed to exist in the case of literature designed for entertainment only, but it has been largely annulled by the activity of the censor. Theatrical performances in Ukrainian have either been prohibited or put under restrictions rendering them practically impossible. The printing of Ukrainian text to music of any kind has been forbidden. The importation of Ukrainian literature from abroad—which means from Galicia, where Lemberg has more and more become a center of Ukrainian culture and agitation—has been made a criminal offense. The very use of the native

tongue in conversation has been frowned on and often made the excuse for arrests. I have no figures as to the part played by arrests, fines and deportations in connection with this policy of suppression, but I know that it has been important and horrible.

"No use of the Ukrainian tongue in any school has been permitted under any circumstances. In general, Great Russians have been preferred as teachers, and the child of seven, who has never heard any Russian, has been expected to use a primer where, out of forty-seven words contained in the first five lessons, thirty are unintelligible to a Ukrainian. The direct result of this policy—against which even Russian bishops of the Orthodox church have protested—may be found in the number of analphabets among the Ukrainians of the present day. In the rest of Russia there are many peasant districts to-day where the number of those unable to read and write has been reduced to twenty percent. There are no such Ukrainian districts where it falls below fifty percent. When a ukase was issued in 1905, ordering the establishment of Lithuanian and Polish schools, not a word was said about Ukrainian. . . .

"After 1905 permission was issued for the printing of newspapers in the native tongue, and a number of these sprang up at once, and with them many bright hopes. Again the censor took back what the law was supposed to grant, and the police took care of anything that might be overlooked by the censor. This is the record of suppression established by the governors of three governments, Kiev, Kherson and Kharkov, in a single year (1913): twenty-one editors arrested; twenty-six newspapers confiscated; eighty-five fines inflicted, aggregating a sum of 20,525 rubles. To what extent a press will be able to speak freely under such circumstances may be easily imagined."

"Ukraine sent forty representatives to the first Duma, who stood for home rule of a kind that could not possibly menace the coherence of the empire. . . . But in official circles those demands were branded as 'Mazepism,' which is the established Russian term for Ukrainian separatism. Their bitterest opponents were found in the Polish group of representatives, composed exclusively of big aristocratic landowners. . . . Since the outbreak of the present war began to raise new hopes for an autonomous Poland, the Poles all too often have insisted that their ambitions will remain unachieved unless they are given control of all provinces that, at one time or another, used to be Polish—provinces, that means, where the majority of the population hate a Polish nobleman as much as the devil and much more than a Russian."

In Austria the Ruthenians suffer greatly from the insolence of the Polish nobility in whose service they live like slaves. "Nevertheless," says Professor Björkman, "the Ruthenians have in many respects been better off than under Russian rule. They have had schools and clubs and a literature of their own—about 2500 of the schools—and they have generally been allowed to discuss their own affairs in their own language. Thanks to this fact, much of the Ukrainian propaganda in Russia has been directed from Lemberg in recent years. . . . The university of Lemberg, established by Emperor Joseph II for the use of the Ruthenians alone, was at once seized and appropriated by the Poles. On one occasion, when the Ruthenian students dared to protest openly against the unfair conduct of this university, one hundred of them were arrested and kept in jail for weeks on trumped-up charges. In recent years, however, the number of Ruthenian professors has been gradually increased. . . .

"Two days after the occupation of Lemberg by the Russians they closed all the Ruthenian book-stores, which meanwhile had been crowded with Russian officers and soldiers eager to buy the literature forbidden at home. Under such circumstances one may well doubt the Russian claims of having been greeted as liberators by the Slav population of the province. In fact, it has been asserted that no Austrian regiments have fought with more stubbornness or bitterness than those composed of Ruthenians. . . .

"Taking it all in all, the outlook for the Ukrainians in Russia seems rather gloomy just now. Yet they are asking for so little: the free use of their own language, and a reasonable amount of local self-government. The Ukrainian dream in Russia for many years has been the reorganization of the Russian empire into a federation based on the American model. As far back as 1825, they sent delegates to this country for the purpose of studying our political institutions, and especially the relationship between the states and the federal government. If, as it has been rumored from time to time lately, Russia should actually decide to reconstruct the empire into a federation of locally autonomous and centrally represented nationalities, and if the new principles should be applied squarely, then the Ukrainians would become no less loyal than the people of Great Russia. But the one thing they fear most of all is their own inclusion within an autonomous Greater Poland—an alternative that is not very likely to materialize."

This interesting book on Ukraine contains a special chapter on "The Misrule of the Polish Aristocracy" by Simon O. Pollack,

which demonstrates the fact that when the Slav has a chance he can easily be a tyrant and go to the utmost extreme. There is another chapter on this same subject entitled "The End of the Idea of Polish Empire," by Carl Leuthner.

Other chapters are "The Ukrainian Revival" by M. Hrushevsky, a Russian subject and a well-known Ukrainian leader and university professor who was arrested in Kiev in January, 1915, as he was returning to Lemberg from Venice; "The Position of the Ukrainians in Galicia," by Yaroslav Fedortchuk; "Ukrainian Aspirations in Austria," by Dr. Longin Tzegelsky; "The Ukrainian Movement in Russia," by Prof. Otto Hoetzsch; "The Political Parties in Russian Ukraine," by W. Doroschenko; and three short articles from the *Ukrainische Rundschau*. The last chapter comprises a collection of passages reprinted from American newspapers, 1914-1915, dealing with the recent Russian conquest of Galicia and exhibiting the effects of this conquest upon the Ukrainian population.

The book offers us a remarkable insight into the conditions of a large nation that is practically unknown,—a nation of highly gifted people with great and unlimited possibilities.