

Byelorussia's Representatives in the Second State Duma (20 Feb. — 2 June, 1907)

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The results of the election to the second Duma that took place in January-February 1907 in the five Byelorussian gubernijas of the North—Western Region were quite different from those to the first Duma,* as the following tables show:

TABLE 1
REPRESENTATION OF BYELORUSSIA IN THE FIRST
STATE DUMA

Nation- ality	Social Status					Education			Party Affiliation				
	Landl.	Bourg.	Peas.	Work.	Cler.	High.	Sec.	Elem.	Cad.	Trud.	Unaff.	Zion.	Auton.
Byel.	14	1	11	1	1	1	2	11	1	4	8	-	1
Pol.	13	10	-	-	1	13	-	-	2	-	-	-	11
Jew.	5	-	5	-	-	5	-	-	1	-	-	4	-
Russ.	2	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Latv.	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Lith.	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Total	36	13	8	12	1	22	3	11	7	5	8	4	13

Calculated from: *Gosudarstvennaja Duma pervogo sozyva. Portrety, kratkije biografii i charakteristiki deputatov*, SPB, 1906; *Pervaja Gosudarstvennaja Duma. Alfavitnyj spisok i podrobnyje biografii i charakteristiki členov Gosudarstvennoj Dumy*, SPB, 1906; *Encyklopedičeskij Slovar'*, 'Granat', 7th ed., Moscow, n.d., XVII, Supplement, pp. 1-76; *Novyj Encyklopedičeskij Slovar Brokgauz-Jefron*, SPB, n.d. XIV, Supplement to the article 'State Duma', pp. i-lxxii; *Russkaja Enciklopedija* ed. S. A. Adrijanov *et al.*, SPB, n.d., VI, the table on pp. 152-3; and other sources.

* See *JBS*, II, 3, pp. 290-8.

TABLE 2

THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTION TO THE SECOND STATE DUMA IN THE FIVE BYELORUSSIAN GUBERNIJAS OF THE NORTH-WESTERN REGION

Nationality	Social Status					Education			Party Affiliation				
	Landl.	Bourg.	Peas.	Work.	Cler.	High.	Sec.	Elem.	Cad.	Trud.	Unaff.	P. Cir.	Right.
Byel.	8	1	-	7	-	-	1	7	-	1	8	-	-
Pol.	11	9	-	1	1	8	2	1	-	-	-	11	-
Russ.	16	5	1	8	2	2	6	8	2	-	6	-	8
Latv.	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Total	36	15	2	16	-	3	11	9	16	3	-	14	8

Calculated from: *Gosudarstvennaja Duma. Ukazatel' k Stenografičeskim očetam. Vtoroj sozýv. 1907 god, SPB, 1907; Enciklopedičeskij Slovar', 'Granat', 7th ed., Moscow, n.d., XVII, Supplement, pp. 1-76; Novyj Enciklopedičeskij Slovar' Brokgauz-Jefron, SPB, n.d., XIV, Supplement to the article 'State Duma', pp. i-lxxii; Russkaja Enciklopedija, ed. S. A. Adrijanov et al., SPB, n.d., VI, the table on pp. 152-3 and other sources.*

Slightly different data than those in Table 2 are given by K. Šabunja, *Agrarnyj vopros i krest'janskoje dviženije v Belorussii v revoljucii 1905-1907 gg.*, Minsk, 1962, p. 404, but this author did not say where he obtained his information.

A comparison of Tables 1 and 2 reveals that the representation of the five Byelorussian gubernijas in the second State Duma was more conservative socially, more rightist politically and, as the subsequent debates revealed, more markedly polarized in its national and religious antagonisms — something the next two Dumas would sharpen even more. Where the landlord-bourgeois-peasant ratio in the first Duma was a balanced 13-8-12, in the second Duma it became 15-2-16, with the landlords and rightist peasants increased at the expense of the liberal bourgeois representatives. Any liberal and leftist elements in the first Duma were now eliminated by unbridled prejudice, nationalist passion, and fraudulent officials abetted by the police. Not only was there not a single Social-Democrat from the five gubernijas, as none was in the first Duma, but not even one Trudovik was elected this time. In the Empire as a whole the leftist deputies increased from 131 in the first Duma to 232 in the second,¹ while in the five North-Western gubernijas leftist and even liberal voices were stifled in the clash of Russian and Polish nationalistic

1. A. Levin, *The Second Duma. A Study of the Social-Democratic Party and the Russian Constitutional Experiment*, 2nd ed. Hamden, Conn., 1966, p. 68.

interests. In the first Duma all of Byelorussia's six major nationality groups were represented, but in the second the Jewish and Lithuanian minorities were not. Also considerably changed was the political and national balance of the representation. There were no longer any liberal spokesmen for the North-Western Region like Skirmunt, Bishop Ropp, or Lednitski. There was less eloquence, fewer speeches, and a narrower range of topics taken up by the North-Western deputies in the second Duma. The second Duma as a whole, as Alfred Levin found it, 'had a higher intellectual level than the first'.² The representation of the five North-Western gubernijas rather fits the rightist Cadet Maklakov's description of the second Duma: 'Its composition was unfortunate as was its exceptionally low cultural level.'³

A word should be said about the Russian-nationality deputies from the five gubernijas. Out of sixteen deputies, at least thirteen were natives of Byelorussia, Orthodox and Russified. Eight out of thirteen were peasants, all but one of them with an elementary education and all markedly rightist, which in the political context of the North-Western Region meant first of all, anti-Polish. Of the remaining five, two were Orthodox priests of peasant background, one town dweller with an elementary education, and two were representatives of the local nobility: one 'a rightist landlord and a Byelorussian',⁴ Burmeister, the other, Sozonovič, a rightist professor of peasant origin from the Mahiloŭ gubernija who once explained in the Duma that he represented the 'West-Russian population, namely the Byelorussian population'.⁵

The second Duma as a whole being more polarized and more antagonistic to the Government than the first — 'the most revolutionary parliament in the world' (Lenin)⁶ — channeled its militancy in regard to the North-Western Region in the traditional way by stressing autonomy with specific emphasis on the issues of education and election of justices of the peace.

The Polish deputies from the Byelorussian gubernijas — nine landlords, one priest, and one Polonized Byelorussian peasant⁷ — did

2. 'While 42.1 per cent of the First Duma had received a higher education, in the Second 44.6 had attended universities.' *Ibid.*, p. 68.

3. V. A. Maklakov, *Vtoraja Gosudarstvennaja Duma. Vospominanija sovremennika*, Paris, 1948?, p. 254.

4. K. I. Šabunja, *Agrarnyj vopros i krest'janskoje dviženije v Belorussii v revoljucii 1905-1907 gg.*, Minsk, 1962, p. 403.

5. Since he spent twenty years teaching at the Russian University of Warsaw and was congratulated on his election to the Duma by a group of Russians living in Warsaw, he earned from Nowodvorski, representing Warsaw in the Duma, a remark that 'through his lips speaks the Russian bureaucracy of the Kingdom of Poland'. *Gosudarstvennaja Duma. Stenografičeskie Otčety* (subsequently referred to as *SO*), SPB, 1907, Second Duma (subsequently referred to as II), I, col. 533, 13 Mar.

6. Quoted by F. I. Kalinyčev, *Gosudarstvennaja Duma v Rossii v dokumentach i materialach*, Moscow, 1957, p. 243.

7. On the Byelorussian origin of Symon Pielejko see *Naša Niva*, 15, Vilna, 13 April 1907, p. 1; 31 Sept. 1907, p. 7.

not embrace the idea of the first Duma's Territorialists of whom not one was re-elected. Instead they joined their forces, practically if not organizationally,⁸ with the Kingdom of Poland's representation, boosting its ranks of 34 and one from the Lithuanian Kovno gubernija to 46 deputies in all.⁹

The Polish Circle (*Kolo Polskie*) had the reputation of being a close-knit group of deputies which was 'united, voted unanimously, and pressed its Polish programme'.¹⁰ The helmsman of the Polish faction was Roman Dmowski, the leader of Poland's National Democrats. It was he who charted the course of the election campaign and shaped the group's parliamentary tactics. The goal he sought was not easy to reach. In one of his election speeches he said:

'We go to the State Duma for autonomy, but we go there under conditions different from last year's. We must be prepared for a long and difficult campaign, for a struggle which we must wage to attain our goal.'¹¹

Agrarian Reform and Polish Demands for 'Broad Local Self-Government' for the North-Western Region

Dmowski's ultimate goal, however, was not exactly autonomous Poland alone, 'inside her ethnographic borders', as Paul N. Miljukov understood it in the course of previous Russo-Polish dialogue. Dmowski was too familiar with Poland's history and cherished it too much for that. When in the 1890s 'Byelorussia was made by the (Polish) patriotic-socialist movement (PPS) an object of Polish nationalistic expansion', the young Dmowski 'readily approved of that'.¹² In the Duma, Dmowski expressed his view on the subject for the first time on 19 March 1907 when again the agrarian question towered over the Duma debates. The leader of the Polish National Democrats made himself a spokesman not only of the Kingdom of Poland, but having twelve North-Western deputies in his group, also of 'the so-called North- and South-Western Region'.¹³ Holding agrarian reform to be of 'great importance' Dmowski was anxious that it be accomplished if possible without mistakes. Therefore:

'This question ought to be approached with a full knowledge of how it exists in the various parts of the Empire, so different in their agrarian relations that actually there is not one agrarian question,

8. Z. Łukawski, *Kolo Polskie w Rosyjskiej Dumie Państwowej w latach 1906-1909*, Wrocław, 1967, p. 80, explains that the Polish deputies from the North-Western gubernijas (*Litwa i Ruś*) did not join the Polish Circle formally. 'Nevertheless, the two factions co-operated closely and always acted jointly in the Duma... In spite of a certain organizational separation, basically both groups constituted one faction and so it was understood by the Russians.'

9. *Ibid.*

10. Maklakov, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

11. Łukawski, *op. cit.*, p. 74, quoting from *Gazeta Polska*, 28 Jan. 1907.

12. A. Cvikievič, *Zapadno-russizm*, Minsk, 1929, p. 260.

13. *SO II*, I, col. 742, 19 May 1907.

but as many as there are regions set apart by their social conditions.¹⁴

Agrarian relations in Poland and the nine Western gubernijas Dmowski described as being 'a transition to Western-European relations'.¹⁵ Since these relations 'were far different from those of the Great Russian centre', he maintained that a serious discussion of the agrarian reform was 'impossible until the local population of each region is able to express itself on the subject through appropriate institutions which it has so far been denied'.¹⁶ Dmowski noted that the Cadet Party understood the peculiarities of local agrarian relations and, accordingly, made exceptions for the Kingdom of Poland, the Baltic Region, Transcaucasia, the Cossack stanitsas, and the interior lands of the Kirgiz Orda. 'But how about Lithuania, I ask you?' exclaimed Dmowski. 'Is it not true that agrarian relations in Lithuania are much more similar to those of the Kingdom of Poland and the Baltic Region than to those of the Great Russian gubernijas?'¹⁷ In Lithuania, Dmowski said, as a result of forty years of tsarist oppression 'the social order first of all was ruined... There the most useful, most industrious, most educated element of society (by which the speaker meant the Polish element — *J. Z.*) was persecuted as the enemy of society. And what I say about Lithuania applies to all the nine gubernijas which are officially named the North- and South-Western Region.'¹⁸ Having presented the situation this way the leader of the Polish Circle made his key point as follows:

'The agrarian question can be resolved... only after the promulgation of laws granting civil liberties to all — equality of nationalities and religious confessions, and finally, after the introduction throughout the whole Empire of broad local self-government and the establishment of a relationship between its institutions and its administrative authorities based upon law.'¹⁹

Dmowski stressed specifically that what he said did not concern the Kingdom of Poland, since Poland demanded nothing less than its own 'separate local legislation' emanating 'solely from an assembly of the country's representatives — from an autonomous diet'.²⁰ He spoke rather on behalf of the regions with mixed nationalities, with their own special social and cultural relationships, regions without the zemstvo, 'especially, as the example I gave, the North- and South-western Regions'.²¹ And here Dmowski became categorical:

'As far as they are concerned, this question (of agrarian reform — *J. Z.*) presently cannot be even discussed in the State Duma. Bills for these regions must be drawn up by local institutions after they

14. *Ibid.*, col. 743.

15. *Ibid.*, col. 742.

16. *Ibid.*, col. 743.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*, col. 747.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*, col. 748.

have been established; only after that should their bills be presented to the State Duma.' (Applause)²²

The speech of the leader of the Polish Circle was widely acclaimed by the Polish National Democratic press.²³

Dmowski's views received partial support from Šidłowski, a Byelorussian landlord from the Mahiloŭ gubernija who spoke as an Unaffiliated 'on behalf of moderate peasants and several Unaffiliated deputies',²⁴ most probably his colleagues from the North-Western gubernijas. Like Dmowski, Šidłowski held that 'a single agrarian law which would fulfil the needs of all the gubernijas of the Russian Empire equally cannot be made'.²⁵ Šidłowski hoped that the agrarian committee, whose election he urged, 'would prod us by its activity and would force us to take up the questions in which the Polish Circle is interested, namely, the question of self-government'.²⁶

The Polish Circle's interest in promoting self-government of the Western gubernijas sounded again on 22 March 1907 when another theorist of Polish statehood, the Lublin gubernija deputy Jan Stecki spoke in connection with the Government's budget bill. Insisting on autonomy for Poland, Stecki notified the Russian parliament:

'The interests of the Polish people are not confined within the boundaries of the Kingdom of Poland and cannot be satisfied by autonomy for it alone. Like other nationalities, Poles inhabit all the Western gubernijas of the Empire being in Lithuanian, Byelorussian, and Little Russian gubernijas part of the permanent native population.'²⁷

Stecki charged that while carrying the burden of all the duties imposed by the state Poles in these gubernijas suffered from economic and cultural restrictions and the way to resolve this 'grievous situation' was first of all to grant to these regions 'broad local self-government based on the principles of full equality'.²⁸

By the time Stecki spoke, newspapers had published a declaration by five Lithuanian deputies in which they announced their programme for the four gubernijas of Kovno, Suvalki, Vilna and Hrodna. The organ of the Byelorussian Socialist Hramada, *Naša Niva*, supporting the Lithuanian declaration, but broadening the scope of their demand to include all the six gubernijas of the North-Western Region, wrote:

'The deputies justly say that in our Region the people themselves in their own diet should decide how to satisfy the needs of land for the working peasantry... Our country lives its own life; it has relationships and desires different from those of the rest of Russia.'²⁹

While the self-government and autonomy of the North-Western

22. *Ibid.* Cf. Łukawski, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

23. Łukawski, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

24. *SO II*, vol. I, col. 752, 19 May 1907.

25. *Ibid.*, col. 749.

26. *Ibid.*, col. 752.

27. *SO II*, I, col. 906, 22 Mar. 1907.

28. *Ibid.*, cols 906-7.

29. *Naša Niva*, 12, Vilna, 23 Mar. 1907, pp. 6-7.

Region gained supporters and adherents, the cause itself became more entangled in the second Duma than it had been in the first. In the first Duma its champions — Lednicki, Drucki-Lubecki, Skirmunt, Baron Ropp, Trasun, Jalowiecki, Gotowiecki, Massonius, and other Territorialists — were representatives of the North-Western gubernijas, unopposed on the floor of the Duma in their quest for autonomy by any of the peasant or bourgeois deputies of the same gubernijas; the situation in the second Duma was altogether different. The development toward extreme nationalism in the Western gubernijas,³⁰ both Russian and Polish, left a strong imprint upon the Region's representatives. Gone was the 'pernicious separatism' of the Territorialists acting separately from Poland's delegation. The Polish deputies of the North-Western Region became part of the unified and disciplined Polish Circle and let the representatives of the central Polish gubernijas be their spokesmen on important matters. That only confirmed the charge of the Russian nationalists:

'Propaganda of Polish ideas is agitating Lithuania and White Russia... In Polish heads the Jagellonian idea is stirring incessantly, the idea of a resurrected Poland 'from (the Baltic) sea to (the Black) sea'... In the struggle of the borderlands against the centre the Poles took a most active part; they took the initiative in engendering aspirations for autonomy in the North-Western Region'.³¹

In the Duma, the speeches of Dmowski and Stecki demanding self-government for 'the so-called' North- and South-Western Regions provoked a barrage of passionate rebuttals from six of the nine Minsk gubernija deputies, all nine registered as Russians and either politically unaffiliated or rightist.

Speaking first on 26 March 1907 Melnik, a peasant, reminded the Duma that in his gubernijas there were '70,000 Poles, but 2,500,000 of us, Russians'.³² In spite of such a disparity Melnik regretted to say that 'our administration is completely in Polish hands, not in the hands of peasants... While we have 70,000 (Poles) altogether, they completely dominate our Region'.³³ Melnik thought the Poles were afraid of what the Duma might decide on agrarian matters and warned that 'if this question will be settled by your Polish diet, it might result in bitter fruit'.³⁴ Addressing the Cadet 'party of the centre' whose deputies to Melnik's dismay applauded Polish speakers, the Minsk gubernija deputy asked Cadets 'not to act for (the North-Western) Region without knowing the true views of its representatives'.³⁵

30. *Okrainy Rossii*, for example, wrote (duly fencing off the Russians): 'In recent times, on the borderlands among the *inorodcy* (non-Russians) without exception one can observe a development of extreme nationalism...' — *OR*, 27, 3 Sept. 1906. p. 456.

31. *Okrainy Rossii*, 29, 17 Sept. 1906, pp. 489-90.

32. *SO II*, I, col. 1102, 26 Mar. 1907.

33. *Ibid.*, col. 1103.

34. *Ibid.*, col. 1104.

35. *Ibid.*, col. 1105.

On 29 March 1907, Kroskovski, another Minsk gubernija peasant deputy took the floor. Like his colleague Melnik, he insisted on the paramount importance of the agrarian question to which the problems of self-government and civil liberty were only secondary:

'An empty stomach is deaf to preachings, and therefore the poor and hungry peasant first should have his hunger satisfied and then given education and liberty and freedom:... what do I need them for if I am dying of hunger?'³⁶

Kroskovski's like Melnik's, point of departure was just the opposite of Dmowski's and Stecki's — not land through freedom, but freedom through land — and, consequently, he logically concluded: 'I cannot agree with those speakers who said that first, broad self-government must be introduced and only then should we embark upon resolving the agrarian question.'³⁷ Kroskovski also rebuked Dmowski for seeking the autonomy for the North-Western Region. In the Minsk gubernija, he said, fulfilling Dmowski's proposal for 'broad self-government' 'would give the main trump card to the Polish landlords in order to subject Orthodox peasants to their rule as they had been during the times of serfdom'. In the name of two-and-a-half million Orthodox inhabitants of the Minsk gubernija Kroskovski rejected such an eventuality as he also denounced any grant of freedom for Polish education in his gubernija because that too would lead to 'the subjection of a purely Orthodox population to Polish domination and conversion of the Orthodox to Catholicism'.³⁸

Almost the same terms were used by Gavriličik, another peasant deputy who considered himself 'a representative of the North-Western Region'³⁹ where, he said, both Orthodox and Catholic peasants 'need land, not autonomy'.⁴⁰

Gavriličik was supported by his colleague, Šimanski. Referring to the speeches of Dmowski and Stecki Šimanski reminded the Duma that the North-Western Region 'had only been under the temporary yoke of Poland and the szlachta' (Polish nobility). He appealed to the Duma that decisions concerning the North-Western Region be made 'in the Duma, not in a Polish diet somewhere in Warsaw, Vilna, or Minsk... We peasants of the North-Western Region would rather die than permit autonomy'.⁴¹ Šimanski very clearly evinced a trait common to both the Russian and Polish sides confronting one another in the North-Western Region — identification of Orthodoxy with Russian nationalism and of Catholicism with Polish nationalism. He said:

'In our Region almost all are Russians. In the Minsk gubernija alone there are 2,500,000 Russian Orthodox, and only somewhat more than 60,000 Catholics (voice: 400,000), so how could it be that they got

36. *SO II*, I, col. 1340, 29 Mar. 1907.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*, col. 1341.

39. *SO II*, I, col. 1510, 2 April 1907.

40. *Ibid.*, col. 1511.

41. *SO II*, I, cols. 1617-8, 5 April 1907.

the upper hand over us? No, this cannot happen, we won't yield, our Region is Russian, not Polish.⁴²

It was against this fatal misconception cultivated both by Russian and Polish politicians that the Byelorussian Socialist Hramada fought during the election to the second Duma. *Naša Niva* published an explanation by an Orthodox:

'We Orthodox are being told that we are Russians meaning that we are different people from the Catholics. They say that Catholics are Poles. But in reality that is a lie. The Catholics are the same people as the Orthodox: they speak our language and live the same difficult life as we, Orthodox. We all are brothers of the same blood, from the same Byelorussian land. We are neither Russians nor Poles, but Byelorussians, and everyone should remember that.'⁴³

But how was it possible for a young political party with a single weekly newspaper and millions of illiterate or semi-literate peasants as its potential followers to extirpate what had been inculcated over a period of centuries by both Poles and Russians? As recently as 1966 a Cracow newspaper correspondent visiting the north-eastern fringes of Poland where Byelorussians are natives wrote of his taking a guided tour led by a member of the presidium of the Byelorussian Cultural Society in Poland:

"Laszki?" my companion asks himself aloud. "No, this is a mixed village, Catholic-Orthodox, because here they say that if you are Catholic, then you are not Byelorussian. Yet, to be truthful, these Catholics speak better Byelorussian and with purer accent than our Orthodox people."⁴⁴

Sixty years earlier this religious-political syndrome was more widespread and more impervious to the logic of the Byelorussian Socialist Hramada.

When on 9 April 1907, Grudinski, another Minsk gubernija deputy spoke in the name of the petty-bourgeoisie of his gubernija, his sentiments and reasoning went exactly parallel to those of his peasant brethren and he denied Polish deputies any right to speak on behalf of the North-Western Region and 'categorically' rejected the idea of an autonomous diet, 'of which our Region has no need at all'.⁴⁵

The final voice in the chorus of the rightist deputies of the Minsk gubernija was that of an absentee Russian landlord, a retired colonel Laškarev, who zealously defended before the second Duma the cause of a strong Russian army. 'Gentlemen', he sarcastically turned to the Polish deputies, 'you are not satisfied with your Warsaw diet, you

42. *Ibid.*, col. 1618.

Here is the opinion of a modern Soviet Byelorussian historian on the speeches by the rightist Byelorussian deputies: 'In their speeches the ancient hatred of the peasants for the Polish lord was reflected as were traces of an ideological castigation of the deputies by such Black-Hundred-type organizations as the Russian Borderland Union.' Šabunja, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

43. *Naša Niva*, 1, 6/19 Jan. 1907, p. 4.

44. J. Lovell, 'Polska, jakiej nie znamy. Białorusini', *Życie Literackie*, 9 (735), Cracow, 1966.

45. *SO II*, 1, col. 1812, 9 April 1907.

are still spreading your worries over the North-Western Region...¹⁴⁶ And the rightist landlord, 'a boundless admirer of Peter I',¹⁴⁷ rationalized in a manner still valid today the historic and abiding centrism of the Russian political state:

'The Russian man either due to his common sense, or as a result of having passed through the periods of the independent principalities, the Tatar yoke, and of autonomous Novgorod and Pskov, has deliberately given up a part of his individual freedom, restricted himself by giving over his freedom to the central government thereby making it strong and powerful, and gathered all in all together into one body.'¹⁴⁸

During the speeches of the Minsk gubernija deputies who denounced the Polish deputies' meddling in the affairs of the North-Western Region there were shouts from the floor: 'This is not true, Dmowski did not say it at all... Nothing of the sort.'¹⁴⁹ 'I did not say it. Nobody said it.'¹⁵⁰ 'I did not say it.'¹⁵¹ Indeed, some of the statements attributed to Dmowski and his colleagues were either not true, or exaggerated. It was obvious, however, that the distinction between autonomy for the Kingdom of Poland and 'broad self-government' for the North- and South-Western Regions was unclear and susceptible of misinterpretations by the rightist deputies. Polish politicians themselves were not of one mind on the territorial extent of Polish autonomy and its relationship to the 'so-called' Western gubernijas. For example Jan Stecki, the Lublin gubernija deputy who said in the Duma that 'the interests of the Polish people are not confined within the boundaries of the Kingdom of Poland' gave his fellow deputies and others an opportunity to see what lay behind that statement in his booklet, *W sprawie autonomii Królestwa Polskiego*, published in Cracow in 1907, the year of the second Duma.

In his booklet, Stecki exhorted that 'whenever anyone in Poland raises the banner of national aspirations, he must necessarily display the Pursuit (symbol of historic Lithuania — *J. Z.*) and the Archangel (the emblem of Kiev — *J. Z.*) along with the Eagle'.¹⁵² Stecki maintained that the Polish state could not exist without the Lithuanian and Ukrainian territories. However, since in the present situation that goal, in Stecki's view, was unattainable, the imperial Russian government blocking the way, the only realistic programme for Polish politicians was autonomy. 'This autonomy', wrote Stecki, 'should be free of the elements of separate statehood, and should not be based on the idea of a Polish state; it should be provincial autonomy.'¹⁵³ This scheme, of course, left an open end for a possible federation of

46. *SO II, I*, col. 2131, 16 April 1907.

47. *Ibid.*, col. 2128.

48. *Ibid.*, col. 3132.

49. *SO II, I*, col. 1341, 29 Mar. 1907.

50. *SO II I*, col. 1511, 2 April 1907.

51. *SO II, I*, col. 1812, 9 April 1907.

52. Quoted by Łukawski, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

53. Quoted by M. Wierchowski, *Sprawy Polski w III i IV Dumie Państwowej*, Warsaw, 1966, p. 57.

several autonomous provinces, something similar, for example, to the historic Commonwealth of Poland...

Polish political thought of that period was at a crossroads. If Stecki was willing to settle for the time being for provincial autonomy hoping some day to gain 'the Pursuit and the Archangel' on the Polish banner, Roman Dmowski was slightly more realistic. He saw the impact of the Russification policies in the regions that had been torn away from the historic Kingdom of Poland and also was aware of potential nationalistic movements among the non-Polish masses of the eastern borderlands. He admitted that the Poles in the Western gubernijas 'could not be the dominant element'⁵⁴ and counted, quite correctly, upon the success of Polish elements in that region in a free and unobstructed 'cultural competition' — something the Territorialist Lednicki had been reckoning upon. This was also the goal of the Regional Party of Lithuania and Byelorussia which had been organized at that time by conservative nobility and gentry for the development and maintaining of cultural ties with the Polish 'Crown'.⁵⁵ Another organization of the same type, the democratic 'Polish Union of Social Activity in Lithuania and Byelorussia' was founded in 1907 to seek the co-operation of the non-Polish local elements of Western gubernijas.⁵⁶ On the other hand, some radical secessionist writers espoused the cause of a Poland restricted within the ethnographic borders, basing their argument on an analysis of the contemporary process of rebirth of nationalities. On both flanks, however, there were extremes: one for maintaining the eastern border along the old historic line of the Polish Commonwealth of which Władysław Studnicki was the principal advocate, the other for giving up the eastern Kresy and concentrating the national forces in defence of the western territories. Czesław Jankowski, a Vilna gubernija deputy in the first Duma, was one of the chief partisans of this view.⁵⁷

Meanwhile in the second Duma, at the beginning of April 1907, the Polish Circle worked out a proposal for Poland's autonomy. On 10(23) April 1907, Golovin, the President of the Duma announced the document which was cosponsored by 34 deputies from the Kingdom and 12 from the six North-Western gubernijas.⁵⁸ The rightist press, *Novoje Vremja* and *Rossija*, immediately objected to the proposal.⁵⁹ Paul Miljukov himself analyzed it in the Cadet Party daily *Rteč* and expressed doubt that the Duma would approve of it without major changes. Even if the Duma wanted to help the Polish Circle, said Miljukov, it would certainly avoid taking on an additional burden which might contribute to its own downfall and would also

54. W. Feldman, *Dzieje polskiej myśli politycznej, 1864-1914*, 2nd ed., Warsaw, 1933, p. 366.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 365. See K. Zalevskij, 'Nacional'nija dviženija', in L. Martov et al., eds., *Obščestvennoje dviženije v Rossii v načale XX veka*, StP, 1911, IV, 2, pp. 208-9.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 209; Feldman, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

57. Feldman, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

58. Łukawski, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-2.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

complicate relations with Germany.⁶⁰ A copy of the Polish autonomy bill was passed by Golovin to the Tsar's Government, but no answer was forthcoming from it within the required month and nothing was heard of it thereafter.⁶¹

On 3 May 1907 Grabski, a Warsaw gubernija deputy and a leading National Democrat tried to defend the Polish Circle against the suspicion of scheming to take over the North- and South-Western Regions. He stressed that in Polish plans the Kingdom and the Western Region had been kept distinctly separate and if the same deputy spoke of the Kingdom of Poland and the North- and South-Western Region 'it was only because the Poles of the Polish Kingdom and of these provinces belonged to one and the same nationality, equally oppressed, and made up one Polish group'.⁶² He repeated the same demand:

'We make the establishment of local life on just principles the first condition of a just solution of the agrarian question. We declare that the Kingdom of Poland must have autonomy and that the North-western Region must have equality and regional democratic self-government.'⁶³

Rebuking Poland's opponents Grabski explained:

'We did not demand that agrarian reform be handed over to those organs of self-government. We only stated that it is necessary to secure the participation of local organs of self-government in the agrarian reform process.'⁶⁴

Debate on agrarian matters lasted until 26 May 1907 when the majority of Cadets and rightists voted (238 to 191) that 'it is not necessary to conclude the debate on the agrarian question by passing any particular resolution before moving on to the next point on the agenda'.⁶⁵ The agrarian bills were sent to committees where they lay when the second Duma was dissolved on 3 June 1907.

The Duma's Educational Policy and Polish Schools in the North-Western Region

Back in the first Duma, Nowodworski, a deputy from the city of Warsaw, had denounced the ukase of 3 April, 1892 forbidding the so-called 'clandestine schools' in the North-Western and South-western Regions. The chief target of the ukase was Polish private schooling; the purpose of the ukase was to 'strengthen the Russian nationality in the Western Region'.⁶⁶ On 26 May, 1900 its enforce-

60. *Ibid.* Cf. Wierzchowski, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

61. Łukawski, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

62. *SO II*, II, col. 64, 3 May 1907.

63. *Ibid.*, col. 67.

64. *Ibid.*, col. 64.

65. Kalinyčev, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

66. *SO I*, StP, 1906, I, p. 299, 12 May 1906.

See also a detailed explanation of those prohibitive measures by Konic, the rapporteur of the Committee on the Inviolability of the Individual. *SO II*, II, cols 898-901, 21 May 1907.

ment was extended to the Kingdom of Poland. Ever since then, the repeal of both acts which paralyzed Polish education was one of the important aims of Polish politicians. In the first Duma, however, not much attention was devoted to the problem because the energy of the deputies was almost exclusively absorbed by such urgent matters as amnesty, relief of the hungry, the agrarian problem and closely linked with it, autonomy.

During the second Duma, the Russian Government abandoned its policy of legislative inactivity and showered the imperial legislature with bills. Among them was a bill on the development of primary education, introduced on 12 March, and one to repeal the 1892 prohibition against private schooling, presented on 15 March 1907.⁶⁷

'It has always been our main concern to dispel popular ignorance with the light of education', said the Tsar in his manifesto dissolving the first Duma.⁶⁸ The Tsar's representative, the Minister of Public Instruction, defended the Government's education bill on universal elementary education in the Duma on 4 May 1907.⁶⁹ The Minister did not refer specifically to the situation in the North-Western Region although his bill, as Andrej Bulat, a Suvalki gubernija deputy pointed out, aimed to introduce universal elementary education only in the zemstvo gubernijas,⁷⁰ thereby excluding from its purview the nine Western gubernijas.

The first speaker to defend the interests of the Region, after the Minister had concluded his address, was Chominski, a Polish deputy from the Vilna gubernija. His speech was only a curtain raiser to the long and passionate debate that was to follow, especially in the third and fourth Dumas, the frontier of education being the last line of defence for the Polish cause against the onslaught of Russian nationalism in the Western gubernijas.

Chominski welcomed the initiative of the Ministry of Education toward 'gradually introducing universal elementary education in Russia', but bitterly reminded the Duma that in the Vilna School District, which comprised six North-Western gubernijas, education had been in a better condition a hundred years ago than it was now in 1907.⁷¹ Both the Minister of Public Instruction⁷² and Chominski⁷³ regretted that education had become a political pawn, each obviously understanding 'politics' in exactly the opposite sense. Chominski suggested that school affairs be put in the hands of local self-governing agencies, that local languages should be permitted in the schools, and that private schools be relieved of persecution. On behalf of the Polish deputies he moved that the Ministry's education bill be sent to the Duma's educational committee 'despite its shortcomings'.⁷⁴

67. *SO II*, II, col. 898, 21 May 1907.

68. Kalinyčev, *op cit.*, p. 182.

69. *SO II*, cols 141-6, 4 May 1907.

70. *SO II*, II, col. 569, 15 May 1907.

71. *SO II*, II, col. 148, 4 May 1907.

72. *Ibid.*, col. 146.

73. *Ibid.*, cols 148, 151.

74. *Ibid.*, col. 153.

By 21 May 1907, Konic, a Polish deputy and the rapporteur of the Education Committee reported to the Duma a bill abrogating the penalty for 'clandestine schooling'.⁷⁵ It was intended, Konic said, as 'the first of a series of laws directed at the final abolition of the restrictions upon all non-Russian nationalities'.⁷⁶ The speaker exhorted the Duma to adopt the bill and thereby demonstrate to the Government 'that the obsolete system of Russification should be abolished once and for all'.⁷⁷ The bill was finally passed by a large majority of the Duma,⁷⁸ but not without protests from the Minsk gubernija deputies, Laškarev and Melnik who saw no urgency in the bill and wanted to protract discussion of it. Laškarev denounced Polish schools in the North-Western Region as hotbeds of Polish nationalism and Catholic propaganda. 'In their clandestine schools they (the Poles) teach those who depend upon them. Here you have many children of mixed marriages, especially orphans. By various measures they force them to learn the Polish language.'⁷⁹ Laškarev based the defence of his Minsk gubernija against the dangers of Polonization on statistical data. According to him, out of the 2,500,000 people in the gubernija, only 250,000 were Poles... 'That is, I should say, not Poles, but Poles and Polonized Byelorussians which means that there are only 10% of those who cannot accept the fact that the Western Region is not Polish but Russian (voice: Lithuanian!)'.⁸⁰ 'This, gentlemen', he exclaimed, 'for us from the North-western Region is a very sore subject'.⁸¹

'Sore subjects', however, were endless, being part and parcel of the socio-political condition of the nine Western gubernijas. Even at the very last session of the second Duma, on 2 June 1907, a matter was brought up for discussion which agitated the rightist Russophile deputies and the representatives of the Polish nationality.

The subject was the reform of local courts; the Duma committee had proposed making them elective.⁸² The first speaker was Wienślawski, a Polish deputy from the city of Vilna. He used the opportunity to point out discriminatory policies of the Russian Government which did not allow the nine Western gubernijas to have elective zemstvo institutions and where laws were replaced by directives and secret instructions.⁸³ As a result of the absence of the zemstvo, the justices of the peace were appointed bureaucratic strangers instead of being elected and familiar with the local languages and customs. 'The absence of zemstvo institutions', warned Wienślawski, 'is a shoal

75. *SO II, II*, col. 898, 21 May 1907.

76. *Ibid.*, col. 900.

77. *Ibid.*, col. 901.

78. *Ibid.*, cols 921-2.

79. *Ibid.*, col. 914.

80. Other Minsk gubernija deputies, Melnik and Šimanski, used 70,000 as the figure for the Poles in the Minsk gubernija. Once when one of them mentioned the above figure, a voice from the floor shouted '400,000,' which shows how relative and fluctuating 'factual' data were in those debates.

81. *SO II, II*, col. 914, 21 May 1907.

82. *SO II, II*, col. 1584, 2 June 1907.

83. *Ibid.*, col. 1577.

on which we shall run aground in all discussions of any, even slightly important, bills.⁸⁴

With twelve out of its forty-six members coming from the North-western gubernijas and by always voting unanimously, the Polish Circle was able to hold the balance in the second Duma.⁸⁵ The Circle's aim was to defend Polish interests — cultural, economic, and historic — in the Kingdom and the nine Western gubernijas. During the Duma's debate on the national budget, Dmowski, in an interview with a correspondent from the influential monarchist daily, *Novoje Vremja*, said that the Polish deputies' stand on budgetary matters would depend on what the Russian government would do on the proposal to 're-polonize the schools and to abolish restrictions on buying land by Poles living in Lithuania and the Ukraine'.⁸⁶ Similar statements by other Polish deputies were also published in Russian newspapers.

The key position that the Polish Circle held in the Duma and its policy of using it to exert pressure on 'very sore subjects', hastened the dissolution of the second Duma. According to Maklakov, Premier Stolypin was 'indignant at the prospect that the Russian Duma would be dependent on the votes of *inorodcy* (non-Russians)'.⁸⁷ This is why the manifesto dissolving the Duma and announcing a new electoral law 'to enable each part of the people to have its own representatives', stressed that 'the State Duma which was established to fortify the Russian state must be Russian in spirit'.⁸⁸

Roman Dmowski, the leader of the Polish Circle, also interpreted the dissolution of the Duma as 'a tangible result of our activity in the second Duma'.⁸⁹ As a result of that activity the June manifesto reduced the representation of the Kingdom of Poland by two thirds, from 36 to 12. Dmowski said that responsibility for the disaster had been put on his shoulders and he accepted the blame. There was no moral disaster in that for him, however, for he was convinced that neither self-government nor the number of Polish deputies in the Duma were essential matters. In the development of the international situation, as he understood it, much more important and urgent was 'preparation of the ground for raising the Polish question as a whole and to gain for Poland standing as a factor in European politics'.⁹⁰ Dmowski thought that in this respect the Polish tactics in the second Duma achieved more than was generally credited to its leadership.

84. *Ibid.*, col. 1578.

85. Maklakov, *op. cit.*, p. 179; Levin, *op. cit.*, p. 34, footnote 11.

86. Łukawski, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-8.

87. Maklakov, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

M. Je. Solov'jev, a Soviet author, wrote that the dissolution of the second Duma was due to the activity of its Social-Democratic faction. 'As V. N. Kokovcov maintained, Stolypin had always connected the necessity of dissolving the second Duma with the affair of the Social-Democratic faction.' *Voprosy istorii*, 8, Moscow, 1966, p. 125.

88. Maklakov, *op. cit.*, p. 179; Kalinyčev, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-3.

89. R. Dmowski, *Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa*, Warsaw, 1925, pp. 83-4.

90. *Ibid.*