

THE LITHUANIAN PEASANTRY OF TRANS-NIEMEN  
LITHUANIA, 1807-1864: A STUDY OF SOCIAL,  
ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CHANGE

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE . . . . .	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	xix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS . . . . .	xx
GLOSSARY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT HISTORICAL TERMS . . . . .	xxi

### PART I: THE STRUCTURE OF TRANS-NIEMEN LITHUANIA'S AGRARIAN WORLD AND THE LITHUANIAN PEASANTRY BEFORE 1864

#### Chapter

I. THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BACKGROUND: AGRICULTURE, THE PEASANTS AND THE ESTATE IN THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA BEFORE 1795 . . . . .	1
Lithuanian Agriculture and the Great Agrarian Reform of the Sixteenth Century . . . . .	1
Peasant Society During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century . . . . .	4
Feudal Obligations to the Estate in Eighteenth-Century Lithuania . . . . .	12
The Land and the Estates in Eighteenth-Century Lithuania . . . . .	16
Peasant Unrest and the End of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth . . . . .	20
II. TRANS-NIEMEN LITHUANIA: A GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL OUTLINE TO 1807 . . . . .	25
Before 1795 . . . . .	25
Prussian Rule (1795-1806) . . . . .	30
III. AUGUSTÓW PROVINCE AND TRANS-NIEMEN LITHUANIA: ADMINISTRATION AND DEMOGRAPHY . . . . .	38
The Administrative Background . . . . .	38
Demographic Characteristics of Augustów Province . . . . .	42
IV. THE PEASANT AND THE LAW, 1807-1864 . . . . .	50
The Abolition of Serfdom and the Problem of Land in the Duchy of Warsaw, 1807-1815 . . . . .	50
Peasant Legislation in the Kingdom of Poland, 1807-1864 . . . . .	52

Rural Administration and the Peasants . . . . .	61
<b>V. SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY . . . . .</b>	<b>68</b>
Nobility, Gentry and Townspeople . . . . .	68
The Peasantry . . . . .	71
<b>VI. PEASANT LAND HOLDINGS AND OBLIGATIONS DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY . . . . .</b>	<b>87</b>
Peasant Land Holdings Before 1864 . . . . .	87
The Problem of the Communition and Consolidation of Land Before 1864 . . . . .	94
The Villagers and Their Obligations to the Estate . . . . .	99
The Obligations to the State and the Church . . . . .	113
<b>VII. AGRICULTURE AND THE PEASANT ECONOMY . . . . .</b>	<b>119</b>
The Sources of Peasant Wealth . . . . .	119
The Agrarian Revolution and Agriculture in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century . . . . .	130
The Agricultural Technology of the Peasant . . . . .	138
The Landless Peasants and Industry . . . . .	152
<b>VIII. ESTATES AND TOWNS BEFORE 1864 . . . . .</b>	<b>158</b>
The Structure and Types of Estates . . . . .	158
Towns Before 1864 . . . . .	175
Puńsk 1818-1821: Profile of an Agrarian Town . . . . .	198
<b>IX. THE WORLD OF THE LITHUANIAN PEASANT: MATERIAL CONDITIONS, THE SPIRITUAL UNIVERSE, THE CYCLES OF WORK AND LIFE . . . . .</b>	<b>205</b>
The Physical Setting: Village and Homestead in the Nineteenth Century . . . . .	205
Food and Dress . . . . .	216
Communications . . . . .	221
Family Ties, Kinship and Traditional Institutions in the Village . . . . .	222
The Spiritual and Artistic World of the Peasant: Song, Dance and Folk Belief . . . . .	226
The Peasant's World of Activity: the Daily Round, the Seasonal Cycle, and the Stages of Life . . . . .	235

PART II: THE PEASANTS OF TRANS-NIEMEN LITHUANIA: THE STRUGGLE FOR  
SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND NATIONAL RIGHTS, 1807-1864

Chapter

X.	THE RISE OF THE PEASANT QUESTION AND "NOBLE" AGITATORS IN THE VILLAGE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	251
	The Forms of Peasant Resistance . . . . .	251
	The Rise of the Peasant Question Among the Nobility of Lithuania at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century . . . . .	253
	Peasant Resistance Before 1831 and the Case of Franciszek Rupiński . . . . .	259
	Peasant Protest on Church Lands: The Gražiskiai Case of 1817 . . . . .	279
XI.	VILLAGE VS. MANOR: SOME CASES OF PEASANT PROTEST, 1827-1855 . . . . .	286
	The Peasants and the Issue of Labor Obligations . . . . .	286
	Peasants, Landowners and the Problem of Land Tenure . . . . .	302
XII.	VILLAGE, TOWN AND CHURCH: SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ETHNIC CONFLICT IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	332
	The Peasants and the Jews: The Issue of Market Tolls and Town Levies . . . . .	332
	The Town and Country Inn: The Church, the Jews, and the Peasant Temperance Movement . . . . .	339
	The Peasants and Their Parish Church . . . . .	359
XIII.	DESPAIR AND HOPE: THE POOR PEASANTRY AND THE LEAN YEARS OF THE FORTIES AND FIFTIES . . . . .	365
	Hunger and the Rise of the Landless . . . . .	365
	Escape from Hunger: The False Hope of a 'New World' . . . . .	372
XIV.	MASS AGRARIAN UNREST BEFORE AND DURING THE GREAT REFORMS, 1831-1864 . . . . .	381
	The Agrarian Question Among the Nobility and Gentry of Poland and Lithuania Before 1864 . . . . .	381
	The Peasants and the Political-Agrarian Crises, 1831-1864 . . . . .	392

XV. THE LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE, EDUCATION AND NATIONAL CULTURE BEFORE 1864 . . . . .	420
The Lithuanian Language and the Origins of Polonization . . . . .	420
The Lithuanian Language, the Church and Polonization Before 1864 . . . . .	425
The Government, Politics and the Lithuanian Language Before 1864 . . . . .	440
Peasant Literacy, Education and Popular Literature Before 1864 . . . . .	450
Ethnographic Studies, National Romanticism and Mikalojus Akelaitis . . . . .	467
XVI. EPILOGUE: THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ORIGINS OF LITHUANIAN NATIONALISM . . . . .	487
Trans-Niemen Lithuania's Role in the Lithuanian National Awakening . . . . .	487
The Lithuanian National Movement and Its Social Basis: Typology and Comparison . . . . .	498

## APPENDIXES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Appendix

I. THE PETITION OF THE PARISHIONERS OF PAJEVONYS, JULY 10, 1820 . . . . .	508
II. THE RURAL DISPOSSESSED: THE STORY OF AGATA PAUKSZTYS . .	510
III. CURRENCY, WEIGHTS AND MEASURES . . . . .	514
IV. INDEX OF TOWNS AND CITIES . . . . .	516
 BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	520
I. ARCHIVAL SOURCES . . . . .	520
II. PUBLISHED SOURCES . . . . .	525

## LIST OF MAPS

The Ethnographically Lithuanian Lands About 1860 . . . . .	x
Trans-Niemen Lithuania . . . . .	26
The Białystok Department of Neuostpreussen and the Łomża Department of the Duchy of Warsaw . . . . .	39
The Administrative Districts of Augustów Province, 1815-1867 . . . . .	41
The Nationalities and Ethnic Groups of Augustów Province About 1860 . . . . .	47
The Birthplaces of the Lithuanian Intelligentsia in the Nineteenth Century . . . . .	493

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### Figure

1. Percentage Distribution of Landed Peasants on Private Estates by Holding Size in the Lithuanian and Polish Areas of Augustów Province About 1859 . . . . .	90
2. Typical Street Village Layout Showing Buildings, Trees and Orchards . . . . .	209
3. Typical Street Village Layout of the Trans-Niemen Region . . . . .	209
4. Individualized Homestead Layout . . . . .	210
5. Individualized Homestead Layout . . . . .	210
6. Individualized Homestead Layout . . . . .	210
7. Individualized Homestead Layout . . . . .	210
8. A "Smoke" Cabin of the Eastern Trans-Niemen Region in the Nineteenth Century . . . . .	212
9. The Peasants of Marijampolé Region. Drawn by V. Gerson, 1851 . . . . .	220
10. A Lithuanian Temperance Poster Published in Warsaw Commemorating the "Introduction of Sobriety in 1858" . . .	433
11. Closeup: The Fate that Awaits the Drinking Driver . . . . .	434

## LIST OF TABLES

### Table

1. Approximate Ratio of Populations in Lithuanian and Non-Lithuanian Districts of Augustów Province Between 1808 and 1856 . . . . .	44
2. Approximate Breakdown of the Population in Augustów Province by Nationality with Probable Upper and Lower Frequency and Percentage Limits (About 1860) . . . . .	45

## LIST OF TABLES (continued)

3. Estimated Frequency (N) and Percentage (P) Distribution of Peasant Holdings on Private Estates in Augustów Province by Peasant Category and District About 1859 . . . . .	89
4. Estimated Frequency (N) and Percentage (P) Distribution of Peasant Holdings on Public (Non-Private) Estates in Augustów Province by Peasant Category and District About 1859 . . . . .	91
5. Estimated Frequency (N) and Percentage (P) Distribution of Peasant Holdings on All Estates by Peasant Category and Lithuanian District of Augustów Province About 1859 . . . . .	92
6. Distribution of Peasant Holdings by Type of Estate in Augustów Province in 1859 . . . . .	161
7. Distribution of Peasant Holdings on Private and Public Estates in the Lithuanian Districts of Augustów Province in 1859 . . . . .	162
8. Trans-Niemen Lithuania's Major Towns and Their Populations Between 1800 and 1862 . . . . .	178
9. Trans-Niemen Lithuania's Small Townships and Their Populations Between 1800 and 1862 . . . . .	180
10. Trans-Niemen Lithuania's Bogus Towns and Their Populations Between 1800 and 1860 (Where Data Was Available) . . . . .	181
11. Approximate Percentage Distribution of Jewish and Gentile Urban Inhabitants in the Three Lithuanian Districts of Augustów Province Between 1820-1890 . . . . .	183
12. Percentage of Jews in the Urban Population of the Lithuanian Districts of Augustów Province in 1827, 1848 and 1858 . . . . .	185
13. Landowning Pattern of Peasant Households in Suwałki Gubernia in 1877 . . . . .	488
14. Percentage of the Lithuanian Population in the Three Lithuanian Gubernia's in 1861 and 1897 . . . . .	497

## PREFACE

Basically, this study is a social and economic history of the Lithuanian peasantry in the Duchy of Warsaw and the Kingdom of Poland roughly between 1807 and 1864. This subject has not been treated in detail by either Western or Polish historians, nor has it been studied comprehensively by Lithuanian scholars either at home or in emigration. Therefore, it is necessary to define, as precisely as possible, the chronological and, especially, geographical limits of this dissertation.

The chronological limits of this study are traditional enough and often used in historical literature. Serfdom was abolished in the Duchy of Warsaw in 1807, while 1864 is the date of the enfranchisement (Pol. uwłaszczenie) of the peasants, or the "real" emancipation with land in the Kingdom of Poland.

The geographical limits of this study, or the boundaries of what I have called "Trans-Niemen Lithuania" need some clarification. First of all, the very term "Lithuania" has been used ambiguously in the past, especially in 19th century Polish sources, and so a brief note of this problem might be useful in avoiding any geographical or historical misconceptions.

In historical sources and literature, Lithuania has represented both a historical entity, as well as an ethnographically distinct region. Until its final partition in 1795, the old Grand Duchy of Lithuania included many Slavic territories. As one Polish historian has pointed

out, this fact gave rise to such ethnographically incongruous place names as Lithuanian Rus, Brest Litovsk, Lithuanian Minsk, etc.<sup>1</sup> The old Lithuanian state, or the historical Lithuania, which in the 18th century included most of present-day Belorussia, was dominated culturally and socially by the native nobility and gentry, Polonized between the 16th and 19th centuries, who considered it their fatherland. Adam Mickiewicz, the best known Polish poet of the 19th century, extolled this land in the famous opening lines of his epic Pan Tadeusz ("Lithuania, my fatherland! You are like health . . ."). Tadeusz Kościuszko who, like Mickiewicz, was born in Belorussia, described himself as gente lituanus, natiōne polonus (Lithuanian by origin, Polish by nationality).<sup>2</sup> Clearly, to these men, the term "Lithuanian" represented a historical and geographic, rather than ethnic, allegiance. For all practical purposes, this native nobility considered themselves Poles. In fact, many of the Polonized landowners had little knowledge of, or interest in, the national traits of the Lithuanian and Belorussian peasant masses around them. Speech, custom and social position made the "Lithuanian" landowner a complete stranger even to villagers in the relatively small western part of the former Grand Duchy (or historical Lithuania) where a Lithuanian-speaking peasantry formed the vast majority of the population.

Lithuania as an ethnographically distinct region began to be better understood among educated Poles from the middle of the 19th century,

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<sup>1</sup> Jerzy Ochmański, Litewski ruch narodowo-kulturalny w XIX wieku, Prace Białostockiego Towarzystwa Naukowego, No. 5 (Białystok, 1965), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> K[ajetonas] J. Čeginskas, "Die Polonisierung des litauischen Adels im 19. Jahrhundert," in Commentationes Balticae, IV-V (1958), 23.

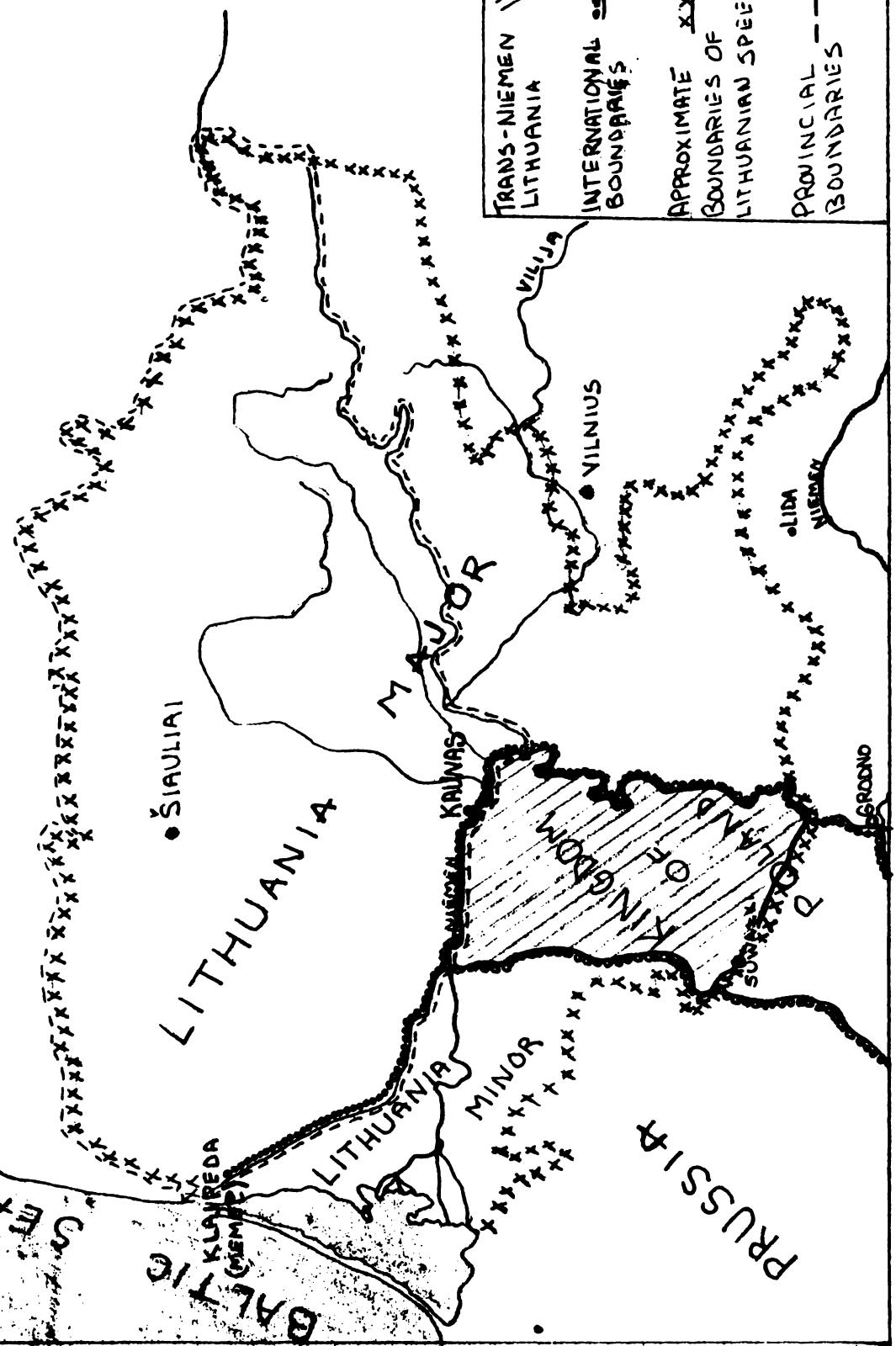
primarily through the writings of ethnographers and travelers such as Aleksander Połujański, Oskar Kolberg, and others. The boundaries of ethnographic Lithuania can be drawn with some precision using language as the main criterion. Lithuanian historical literature has traditionally divided ethnographic Lithuania into two parts: Lithuania Major and Lithuania Minor. The first corresponds to the ethnically Lithuanian territories of the former Grand Duchy which had a predominantly Catholic population. In the 19th century, Lithuania Major included all of Kaunas (Russ. Kovno) gubernia, certain western areas of Vilnius (Russ. Vilna) gubernia and, in the southwest, the northern districts of Augustów province (later Suwałki gubernia) in the Polish Kingdom. Lithuania Minor, on the other hand, comprised the ethnically Lithuanian areas of East Prussia, and had a predominantly Protestant population which lived under Prussian rule.<sup>1</sup>

For the purposes of this study, Trans-Niemen Lithuania is a distinct subdivision of Lithuania Major. Geographically, it is an area easy to define. With some relatively minor changes, the Trans-Niemen Lithuania considered here is roughly equivalent to present-day Soviet Lithuania to the west of the Niemen (Lith. Nemunas) River. In Lithuanian, this region has long been known as Užnemunė, which simply means "beyond the Niemen." This term has been used in scholarly publications, as well as popular speech, and it has also been picked up by Polish and Russian historical writing (Pol. Litwa zaniemeńska, Russ. Litva zaneman'e).

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<sup>1</sup> Michał Römer, Litwa: studium o odrodzeniu narodu litewskiego (Lwów, 1908), pp. 3-13.

THE ETHNOGRAPHICALLY LITHUANIAN LANDS ABOUT 1860



Since there has been no real English equivalent, I have adopted the term "Trans-Niemen Lithuania" from the French "Lithuanie Transniemienne," an expression used as a translation for Užnemunė in a prewar Lithuanian monograph.<sup>1</sup> To avoid monotonous repetition of cumbersome terminology, I use the term "Trans-Niemen Lithuania," "southwestern Lithuania," and Užnemunė interchangeably.

Important historical, economic, social and legal features of this territory more than justify a treatment separate from the rest of ethnographic Lithuania, especially for the 19th century. Trans-Niemen Lithuania, or Užnemunė, was under Polish administration during the 19th century. It was part of the Duchy of Warsaw between 1807 and 1815; thereafter, the region was included in the Kingdom of Poland, which enjoyed considerable autonomy, at least until 1831. The most striking economic feature of the Lithuanian peasantry in Congress Poland was the exceptionally large number of sizeable peasant holdings. Socially, this meant the emergence of a remarkable class of wealthy peasantry in Trans-Niemen Lithuania during the 19th century, a development not mirrored, at least not to the same extent, either among the Polish peasantry to the south, or in Russian Lithuania across the Niemen River (with the partial exception of Samogitia).

The most obvious factor that distinguished the life of the peasantry in Užnemunė from the rest of Lithuania was a legal one. Serfdom was

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<sup>1</sup> Augustinas Janulaitis, Napoleono teisynas: jo atsiradimas ir veikimas Prancūzijoj, išsiplėtimas svetur, o ypatingai Lietuvos Užnemunėje, Lietuvos Universiteto Teisių Fakulteto Darbai, Vol. 5, Bk. 6 (Kaunas, 1930).

officially abolished in the Duchy of Warsaw in 1807--in Russian Lithuania it was to continue until 1861.

If 19th century Trans-Niemen Lithuania was distinct in some ways from the rest of ethnographic Lithuania, it was even more unique as a part of the Kingdom of Poland. Elżbieta Kaczyńska, a specialist in the history of the northeastern region of Congress Poland, divided the area into sub-regions of which Trans-Niemen Lithuania is distinct from an ethnographic and economic point of view.<sup>1</sup> She also distinguishes this Lithuania as the "most backward region of the Polish Kingdom," explaining this backwardness in part by the area's "artificial" geographical connection with Congress Poland. Only a narrow "neck" of territory connected this historically Lithuanian region with the Kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

Some contemporary 19th century Polish ethnographers and authors also recognized the unique features of the Lithuanian areas of the Kingdom, sometimes idealizing what they thought were some of the outstanding qualities of this region. Aleksander Połujański, a well-known traveler, stated that Lithuania began to the north of the Czarna Hańcza River, and was a "little country renowned for its predilection for work and industry, as well as its piety."<sup>3</sup> Połujański described the land north of the Czarna Hańcza as "our Lithuania," also referring to it as "Polish

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<sup>1</sup> Elżbieta Kaczyńska, Społeczeństwo i gospodarka północno-wschodnich ziem Królestwa Polskiego w okresie rozkwitu kapitalizmu (Warsaw, 1974), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Elżbieta Kaczyńska, "Gubernia suwalska w świetle oficjalnych danych statystycznych w latach 1866-1914," in Studia i materiały do dziejów Suwalszczyzny, ed. Jerzy Antoniewicz (Białystok, 1965), 283.

<sup>3</sup> Aleksander Połujański, Wędrówki po guberni augustowskiej w celu naukowej odbyte (Warsaw, 1859), p. 6.

Lithuania." According to Połujański, other contemporaries called Trans-Niemen Lithuania the "trans-forest region," apparently because it lay beyond the Augustów forest belt.

Adam Goltz, a prominent landowner, was struck not only by the economic peculiarities of the Užnemunė region, but also by its atmosphere of "foreignness." "Undoubtedly, many readers are unaware that within the borders of our small Kingdom," he wrote, "there is . . . a region where one finds himself almost a foreigner, a stranger to the speech, customs and all local conditions . . . such are the Mariampol[Marijampolé] and Kalwaria[Kalvarija] districts."<sup>1</sup> Also, in official government correspondence, the northern districts of Augustów province were sometimes referred to as the "Lithuanian districts."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the history of Trans-Niemen, or southwestern, Lithuania in the 19th century must be treated from two angles. As this study will hopefully show, the peasantry of this region played an important role in the history of the Lithuanian nation in the 19th century. On the other hand, Trans-Niemen Lithuania was, at the same time, a part of the Kingdom of Poland. Thus, during the entire 19th century, and especially during its first half, this land was in a kind of historical "twilight zone," straddling both Poland and Lithuania, and part of the history of both. I have tried to keep this duality in mind throughout this work.

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Goltz, "Kilka słów o północnych powiatach gubernii Augustowskiej," in Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego, X(1847), 275.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-4764, Urban Supervisor of Augustów Province to KRSW, March 3, 1819, k. 32.

Within the chronological and geographical limits outlined above, I have attempted to describe the Lithuanian peasant's social, economic and cultural development. In addition to a broader outline of Trans-Niemen Lithuania's peasant society and economy (Part I), I have examined in detail its economic aspirations and social conflicts (Part II). I have also tried to present, as much as possible, the physical, psychological and cultural "peasant world" of this period, and to throw some light on the relationship of this world to the forces surrounding it, including the government, Church, the estate, market and town.

This study also takes up, to a limited extent, the beginnings of national awareness, as well as the cultural and educational developments among the Lithuanian population of Užnemunė. Where relevant, I have tried to briefly compare certain social and economic features of Polish Lithuania with those of Russian Lithuania during the 19th century. Throughout, I have attempted to point out some social and economic factors that made Trans-Niemen Lithuania different from the other areas of Congress Poland.

The main purpose of this work is to uncover those forces which led to the emergence of Trans-Niemen Lithuania's most unique social class: the well-to-do peasantry. This class was to form the backbone of the Lithuanian national movement in the second half of the 19th century. In fact, it was the children of those peasants, who were "enfranchised" in 1864, that actually formed the first generation of Lithuania's national intelligentsia. Thus, the history of the Užnemunė region is significant in understanding the emergence of the modern Lithuanian

nation during the 19th and 20th centuries.

In preparing this study, both unpublished and published sources have been utilized. The first are materials found in Polish archives. Unfortunately, much, if not most, of the Polish archival material valuable for my subject was destroyed by the German army during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. I was unable to visit archives in Lithuania itself. Therefore, the archival base of this work is not as broad as I would have wished it to be. On the positive side, I was able to utilize some interesting documents from the Diocesan Archive in Łomża which, to my knowledge, have not been used to study 19th century peasant history. In the footnotes, I have indicated(in abbreviated form) the archive, catalogue number, the particular collection and, where relevant, the correspondents involved, of all manuscript materials. Where the manuscripts were numbered, I have given the pagination provided by the archive.

Published materials include contemporary travelogues, newspaper accounts, statistical materials, as well as various secondary works and monographs, mainly in Polish, Russian and Lithuanian. The titles of non-Western publications are translated in the bibliography, which also lists, at least in most cases, the publisher of the particular work. I apologize for the few omissions in this last regard.

I have encountered the usual difficulties in reconciling the differing Polish, Lithuanian, German and Russian versions of various personal and place names. In regard to personal names, I have tried to adhere to the

spelling peculiar to the particular person's nationality. In the case of some more prominent Lithuanian surnames, I have followed Soviet practice in using the Lithuanian form, but have included the Slavicized or Germanized forms in parentheses, since these were most commonly used in 19th century sources.

The surnames of peasants presented somewhat of a special problem. It was not always easy to determine a peasant's nationality by surname. Those with the characteristic Lithuanian -ys, -is, -us, or -as endings presented few doubts, even with the somewhat contradictory 19th century Polish spelling. I have left these names in the text as I have found them in the sources, even though the Polish spelling of Lithuanian names was not always consistent. In some cases, however, the practice of dropping the characteristic endings and Polonizing Lithuanian peasant surnames in documents, begun toward the end of the 18th century, created difficulties in identifying nationality.<sup>1</sup> Polonized surnames without Lithuanian endings often became identical with Polish last names.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, surname Polonization creates the possibility of a margin of error when identifying "Lithuanian peasants" in sources. The actual risk of confusing Lithuanian and Polish peasants, however, is relatively small and certainly acceptable when considering the demographic realities

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<sup>1</sup> A few documents from the turn of the 19th century in the A. G. A. D., KRSW collection still maintain the characteristic Lithuanian endings of the surnames, but these are the exception, rather than the rule. See also V[ytautas] Vanagas, Antanas Strazdas(Vilnius, 1968), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> One document identifies a certain Stanisław Rudzewicz, a peasant fugitive, as a "Lithuanian speaker" and "wearer of Lithuanian clothes," the name here giving no clue to the person's ethnic background. Dziennik Urzędowy Województwa Augustowskiego, No. 26(1821), 256.

of Trans-Niemen Lithuania. The Polish and other Slavic peasants were a tiny minority of the total peasantry in the Užnemunė region and constituted a significant number only in some southern parts of Sejny district. In all but a few cases, demographic knowledge of the region and common sense are relatively certain determinants of nationality.

Frequent political changes, as well as the region's multinational character, have resulted in various spellings and versions of place names in Lithuania. Except for Prussia, where I have used the prewar German versions of place names, I have followed the practice of using the present-day spelling. In a few cases, I have used the form most commonly found in English language publications. Thus, in reference to western Lithuania, I use the Latin term Samogitia, instead of the Lithuanian Zemaitija or the Russian Zhmud'; Niemen, in place of the Lithuanian Nemunas. I have occasionally presented the different versions of certain more important place names in parentheses.

I have tried to be flexible when providing the reader Russian, Polish or Lithuanian terms in the text. I have used the singular form of a word whenever possible, although at times this was not practicable. In using monetary and measuring terminology(for example, złoty, włoka, etc.), I have used the singular and plural nominative forms only. All transliterations from the Cyrillic are according to the Library of Congress system.

Whenever possible, all dates within the Kingdom of Poland are given in the Gregorian calendar, since it was in official use alongside the Julian. For some more important events in the Kingdom and Russia, I have included the Old Style, Julian date in parentheses.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A. G. A. D., Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnzych, The Main Archive of Old Documents [in Warsaw]

A. D. Ł., Archiwum Diecezjalne w Łomży, The Diocesan Archive in Łomża

AN SSSR, Akademiia Nauk Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik, The Academy of Sciences of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

ARA, Akty Rady Administracyjnej Królestwa Polskiego, Acts of the Administrative Council of the Kingdom of Poland

CWW, Centralne Władze Wyznań, The Central Religious Authorities

Ger., German

k., kartka, card, a page of a manuscript

KRSW, Komissya Rządowa Spraw Wewnętrznych, The Government Commission of Internal Affairs

KRWR, Komissya Rządowa Wyznań Religijnych y Oświecenia Publicznego, The State Commission of Religious Confessions and Public Education

Lith., Lithuanian

LTSR, Lietuvos Taryby Socialistinė Respublika, The Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic

LTSRMA, Lietuvos Tarybų Socialistinės Respublikos Moksly Akademija, The Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic

PAN, Polska Akademia Nauk, The Polish Academy of Sciences

Pol., Polish

PWN, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, The State Scientific Publishing House

RSFSR, The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic

Russ., Russian

ser., series

VPMLL, Valstybinė Politinės ir Mokslinės Literatūros Leidykla, The State Publishing House for Political and Scientific Literature

zesz., zeszyt, notebook, part

## GLOSSARY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT HISTORICAL TERMS

ekonomia: an economy; a large complex of royal lands in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania administered by officials of the crown

gmina: a rural administrative unit in the Kingdom of Poland, normally consisting of a number of villages and estates

gmina mayor, or wójt: the administrator of a gmina, since 1818 invariably a local landowner(see wójt)

gubernia: a province of the Russian Empire

grossz: a Polish monetary unit(see Appendix III, "Currency")

morga: a unit of land measurement in the Kingdom of Poland(see Appendix III, "Weights and Measures")

powiat: a district of the Kingdom of Poland; part of a province

starostwo: royal holding leased or assigned to landed nobility on a temporary basis

soltys: a village headman; an administrator of a village, usually a peasant

włóka: a unit of land measurement in the Kingdom of Poland(see Appendix III, "Weights and Measures")

wójt: a gmina mayor; an administrator of a gmina in the Kingdom of Poland during the 19th century

złoty: a Polish monetary unit(see Appendix III, "Currency")

**PART I**

**THE STRUCTURE OF TRANS-NIEMEN LITHUANIA'S AGRARIAN WORLD  
AND THE LITHUANIAN PEASANTRY BEFORE 1864**

## CHAPTER I

### THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BACKGROUND: AGRICULTURE, THE PEASANTS AND THE ESTATE IN THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA BEFORE 1795

#### Lithuanian Agriculture and the Great Agrarian Reform of the Sixteenth Century.

To a considerable degree, the Lithuanian agrarian world of the 18th and 19th centuries was still a product of the great land reform of Sigismund Augustus in the 16th century. This reform, begun in 1547, sprang from the Lithuanian government's realization that the income from the crown lands was insufficient and that the old, disorganized forms of land tenure no longer corresponded to the financial needs of the Lithuanian state.<sup>1</sup> Sigismund's reform is usually known in historiography as the Volok Reform, so named after the unit of land (Russ. volok, Pol. włoka, Lith. valakas) that the state assigned to an average peasant household.<sup>2</sup>

Sigismund Augustus' agrarian reform sought to determine the boundaries of the crown domains (and eventually those of the private estates), establish villages on the Western model and provide each peasant household with the aforementioned measure of land. The main economic goals of the reform were to increase the revenues of the Grand Duchy's treasury through efficient taxation of the land and to regulate and systematize the obligations of the peasantry. The reform was also supposed to stimulate agriculture by making the three-field system of cultivation universal on

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<sup>1</sup> Ludwik Kolankowski, "Pomiara włóczna," in Ateneum Wileńskie, IV(1927), 235-236.

<sup>2</sup> See Vladimir Picheta, Agrarnaia reforma Sigizmunda-Avgusta v litovsko-russkom gosudarstve, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1958), pp. 215-216 and Werner Conze, Agrarverfassung und Bevölkerung in Litauen und Weissrussland (Leipzig, 1940), pp. 70-72. In Lithuania the volok or włoka unit ranged in area between approximately 21 and 23 ha.

the large manorial farms (Pol. folwark) of Lithuania.<sup>1</sup> The number of these large manorial farms increased considerably during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Peasant land tenure and settlement patterns changed radically as a result of the agrarian reform of the 16th century. Where possible, the peasant holdings were consolidated to facilitate three-field agriculture. King Sigismund's reform also helped establish planned villages in which the peasant homes were lined up along a main street. Eventually, several different patterns of these "street" villages emerged. Before the reform peasant plots were often intermingled with state and private lands; now, they were systematically consolidated into strips outside the village.

<sup>2</sup> Government surveyors measured the peasant holdings.

Subsequent developments undid much of what the 16th century agrarian reform had accomplished. Over the years, as the population increased, the redistribution of peasant holdings (for example, through inheritance or marriage) caused the fields or strips of land outside the village to become more numerous and scattered. The comminution, or alienation, of these land strips became very widespread. Many of the large and prosperous manorial farms in Poland and Lithuania were ruined by the wars and plagues of the 17th and early 18th centuries. However, the original volok or wółka still remained the basic unit of land on which peasant obligations were based.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, it is best to describe the folwark as that part of an estate's farmland which was worked by corvée or hired labor and whose production went to the manor. In place of folwark, I prefer the term "manorial farm."

<sup>2</sup> See Henryk Łowmiański, "Przyczynki do kwestji najstarszych kształtów wsi litewskiej," in Ateneum Wileńskie, VI(1929), 293-336; cf. Izidorius Butkevičius, Lietuvos valstiečių gyvenvietės ir sodybos (Vilnius, 1971), pp. 16 ff., 41-44 and Conze, Agrarverfassung, pp. 72 ff. It must be noted that Sigismund's reform bypassed some social groups and areas of Lithuania. The reform did not affect the petty gentry and barely touched southwestern Lithuania which was sparsely populated in the 16th century, although later peasant colonization of this region was carried out on the example of the reform.

The real breakdown of the land tenure system established by King Sigismund's agrarian reform and modified by later developments began in the first half of the 19th century. The increasing number of consolidated peasant homesteads and the changeover from labor obligations to money rents among the peasantry were two key factors that helped break down the old land tenure system.

In addition to affecting the peasants' land tenure system, the 16th century agrarian reform also influenced Lithuanian agriculture for the next three centuries. The first form of agriculture in Lithuania had been the primitive "slash and burn" type characteristic of most heavily forested regions. The two-field system, in which the fields were alternately planted and then left fallow for several years at a time, grew out of "slash and burn" farming. In Lithuania's forested areas, the two-field system remained in use as late as the 19th century.<sup>1</sup> However, the form of agriculture that really characterized Lithuanian farming since at least the 15th century was the three-field system. Under this method of cultivation, the first field was planted with winter crops, the second with spring crops and the third left fallow. The three fields were rotated each year. Recent research suggests that the three-field system came to Lithuania earlier than was previously supposed; perhaps, as early as the 13th century. It was already widespread by the time of the agrarian reform of the 16th century. The reform itself did not introduce three-field agriculture into Lithuania; it simply systematized three-field cultivation by organizing the village lands into three blocks of arable strips suitable for efficient cultivation. The three-field system was

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<sup>1</sup> Pranė Dundulienė, Zemdirbystė Lietuvoje nuo seniausių laikų iki 1917 metų (Vilnius, 1963), pp. 12-13.

the dominant form of agriculture in Lithuania throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt, by systematizing three-field agriculture and stimulating the growth of large manorial farms, the agrarian reform of the 16th century helped Poland and Lithuania become major exporters of agricultural products to Western Europe. However, the wars and plagues of the 17th and early 18th centuries which swept the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth interrupted trade with the West. The general destruction of this period greatly reduced Lithuania's population and agricultural production; this ended, at least for a while, the country's role as a grain exporter.<sup>2</sup>

#### Peasant Society During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century.

During the second half of the 18th century Lithuania began to recover from the devastation of the previous wars and again became an exporter of grains and flax. This limited recovery was due both to the general economic recovery of the later 18th century and to a rise in agricultural prices in Western Europe.

The demand for exports and the limited recovery of this time directly affected the peasant economy; for example, the peasants now raised more flax which was an important export item. Flax actually became a means of exchange; in fact, many landowners began to demand that villagers pay their money rents in flax rather than cash, a form of exploitation that hindered the peasants in their attempts to sell produce on the local market.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dundulienė, Žemdirbystė, pp. 42-47.

<sup>2</sup> See Józef Morzy, Kryzys demograficzny na Litwie i Białorusi w II połowie XVII wieku(Poznań, 1965).

<sup>3</sup> Mečislovas Jučas, "Prekyba Lietuvos kaime XVIII a.," in Iš lietuvių kultūros istorijos, LTSRMA, Istorijos Institutas, IV(Vilnius, 1964), 111.

More important, despite the landowners' efforts to monopolize the local markets and their constant interference in virtually every aspect of village economic life, the second half of the 18th century was a time of increasing prosperity for a large number of peasants. In the 18th century it was customary to farm out the estate's monopoly of trade with the peasants to Jewish merchants. By the end of the century, the peasants themselves were sometimes allowed to trade in grains, flax, salt, herring and other traditional commodities as long as they paid a commission to the estate. This, however, did not mean free trade for the rural population; the estate still dominated the economic activities of the peasantry. The estate usually directed the peasants to do their trading at "approved" markets where tolls could be collected from the villagers as they entered (although the peasantry sometimes evaded this regulation by engaging in surreptitious trading).<sup>1</sup>

The social effect of this increased economic activity among the peasants, limited as it was by manorial interference, was a noticeable strengthening of Lithuania's well-to-do peasant class. This class of prosperous villagers was most numerous in western Lithuania where the economic conditions for its growth were most advantageous. The wealthier peasants accumulated wealth through savings, livestock and the expansion of the arable land on their holdings. The last means proved most difficult since most of the peasants could not buy land; however, in certain areas they were able to rent additional land from the estate.<sup>2</sup> A. C. Holsche, an important Prussian official, published a study in 1800 in which he described wealthy

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<sup>1</sup> Jučas, "Prekyba," 115-116.

<sup>2</sup> M. A. Iuchas, "Naemny trud v krest'ianskem khoziaistve pomeshchichei derevni Litvy vtoroi poloviny XVIII v.," in Istoria SSSR, No.1(1967), 99.

peasants he had observed in southwestern Lithuania's Marijampolė and Kalvarija districts. Most of these well-to-do peasants were free from compulsory labor and paid money rents for their holdings. Holsche noted that some of the wealthiest villagers had considerable cash in savings, while others possessed huge grain reserves and owned between twenty to thirty head of cattle.<sup>1</sup>

The increase in the number of wealthy peasants in Lithuania during the late 18th century was accompanied by a parallel rise in the number of poor peasants with little or no land holdings. During this period, there was a noticeable increase in the number of hired hands employed by the wealthier peasantry. The hired help included male farmhands, milkmaids and shepherds. Some of these impoverished peasants and farm help came from those estates where the landowners could no longer maintain landless villagers. Another source of rural hired labor in the village were the escaped peasants who wandered from estate to estate selling their services.<sup>2</sup>

The landless and "nominally landed" peasants,<sup>3</sup> like their wealthier counterparts, were more prevalent in western Lithuania. At the end of the 18th century it is estimated that these impoverished peasant households constituted less than a fifth of the peasantry in all of Lithuania; however, it must be recognized that 18th century statistics are very unreliable. The landless and "nominally landed" population was unevenly distributed: parish lists for 1795 showed an especially large percentage

<sup>1</sup> Jučas, "Prekyba," 117; see also Mečislovas Jučas, Baudžiavos irimas Lietuvoje(Vilnius, 1972), pp. 147-158.

<sup>2</sup> Iuchas, "Naemny trud," 95-99.

<sup>3</sup> I use the term "nominally landed" to denote those peasants with garden plots of three morgi or less(between 30 to 33 morgi=one Lithuanian volok or widka); practically, these peasants belonged to the landless group.

of landless peasants along the Niemen(Nemunas) River(of the peasants in southwestern Lithuania's huge Alytus economy 31.3% were listed as "landless.") However, the 1790 census of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania posited only 9% of "nominally landed" garden peasants in the entire Duchy, but up to 13% in the western areas of the country.<sup>1</sup> This last census did not include totally landless peasants.

The impoverished and landless peasant class increased dramatically during the 19th century; however, already in the 18th century it provided labor for a considerable number of landed peasant households. For example, a survey of 23 villages in southwestern Lithuania's Kalvarija parish revealed that 52% of the landed peasants employed hired labor at the end of the 18th century. Of these, almost a quarter employed three or more villagers.<sup>2</sup> Normally, the estate did not interfere with the landed peasants' employment of poor villagers; after all, this was one way of absorbing a part of the growing reserve of landless peasantry. It is clear that by the end of the 18th century hired labor had become an integral and increasingly important part of the landed peasant's economy.<sup>3</sup>

Naturally, not all peasants belonged to the well-to-do or impoverished classes: between these two groups there existed a wide range of village households. The legal, social and economic categories of the landed and landless peasantry were numerous and complex; in fact, this complexity confused contemporary governments and landowners as well as historians. The different divisions of the landed peasantry are particularly important

<sup>1</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos, pp. 101-102, 154-160; see also Antoni Žabko-Potopowicz, Praca najemna i najemnik w rolnictwie w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim (Warsaw, 1929), pp. 100-101 and M. A. Iuchas and L. P. Muliavichius, "Bezzemel'nye krest'iane v Litve v XVI-XIX vv.," in Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii Vostochnoi Evropy 1965 g., AN SSSR(Moscow, 1970), 80-84.

<sup>2</sup> Žabko-Potopowicz, Praca, pp. 163-165.      <sup>3</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos, pp. 167-168.

for an understanding of Lithuanian social history.

The obligated rural population engaged in serious agriculture (for example, those holding more than a half włóka of land) was divided into a maze of historical categories that sometimes overlapped. The highest obligated class were the so-called "landed" peasants (Pol. ziemianie, Lith. žemininkai), a kind of obligated peasant aristocracy who performed seasonal labor obligations and were sometimes engaged in rural administration. This prestigious class of villagers was very small: in the 1780s there were less than three hundred in the large Alytus economy of southwestern Lithuania.<sup>1</sup> Below these ziemianie were the so-called peasant "boyars" who were often economically indistinguishable from other wealthy peasants around them; however, the obligations of the peasant "boyars" were usually lower than those of other villagers and consisted mainly of money rents. The peasant "boyars" should not be confused with the genuinely noble Lithuanian boyars or lesser gentry (Pol. szlachta). The position of the peasant "boyars" as money renters on state domains elevated them above the serfs; in the peasant idiom they were often called "royal people" (Lith. karaliūnai). To this day, the popular terms for the peasant "boyars" (Lith. bajoras, karaliūnas) are reflected in numerous Lithuanian village names and surnames. The Lithuanian peasants called a genuine nobleman or member of the lesser gentry "ponas," a term derived from the Polish word for landowner (pan).<sup>2</sup>

These two "exalted" peasant categories, along with villagers who

<sup>1</sup> Dmitrii L. Pokhilevich, Krest'iane Belorussii i Litvy vo vtoroi polovine XVIII v. (Vilnius, 1966), p. 33; see also Władysław Wieczorek, Z dziejów ustroju rolnego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w XVIII w. (Poznań, 1929), pp. 82-92, also Juozas Žiugžda, ed., Lietuvos TSR istorija, I (Vilnius, 1957), 320-321.

<sup>2</sup> Lietuvos TSR istorija, I, 321.

had once received the right to move from their holdings (Russ. pokhozhye liudi) and smaller assorted groups (such as Russian Old Believers in Lithuania, emancipated serfs and peasant officials), formed a class of so-called "free people" (Russ. vol'nye liudi).<sup>1</sup> Historians dispute the origins of the free people, a difficult problem since peasants who had the right to leave their holdings could be found in almost all classes of the peasantry in the 16th century. Soviet historian Dmitrii Pokhilevich at one time maintained that the free people were, as a rule, "foreign elements," that is, immigrants, escaped peasants from other lands and emancipated slaves.<sup>2</sup> This version has been successfully challenged by other scholars.<sup>3</sup>

As a rule, "free" peasants paid money rents in lieu of compulsory labor and did not belong to a manorial farm. They were free from corvée and free to leave their holdings; thus they were renters of land rather than true serfs. It is estimated that in 1795 about 30% of Lithuania's rural population was in the "free" category. That same year the Russian senate confirmed the freedom of this social class but termed them "foreigners," mistakenly assuming that the free peasants had come to Lithuania from Prussia and Poland. Most of the free peasants lived in western Lithuania; in some areas of Samogitia rent-paying free peasants actually formed the majority of the local population.<sup>4</sup> During the 19th century

<sup>1</sup> See Pokhilevich, Krest'iane vo vtoroi polovine XVIII v., pp. 30-36.

<sup>2</sup> Dmitrii L. Pokhilevich, Krest'iane Belorussii i Litvy v XVI-XVIII vv. (L'vov, 1957), p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> See N. N. Ulashchik's review of the above work in Voprosy istorii, No. 3(1960), 179; J[uozas] Jurjinis, "Lietuvos valstiečiai vadinti bajorais XVIII a.," in LTSRMA Darbai, Ser. A, VII(1959), 91-102.

<sup>4</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos, pp. 169-175, 197.

the number of the free peasants declined dramatically as a result of a constant assault on their legal status by the landowners and the state.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the free peasants, there were also free people for whom agriculture was not the major occupation. These were the various innkeepers, millers and craftsmen employed by estates and towns. Often these men held land and paid money rents; however, in some cases, they were free of all obligations. The vast majority of the non-agricultural free people were not ethnic Lithuanians but, rather, Germans, Poles and Jews.<sup>2</sup>

The petty gentry(Pol. drobna szlachta) of western Lithuania, particularly Samogitia, constituted a special class of its own. Legally, they were not a part of the obligated population, but economically the position of the petty gentry was often close to or identical to that of the wealthier peasantry. In fact, a 1775 survey of the Grand Duchy showed that out of 5,748 Samogitian gentry, only 1,179 or 20.5% owned serfs.<sup>3</sup> Historically, these Samogitian gentry were important in that they made up the only legally non-peasant group of Lithuanian society that still retained the native language at the end of the 18th century.

The vast majority of Lithuania's rural population, except for some parts of Samogitia, consisted of the enserfed peasantry. Most of these villagers performed compulsory labor or corvée(Russ. barshchina, Pol. pańszczyzna, Lith. lažas) in addition to or, in some cases, in place of the money rent(Russ. obrok, Pol. czynsz, Lith. činšas). The enserfed

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Neupokoev, "Vol'nye liudi Litvy v pervoi polovine XIX v.," in Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii Vostochnoi Evropy 1961 g., AN SSSR (Kiev, 1962), 390-402 and N[ikolai] N. Ulashchik, "O krest'ianskikh volneniiakh v Litve v pervoi polovine XIX v.," in Istoriia SSSR, No. 1 (1959), 155-168.

<sup>2</sup> Wieczorek, Z dziejów, pp. 48-49.

<sup>3</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos, p. 83.

peasants were tied to a private or crown estate and, unlike the free population, had no legal right to leave their holdings. In 18th-century Lithuania the majority of the enserfed peasantry lived on private estates. Another large group of villagers lived on state domains. There was also a smaller third group: peasants who lived on Church lands and on holdings owned by municipalities.

Like the free population, the enserfed peasants represented many different legal and social categories.<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this study, it is probably best to ignore certain minor legal divisions and consider the peasantry from an economic point of view. Those peasants holding enough land to perform all the regular obligations to the manor, usually with holdings of between one-fourth and one włóka, are referred to as "householders" (Pol. gospodarz, or the older term kmieć) in the sources. These villagers can be termed, as it were, "fully landed." Lithuania also had a class of smallholders (Pol. zagrodnik) who lived on plots of between three and six morgi, scattered among the wealthier peasants.<sup>2</sup> The poorest category of smallholders were the so-called "garden peasants" (Pol. ogrodnik, Lith. daržininkas); they usually lived on plots of three morgi or less, sometimes holding little more than their dwelling. The holdings of the garden peasants were often so pathetic that their economic status was very close to that of the landless villagers of Lithuania. The truly

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<sup>1</sup> See N[ikolai] N[ikolaevich] Ulashchik, Predposylki krest'ianskoi reformy 1861 g. v Litve i Zapadnoi Belorussii (Moscow, 1965), p. 61. For example, as late as 1844 the Vilnius Department of State Domains listed 31 legal categories of state peasants, despite an 1840 decree which declared that all villagers on state lands belonged in a single group.

<sup>2</sup> Between 30 and 33 morgi equalled a single włóka. Hereafter, I use the Polish term włóka to denote the traditional unit of land established in the 16th century.

landless peasants were called "tenants" (Pol. komornik, katnik; Lith. kampininkas, bobelis). Sometimes tenant peasants worked a tiny sliver of land and lived in their own wretched huts. More often, they had no homestead of their own and lived with well-to-do peasants, occupying, as their name indicates, a "corner" of the abode.<sup>1</sup> The landless peasants usually supported themselves by hiring out their labor to either the manor or wealthier villagers. It is estimated that the agricultural laborers who lived in their own homes made up less than 10% of the Lithuanian village population in 1790; in western areas of the country they constituted as much as 13% of the peasantry. As mentioned above, the Grand Duchy census of 1790 did not include tenant peasants without a homestead so that the actual number of practically landless villagers was certainly significantly higher than the respective percentages above.<sup>2</sup>

#### Feudal Obligations to the Estate in Eighteenth-Century Lithuania.

Virtually all of the above categories of the village population, whether free or serf, were obligated in some way to the manor. The obligations, as indicated previously, consisted of either compulsory labor (corvée) or rents payable in money and/or kind. Historically, it was corvée which defined real serfdom and epitomized the exploitation of the peasant by the landowner.

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<sup>1</sup> Wieczorek, Z dziejów, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos, p. 101.

The amount of compulsory labor that the manor demanded from the peasants originally depended on the size of the villagers' holdings. In fact, the very division of the estate's land into peasant holdings and the manorial farm formed the basis of the obligations system which was the core of serfdom. The agrarian reform of the 16th century had divided manorial and peasant lands at a ratio of one to seven respectively. By the 18th century, the ratio had changed to somewhere between one to four, or one to five. Naturally, as the Lithuanian manorial farms continued to expand at the expense of peasant holdings, the villagers' labor obligations increased.<sup>1</sup>

Labor obligations consisted of both the regular(or weekly) corvée and the irregular(seasonal and gratuitous) work duties. The regular labor obligations were not uniform throughout Lithuania during the 18th century. For example, the Šiauliai and Alytus estates of the Tyzenhauz family required eight "man-days" of regular labor per week from a single peasant włóka. On the Uptyé estate the norm was ten days.<sup>2</sup> On the whole, however, the regular summer labor averaged somewhere around three days per week from two adults(for a total of six man-days) for an average peasant household holding about one-half włóka or more. The length of the work day was customarily calculated from sunrise to sunset with two rest breaks, both in the winter and summer seasons. During the winter, the estate usually reduced the number of labor days required.<sup>3</sup> In the

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<sup>1</sup> Jucas, Baudžiavos, pp. 87 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Lietuvos TSR istorija, I, 318-319.

<sup>3</sup> See Żabko-Potopowicz, Praca, pp. 120-122 and Wieczorek, Z dziejów, p. 55; cf. D[mitrii] Pokhilevich, "Perevod gosudarstvennykh krest'ian Litvy i Belorussii v seredine XVIII v. s denezhnoi renty na otrabochnuiu," in Istoricheskie Zapiski, XXXIX(1952), 121-158.

latter half of the 18th century the manors increasingly began to assign compulsory labor on the sole basis of the peasant holding, disregarding the area of the holding. One possible reason for this was the rising economic potential of many landed peasants as a result of their increasing use of hired labor.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the 18th century corvée duties slowly became more standardized and formalized.

The regular corvée was of two kinds. First of all, there was the type in which the peasant was required to use his livestock or draft power; a day on which this kind of work was required was known as a "draft" corvée day(Pol. sprzęzajny, Lith. važiuotinė). The other type of work, where the use of the peasant's livestock was not required, was known as "pedestrian" labor(Pol. pieszy, Lith. péstinė). Men were usually involved in the first kind of work while women normally performed the second type.

In addition to the regular weekly corvée of either "draft" or "pedestrian" days, there were various seasonal and extraordinary labor duties. The two major categories of additional corvée were the seasonal summer harvest obligations(Pol. gwałty) and the construction work for the state, usually road and bridge repair(Pol. szarwarki). The seasonal harvest obligations averaged less than a dozen days of labor annually. The szarwarki-type work took up, on the average, four to five days a year.<sup>2</sup> There were other ways in which the manor exploited peasant labor, particularly through the so-called minor and "gratuitous" work duties. For peasant women this often meant not only the important task of processing

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<sup>1</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> Wieczorek, Z dziejów, pp. 55-67; Lietuvos TSR istorija, I, 318-319.

flax, but also assorted minor duties such as the milking of the manor's cows.<sup>1</sup> The manor often obliged village men to guard the estate's property, even at night; this was an irksome, much detested obligation. Other irregular corvée duties were peculiar to certain localities and social groups; these included such work as certain administrative functions performed by villagers and such things as the transport obligation: the requirement to transport the manor's products to markets and seaports.

Aside from corvée, the other major group of obligations to the manor were the money rents in cash and/or kind. Here again, there were both regular(or major) and irregular(or minor) obligations. First of all, there was the regular payment or money rent(Pol. czynsz); originally, this payment was made in return for the commutation of labor obligations. By the 18th century it represented the peasant's payment for the estate land which he used in addition to his own holding. The amount of the money rent, like the amount of compulsory labor, normally depended on the quality and quantity of the peasant holding's land. The size of the money rent was also influenced by the role that corvée played on a particular estate. The rent or czynsz could be in kind or money; often it was "mixed," that is, calculated in currency but collected in flax or other agricultural products as well as cash.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the basic rent paid for the use of the land, the peasants were also required to make certain other contributions to the manor. For example, in most parts of Lithuania the villagers were required to provide the manor with annual "gifts," sometimes in money, but most often

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<sup>1</sup> Wieczorek, Z dziejów, pp. 67-68.

<sup>2</sup> Wieczorek, Z dziejów, pp. 52-53.

in animals or animal products: chickens, sheep, honey, even meat.<sup>1</sup> The estate also levied fees on some basic peasant social and economic activities such as marriage, hunting, fishing, even picking the mushrooms which were an important supplement to the villager's diet.

Aside from the money and produce that he owed the manor, the peasant was also forced to pay certain taxes to the state and the Church. The major state tax in Lithuania was the household levy or "chimney" tax (Pol. podymny, Lith. padūmė). The state collected this tax from each peasant homestead or, in some cases, from each family. Obligations to the Church varied widely throughout Lithuania but usually meant some form of payment to the local pastor, most often in agricultural produce. In addition, peasants on crown and Church estates paid special taxes of their own.

#### The Land and the Estates in Eighteenth-Century Lithuania.

The most important beneficiary of the peasants' compulsory labor, money rents and various assorted fees was the estate, the basic economic unit in rural Lithuania. The estate's manorial farm employed serf labor and was the basis of the whole corvée system. There were some estates which had no manorial farms and where, therefore, the peasants were primarily rent-paying tenants; however, in 18th century Lithuania such estates were the exception. Most Lithuanian estates depended on a combination of corvée and money rents for their income from the village. The majority of peasants performed both kinds of obligations, although there were classes of villagers who were exclusively money renters; there

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<sup>1</sup> Wieczorek, Z dziejów, pp. 68 ff.

were also a few who provided only labor. In addition to utilizing compulsory labor, the estate also hired agrarian workers both for domestic service in the manor as well as for work on the manorial farm. The manor's hired labor was often recruited from among the smallholders, garden peasants and landless villagers.<sup>1</sup>

The very largest complexes of crown estates in Lithuania were called "economies" (Pol. ekonomja). At the end of the 18th century, the four large economies of Šiauliai, Alytus, Grodno and Brest-Litovsk encompassed over a half million hectares of land, included 30 towns, and employed an estimated 120,000 peasants of whom 80% were serfs.<sup>2</sup> During the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski (1764-1795) the crown economies were divided into governorships (Pol. gubernia), each of them administered by an appointed governor. These were further subdivided into clusters of estates (Pol. klucz, Lith. raktas) which, in turn, were made up of a number of lesser units (Pol. wójtostwo) containing, as a rule, one or more villages. Most of the income from the Lithuanian economies was intended for the royal treasury. Those state domains which were leased out to private landholders (Pol. starostwo) were much smaller than the huge economies; sometimes the leased domains consisted of only one or two manorial farms.<sup>3</sup>

In an administrative sense, private estates were less organized and structured; however, they also were normally divided into smaller units

<sup>1</sup> Wieczorek, Z dziejów, pp. 16-18, 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> Simas Sužiedėlis, ed., Encyclopedia Lituanica, II (Boston, 1972), 162.

<sup>3</sup> Stanisław Kościąkowski, Antoni Tyzenhauz: podskarbi nadworny litewski, I (London, 1970), 622-629.

(the wójtostwo). Rural administrative units in Lithuania were not standardized and differed widely in population and area.<sup>1</sup>

The administration of the large crown economies was entrusted to a royal deputy, the individual governors, and managers(Pol. ekonom); the latter were usually in charge of the estate clusters within a governorship. The heads of the lesser districts(Pol. wójt, Lith. vaitas) executed the managers' orders and took care that the peasants fulfilled their obligations. On private estates, the wójt or mayor was responsible to the owner of the estate. On the lower levels of rural administration there were peasant officials who punished recalcitrant villagers and maintained "order;" and at the very lowest grade of estate administration were various "servant" officials, for example, forest rangers who were themselves serfs and who received a reduction of their obligations in return for their service.<sup>2</sup> Like the administrative units, the duties and functions of Lithuania's rural officials were not uniform throughout the country.

Whether crown or private, the estate's arable land was divided into peasant holdings and the manorial farm. During the 18th century peasant land was of two kinds: (a) the permanent and hereditary holding and (b) temporary or so-called "received" land. The first kind was land assigned for the peasant's use on a more or less permanent, and often hereditary, basis; this holding formed the cornerstone of the peasant's economy. On the other hand, the land "received" from the

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<sup>1</sup> D[mitrii] L. Pokhilevich, "Korolevskie ekonomii Litvy i Belorussii v 70-80 godakh XVIII v.," in Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii Vostochnoi Evropy 1963 g., AN SSSR(Vilnius, 1964), 351-353.

<sup>2</sup> Wieczorek, Z dziejów, pp. 18-21, 27.

manor as a supplement to the basic holding was understood by both land-owner and peasant to be a temporary allotment. The use of the temporary holdings was widespread in Lithuania, but as time went on there was a tendency for the "temporary" allotments to become permanent either through settlement of new peasants on them, or simply through habit. In addition to the above two kinds of peasant holdings, there were also the so-called "empty lands" (for example, those of escaped peasants) which were held by the entire village. It is thought that these empty holdings were eventually divided up among the village's peasant households.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the profitable 18th-century estates had manorial farms; on the other hand, some estates, especially in Samogitia and southwestern Lithuania, exacted only money rents.<sup>2</sup> In fact, for a long time, the leasing of inns and mills as well as the peasants' money rents formed the greater part of an estate's income. The manorial farms of Lithuania became increasingly important at the end of the 18th century when grain prices rose sharply.<sup>3</sup>

For his part, the peasant greatly preferred money rents to corvée; he quickly perceived that money obligations allowed him much greater economic autonomy on the village holding. Corvée had been dominant in the 16th century but compulsory labor became impractical during the wars and natural disasters of the 17th and early 18th centuries during which many manorial farms suffered extensive destruction. This violent period also saw a decline of grain exports which further hurt the manorial farms; naturally, the decline of manorial agriculture

<sup>1</sup> Wieczorek, Z dziejów, pp. 33-38.

<sup>2</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos, p. 129.      <sup>3</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos, pp. 124-126.

tended to undermine corvée and favored money renting.<sup>1</sup> However, in the middle of the 18th century the issue of corvée and money rents came to the fore when compulsory labor again became profitable for many Lithuanian landowners. The resurgence of corvée caused unrest and dissatisfaction among the peasantry.

#### Peasant Unrest and the End of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Not all of the nobility in Lithuania favored the increasing prominence of corvée on the manorial farms; in fact, some of the more liberal nobility bucked this trend, most notably Paweł Brzostowski and Ignacy Karp, who not only abolished labor obligations on their estates but also emancipated their serfs without land.<sup>2</sup> On some other estates, for example, on the Kartena estate in Samogitia, the changeover to money rents continued unchecked during the whole of the 18th century.<sup>3</sup> Still, many large estates, and especially the huge Lithuanian crown economies, greatly increased the peasants' labor duties during the second half of the 18th century as a means of exploiting the manorial farms and increasing profitable agricultural exports. Many estates expanded their manorial farms at the expense of peasant holdings.<sup>4</sup>

Antoni Tyzenhauz, the energetic crown treasurer of Lithuania, in-

<sup>1</sup> D[mitrii] L. Pokhilevich, "Perevod gosudarstvennykh krest'ian Velikogo Kniazhestva Litovskogo s otrabotochnoi renty na denezhnuiu v XVII v.," in Istoricheskie zapiski, XXXVII(1951), 144-168.

<sup>2</sup> See Emanuel Rostworowski, "Reforma Pawłowska Pawla Ksawerego Brzostowskiego(1767-1795)," in Przegląd Historyczny, No. 1(1953), 101-152.

<sup>3</sup> M[ečislovas] Iuchas, "Derevnia i fol'vark Zhemaitii v XVIII v. (Po materialam imenija Karteny)," in Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii Vostochnoi Evropy 1963 g., 365-366.

<sup>4</sup> Pokhilevich, "Perevod ... s denezhnoi renty," 121-158.

spired a reform of the crown economies in the 1760s which aimed at organizing large and efficient state manorial farms employing serf labor. Tyzenhauz introduced the latest agricultural methods, organized compulsory labor efficiently and dramatically raised the incomes of the Lithuanian economies. This energetic reformer even started manufacturing enterprises employing corvée labor.<sup>1</sup> However, Tyzenhauz's attempts to "modernize" serfdom and his reliance on compulsory labor aroused great dissatisfaction among the peasantry which culminated in the great peasant revolt on the Šiauliai royal economy in 1769. It was no accident that the most dramatic resistance to Tyzenhauz's reforms came from the Šiauliai economy; many peasants here were money renters and had long been free of heavy labor obligations. The Šiauliai area harbored an exceptionally powerful class of wealthy villagers who employed more hired peasant labor than anywhere else in Lithuania.<sup>2</sup> The well-to-do peasantry had the most to lose in the Tyzenhauz system of heavy and exacting labor obligations. The Šiauliai revolt which lasted from July to October, 1769 was by far the most severe outbreak of peasant violence in Lithuania during the 18th century.<sup>3</sup> This rebellion, as well as the other lesser expressions of peasant dissatisfaction which accompanied the introduction of the Tyzenhauz system, was inspired by

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<sup>1</sup> For Tyzenhauz see Kościałkowski, Tyzenhauz, vols. 1 and 2. For a comparison of Tyzenhauz's reform with that of Sigismund Augustus see Pokhilevich, Krest'iane vo vtoroi polovine XVIII v., pp. 8, 17.

<sup>2</sup> R. Marčėnas, "Šiaulių ekonomijos valstiečių 1769 m. sukilimas(1. priežastys)," in LTSRMA Darbai, Ser. A, No. 2(1965), 97 and the same author's Šiaulių ekonomijos valstiečių sukilimas 1769 m.(Vilnius, 1969), pp. 34-35.

<sup>3</sup> See Marčėnas, Šiaulių; Witold Kula, Szkice o manufakturach w Polsce XVIII wieku, I(Warsaw, 1956), 309-341; Kościałkowski, Tyzenhauz, II, 57 ff.; also Witold Kula and Janina Leskiewiczowa, "Źródła do dziejów powstania chłopów szawelskich w 1769 r.," in Teki Archiwalne, No. 5 (1957), 228-333.

the peasants' hatred of the heavy corvée that resulted from the expansion and improvement of the manorial farms in Lithuania. As a result of peasant resistance and political intrigues against the Lithuanian crown treasurer, the government withdrew supervision of the royal economies from Tyzenhauz in 1780. Subsequently, the peasantry's labor obligations were reduced.<sup>1</sup>

During the Four Years' Diet or Sejm(1788-1792) and, especially after the proclamation of the May 3rd Constitution in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, some corvée peasants of the crown transferred to a money renting obligations system. In their appeals to the King, particularly during 1791-1792, the crown peasants sought assurances that the hated system of heavy corvée would not be reimposed.<sup>2</sup> The turbulent events in Poland and Lithuania during the late 18th century served to radicalize peasants and raised sharply the issue of corvée and money rents. In part, it may be said that this period mobilized peasant forces for the struggle against "feudal regimentation."<sup>3</sup>

The crisis in Lithuanian agrarian relations of the late 18th century occurred against the background of Prussian, Russian and Austrian negotiations for the partition of Poland-Lithuania; furthermore, the violent political and military events of the 1790s further complicated the situation. This turbulent period was important for the history of the Lithuanian peasantry in several ways. First of all, the May 3rd Consti-

<sup>1</sup> See Kula, Szkice, I, 409-448 on the collapse of the Tyzenhauz system; cf. D[mitrii] L. Pokhilevich, "Agrarnaia reforma A. Tizengauza i shavel-skoe vosstanie," in Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii Vostochnoi Evropy 1958 g., AN SSSR(Tallin, 1959), 278-301. In this study, the author sees the Tyzenhauz period as the "apogee" of the manorial corvée system in Lithuania. See also Stanisław Kościąkowski, Ze studjów nad dziejami ekonomii królewskich na Litwie(Wilno, 1914), pp. 54 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Kula, Szkice, I, 369-373.      <sup>3</sup> Pokhilevich, "Korolevskie ekonomii," 361.

tution of 1791 extended, at least in theory, the protection of the law to the peasants of Poland and Lithuania. Secondly, during the Kościuszko revolt of 1794 the insurgents appealed to the peasants in the Połaniec Manifesto, a document which promised villagers personal freedom and the reduction or abolition of labor obligations if they fought against the Russian invaders. The conservative nobility did much to sabotage the Połaniec Manifesto as well as the liberal provisions of the May 3rd Constitution; consequently, the peasants' reaction to these two events was mixed.<sup>1</sup> However, the fact that the peasant question was raised publicly at the national level was an important precedent.

Another significant development from the Lithuanian national point of view occurred when the Kościuszko insurgents issued several anti-Russian Lithuanian language proclamations to the peasantry. As a rule, these documents were poorly written and their success in arousing the populace very doubtful; however, they provided the modest beginnings for Lithuanian political journalism and were a model for the more numerous and effective Lithuanian political propaganda of the 19th century.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in more ways than one, the late 18th century in Lithuania was a period of ferment and precedent concerning the peasant question.

The last partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795 divided Lithuania into Prussian and Russian zones. The lands to the west and south of the Niemen(Lith. Nemunas) River went to Prussia, while the rest of the country was incorporated into Russia. The history of

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<sup>1</sup> Stefan Kieniewicz, The Emancipation of the Polish Peasantry(Chicago, 1969), pp. 21-29.

<sup>2</sup> Leonas Gineitis, Kristijonas Donelaitis ir jo epocha(Vilnius, 1964), pp. 30-32.

the Lithuanian peasantry in the southwestern areas ruled by the Prussians was distinct from that of the peasants in Russian Lithuania in many ways. In fact, the different historical development of the two regions had important consequences for the history of the Lithuanian people in the 19th and 20th centuries.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On the agrarian policies of the Russian government in Lithuania see Leonid Źytkowicz, Rzady Repnina na Litwie w latach 1794-1797 (Wilno, 1938).

## CHAPTER II

### TRANS-NIEMEN LITHUANIA: A GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL OUTLINE TO 1807

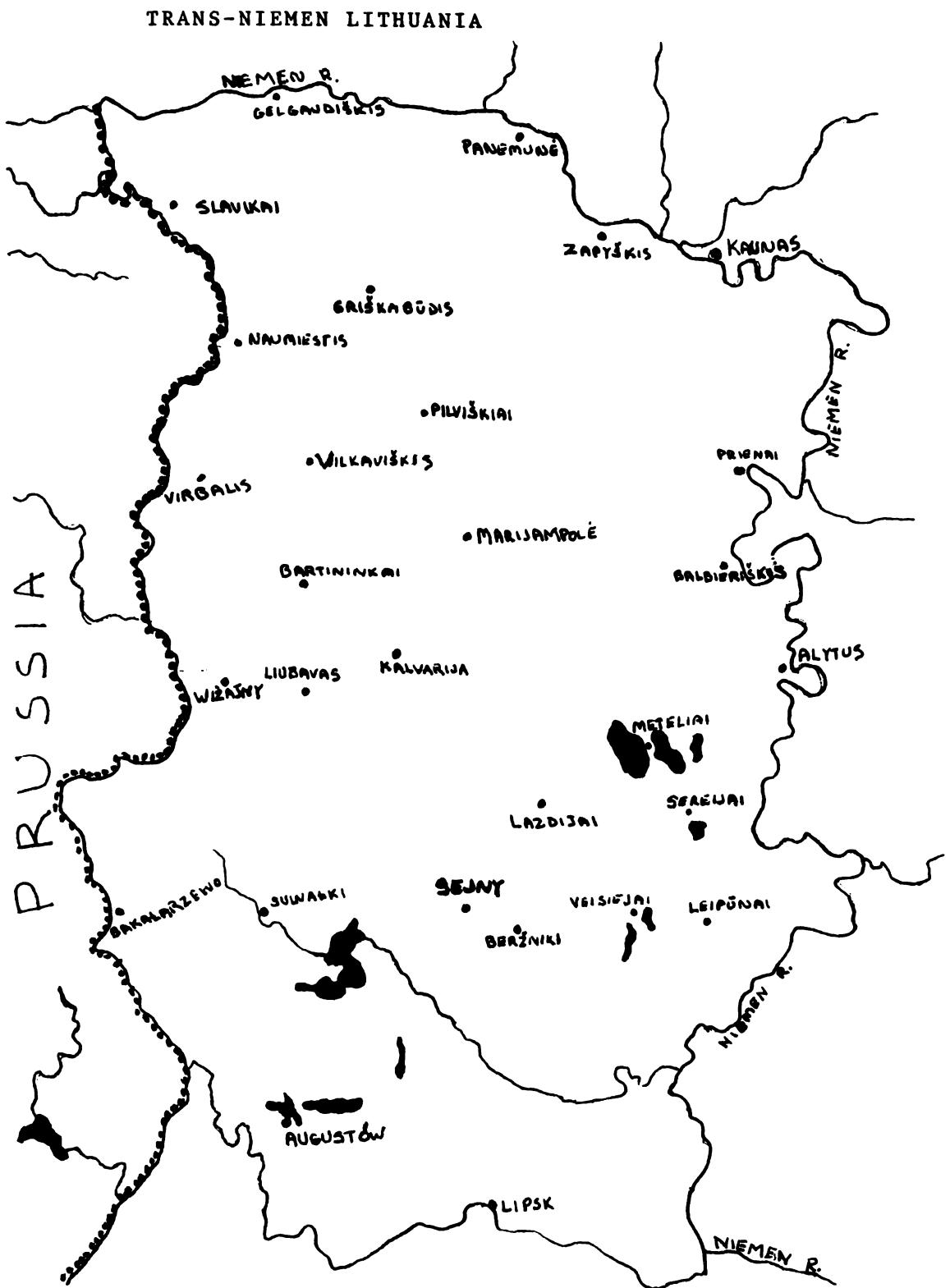
#### Before 1795.

The very Lithuanian name Užnemunė (land beyond the Niemen) makes a geographical definition of Trans-Niemen Lithuania rather simple. In the east its boundary is formed by the Niemen River which flows almost directly north from the town of Grodno until, just east of the large Lithuanian city of Kaunas, it veers westward on its way to the Baltic Sea. This westward flow of the river forms Trans-Niemen Lithuania's northern border. In the west, the boundary of the Užnemunė region is a political-religious one of long standing: the centuries-old Lithuanian-Prussian border stretching from the Niemen River to a point just west of Bakałarzewo. In the 18th and 19th centuries Protestant Lithuanians and Germans lived to the west of this line, the Catholics to the east.

More difficult to determine, especially for the 19th century, is the southern boundary of Trans-Niemen Lithuania, the ethnic border which separated the Polish and Lithuanian populations. Most observers considered the Czarna Hańcza River, flowing through the major town of Suwałki, as the ethnic dividing line between the Poles and Lithuanians.<sup>1</sup> To the east of Suwałki, the southern boundary of the 19th century Sejny district provides an approximate Polish-Lithuanian ethnic border. Józef Tyrawski, who visited Sejny district in 1857, wrote that "you [begin] hearing Lithuanian speech only around Suwałki;" he observed that the countryside

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<sup>1</sup> Stanisław Chańkowski, "Powstanie styczniowe w Augustowskim" (Doctoral dissertation, University of Warsaw, 1966), pp. 37-39.



became more "Lithuanian" the further one traveled north. Tyrawski spoke of an ethnic dividing line "separating two great tribes ... from Baka-  
łarzewo eastward to the Niemen."<sup>1</sup> Of course, as far as the Lithuanian-Polish ethnic boundary was concerned, there was a spillover of nationalities in both directions. For practical purposes, the Trans-Niemen Lithuania of this study consists of these three predominantly Lithuanian districts of Augustów province in their 19th century boundaries: from north to south, Marijampolė(Pol. Mariampol), Kalvarija(Pol. Kalwaria) and Sejny(Lith. Seinai).<sup>2</sup>

The Augustów province of the Kingdom of Poland was the most densely forested area of the country. The northern forests of the Užnemunė<sup>3</sup> region formed a natural extension of the vast old Lithuanian forests. Augustów province was also noted for its many lakes and swamps. The undeveloped character of the region contributed to the relative sparsity of the population in many areas of the province and its general economic backwardness. In addition, communications in Augustów province during the 19th century were always poor.

Southwestern Lithuania was a region where settlement and agricultural development occurred relatively late. Until the 13th century, Užnemunė was inhabited by the Sudovians, known also as the Yotvingians(Lith. jotvingiai, Pol. jaćwingowie), a Baltic tribe who spoke a dialect close to Old Prussian. By the 14th century, the Sudovians were either exterminated

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<sup>1</sup> See Tyrawski's article in Gazeta Warszawska, March 12, 1857; cf. also K[azys] Pakštas, "Earliest Statistics of Nationalities and Religions in the Territories of Old Lithuania," in Commentationes Balticae, IV-V (1958), 40.

<sup>2</sup> As stated in the preface, I follow present-day spelling; thus, the Lithuanian forms Marijampolė and Kalvarija. However, I use the Polish Sejny since the town is today in Poland.

<sup>3</sup> Chankowski, "Powstanie," pp. 35-36.

by the Teutonic Order or "Lithuanianized" by their northern neighbors. The region became a no man's land; in fact, medieval German chronicles referred to the Trans-Niemen region as a wilderness. This wilderness served as both a buffer and invasion route for two bitter enemies: the Teutonic Knights and the Lithuanians. It remained without any significant agricultural settlement until the early 16th century.

Since all the forests of medieval Lithuania were the property of the Grand Duke, he was in a position to stimulate colonization in the wild Užnemunė region by granting these heavily wooded lands to his subjects in return for military service. Lithuanian peasants began penetrating the Trans-Niemen region from the north and east, while Slavic elements colonized the southern and western parts, particularly the Augustów lake region.<sup>1</sup> Despite some initial Lithuanian and Russian settlement, this latter area was predominantly Polish already in the 16th century.<sup>2</sup> Although this was a time of some agricultural settlement, a forest economy still dominated Trans-Niemen Lithuania until at least the 17th century. Here the Grand Duke traditionally gave gifts of lakes and meadows rather than arable land to his nobles.<sup>3</sup> During this basically "pre-agricultural" period, the main products of Trans-Niemen Lithuania's small, undeveloped

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<sup>1</sup> Jerzy Wiśniewski, "Dzieje osadnictwa w powiecie sejneńskim od XVI do XIX wieku," in Materiały do dziejów ziemi sejneńskiej, ed. Jerzy Antoniewicz (Białystok, 1963), 29-33.

<sup>2</sup> Jerzy Wiśniewski, "Dzieje osadnictwa w powiecie augustowskim od XV do końca XVIII wieku," in Studia i materiały do dziejów Pojezierza Augustowskiego, ed. Jerzy Antoniewicz (Białystok, 1967), 80-82.

<sup>3</sup> Jerzy Wiśniewski, "Dzieje osadnictwa w powiecie suwalskim od XV wieku do połowy XVII w.," in Studia i materiały do dziejów Suwalszczyzny, ed. Jerzy Antoniewicz (Białystok, 1965), 74 ff.

estates were honey, fish and hay.<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of towns and new crown estates, as well as the introduction of villages on the example of Sigismund Augustus' reform, began to change the "forest" character of the Trans-Niemen region during the second half of the 16th and early 17th centuries. The state lands consisted of the economies which were the direct property of the royal treasury and the leased estates; the latter were lands handed over to the nobility by the crown which exacted a commission for their use. Two of the largest estates by the 17th century were the ones in Zapyškis and Gelgaudiškis. The huge Alytus economy was an entire region unto itself; in 1649, it consisted of the town of Alytus and the manor on the east bank of the Niemen River, while the enormous manorial farms and numerous villages lay on the west bank.<sup>2</sup> The economic development of the Užnemunė region was interrupted by the devastating wars of the late 17th and early 18th centuries.<sup>3</sup> However, the greatest demographic disaster for western Lithuania was the great plague of 1709-1711. In East Prussia the plague killed over half of the predominantly Lithuanian population and left over a million hectares of empty land for German colonization-- a disaster which permanently altered the ethnic balance in East Prussia.<sup>4</sup> The plague in the Trans-Niemen region was only slightly less severe; in

<sup>1</sup> Wiśniewski, "Dzieje ... sejneńskim," 50.

<sup>2</sup> Jonas Totoraitis, Sūduvos-Suvalkijos istorija(Kaunas, 1938), pp. 295-297.

<sup>3</sup> Jerzy Ochmański, "Zaludnienie Litwy w roku 1790," in Zeszyty naukowe uniwersyteta im. A. Mickiewicza: Historia, No. 7(1967), 271-272. Lithuania reached the population level of the middle 17th century only towards the end of the 18th century.

<sup>4</sup> R. Žostautaitė, "Prūsijos lietuvių valstiečių padėtis XVIII a. antrojoje pusėje," in LTSRMA Darbai, Ser. A, No. 1(1962), 91-112.

fact, on some estates it is thought that the death rate approached a peak of 80 to 95%.<sup>1</sup>

Like the rest of Lithuania, the Užnemunė region began to revive economically only during the second half of the 18th century. Tyzenhauz took the lead in colonizing some of the lands here and agricultural production steadily increased. As elsewhere, however, Tyzenhauz's reforms and the establishment of new estates greatly raised the burdens of the peasantry.<sup>2</sup> During the 1790s, the Trans-Niemen region underwent the same political and social turmoil that was prevalent in the whole of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The final partition of Poland and Lithuania in 1795 placed all of Užnemunė under Prussian rule.

#### Prussian Rule(1795-1806).

That part of Lithuania which formally came under Prussian rule during the partition of 1795 was incorporated into the newly created province of "New East Prussia" (Neuostpreussen).<sup>3</sup> The Prussians ruled Trans-Niemen Lithuania for too short a time to make a great impact on agrarian relations in this region; however, they made some changes and introduced certain significant precedents.

First of all, the Prussian government confiscated all the formerly Lithuanian crown domains, including both the royal economies and the leased estates. Later, as the Prussians found that some of the Lithuanian

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<sup>1</sup> Wiśniewski, "Dzieje ... sejneńskim," 131-132.

<sup>2</sup> Totoraitis, Sūduvos-Suvalkijos, 343-352.

<sup>3</sup> On Prussian administrative organization in general see Jan Wąsicki, "Ustrój pruski na ziemiach polskich w latach 1772-1815," in Wezłowe problemy dziejów Prus XVII-XX wieku, ed. Gerard Labuda(Poznań, 1971), 77.

landed nobility had acquired formerly crown lands in an irregular manner, they confiscated these estates as well. Thus, the Prussians increased the state domain which, even before 1795, already included the largest share of agricultural land in the Užnemunė region. In 1797 the government began an inventory of all state domains in New East Prussia. Most of these lands were subsequently leased to the original leaseholders; in some cases, the Prussians rented the estates to newcomers, especially if the government could not come to satisfactory terms with the former leaseholders.<sup>1</sup> The Prussians also confiscated most Church lands. The Catholic clergy were compensated for their property by a kind of regular salary or payment(Pol. kompetencja). By the summer of 1797 the Prussians had completed the takeover of the state domains and large Church estates in all of New East Prussia.<sup>2</sup> In effect, the Prussians not only maintained the tradition of state(or royal) land ownership in southwestern Lithuania, but actually enhanced it.

The Prussians' tighter and more scrupulous regulation of state lands had the effect of increasing the landed nobility's dependence on the central government. Insofar as the Prussians maintained the original leaseholders on formerly Lithuanian crown lands, they preserved and, perhaps, even strengthened the landed nobility's social position and power over the peasantry;<sup>3</sup> at the same time, however, the Prussian government mistrusted the Polish landed nobility as an element opposed to absolutism and still nurturing hopes of Polish-Lithuanian independence. In response, the Prussians settled German nobles on some of the state lands;

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<sup>1</sup> Augustinas Janulaitis, Užnemunė po Prūsais(Kaunas, 1928), pp. 235-236.

<sup>2</sup> Janulaitis, Užnemunė, pp. 319 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Jan Wąsicki, Ziemie polskie pod zaborem pruskim: Prusy Nowowschodnie (Neuostpreussen)(1795-1806)(Poznań, 1963), pp. 50-51.

other German nobles bought private estates where they could. In this way, a relatively small, but influential, German landowning class came into Trans-Niemen Lithuania.<sup>1</sup> The petty gentry(or szlachta) of the southern, predominantly Polish areas of New East Prussia presented the Prussians with special problems; in these areas, the new government tried to prevent the continued comminution of gentry lands.<sup>2</sup>

The Prussian government also made serious attempts to economically revive the stagnating towns of New East Prussia. Through subsidized construction and tax reforms, the government did manage to improve the situation of some Lithuanian towns in the Trans-Niemen region.<sup>3</sup> On the whole, however, urban life here remained only a small part of the total economic picture.

Even while maintaining the predominant social position of the land-owning nobility, the Prussians made some attempts to reform the system of peasant obligations and improve agriculture. One of the very first acts of the Prussians regarding the peasantry was King Frederick William II's promise to lighten the peasants' burdensome obligations during the Kościuszko uprising. Although it was intended primarily for the peasants of southern Prussia, this royal announcement evoked a considerable response among the Lithuanian peasantry as well. When, after Kościuszko's defeat, the Prussians told the peasants that they were to perform their obligations as of old, the peasants stubbornly resisted. In fact, hopes that the Prussian government would abolish corvée inspired many Lithuanian peasants to discontinue compulsory labor. One case of particularly

<sup>1</sup> Janulaitis, Užnemunė, pp. 263-265.

<sup>2</sup> Wąsicki, Ziemie polskie, pp. 105 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Janulaitis, Užnemunė, pp. 204 ff; Wąsicki, Ziemie polskie, pp. 148 ff.

stubborn resistance occurred in the Virbalis(Pol. Wierzbów) area in 1796; here the peasants insisted that they "were now gentlemen and could do what they pleased." Apparently, the peasants of Virbalis firmly believed that the Prussian takeover of southwestern Lithuania meant their emancipation from corvée labor.<sup>1</sup>

The Prussians took a more serious look at the peasant problem in the 1790s when the King began considering the abolition of corvée throughout Prussia. During this time the ruling chamber of Białystok department, the northern division of New East Prussia which included Trans-Niemen Lithuania, suggested the abolition of compulsory labor. Some Prussian officials, like A. C. Holsche, were impressed with the quality of the soil in the Užnemunė region and criticized corvée labor as inefficient; Holsche himself suggested the use of hired labor on manorial farms.<sup>2</sup> However, the Prussians failed to solve the problem of corvée; basically, opposition by the region's landowners and procrastination on the compulsory labor issue in Berlin delayed action on agrarian reform. Thus the social and economic structure of southwestern Lithuania changed little under Prussian rule.

The Prussians did, however, establish certain legal precedents in dealing with the peasantry; for example, the government sought to make the peasants' holdings on private estates more secure.<sup>3</sup> In 1799 the Prussians forbade the practice of attaching the better lands of peasant

<sup>1</sup> Wąsicki, Ziemie polskie, pp. 59-63.

<sup>2</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos irimas, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Janulaitis, Užnemunė, pp. 229-234.

holdings to the manorial farms in exchange for lands of poorer quality; the government had noticed that, in many cases, peasant holdings were already insufficient to sustain village families. In another attempt at bettering the lot of the peasant, the Prussians allowed villagers on private estates to appeal alleged abuses by the landowners in state courts, thus setting a precedent of government interference in landowner-peasant relations.<sup>1</sup>

The Prussian government showed somewhat more energy in dealing with reform on the state(formerly crown) lands of southwestern Lithuania; in fact, it reorganized some of the old Lithuanian economies and began the important process of changing the royal peasants' obligations from compulsory labor duties to money rents.<sup>2</sup> The Prussians planned for the state manorial farms to eventually rely on hired, rather than compulsory, labor; actually, the government hoped that the leaseholders on the state domains would bear the costs of such a changeover in peasant obligations, such as the purchase of farm equipment and the housing for agricultural laborers. As in the case of the private peasants, reform on state(or crown) lands came very slowly; in fact, despite much talk and correspondence between officials in New East Prussia and Berlin, the state peasants' situation did not change dramatically under the Prussians.<sup>3</sup>

The Prussians did introduce one new element into southwestern Lithuania that left a permanent trace: German colonization. Since 1795, a steady flow of German officials, townspeople and landowners poured into

<sup>1</sup> Wąsicki, Ziemie polskie, pp. 121 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Wiśniewski, "Dzieje ... sejneńskim," pp. 180-183.

<sup>3</sup> Wąsicki, Ziemie polskie, pp. 138 ff.

New East Prussia.<sup>1</sup> German peasant colonists also arrived at this time. One prominent source of German colonists was the Rhineland where war had displaced large numbers of people. The Prussians encouraged and even subsidized colonization of their new eastern territories; however, as far as New East Prussia was concerned, the response was less than expected since the majority of Germans tended to settle in South Prussia. Over 3,500 German peasant colonists came to the province of New East Prussia between 1795 and 1806, but it is not clear what percentage settled in the predominantly Lithuanian districts.<sup>2</sup> After the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw and the cession of the Białystok region to Russia, many German colonists returned home or migrated to Prussia proper; however, some remained and German immigration into southwestern Lithuania continued during the 19th century. On the whole, the Germans formed a small, but prosperous minority. In addition to the Germans, a small number of peasants from Russia also settled in New East Prussia before 1806.<sup>3</sup>

On the whole, the period of Prussian rule in southwestern Lithuania was a transitional one; clearly, Prussian policy was moving in the direction of personal emancipation of the serfs, albeit slowly and reluctantly. Economically, the Prussian period was one of some improvement in Trans-Niemen Lithuania. In part, the slight revival of trade and commerce was due to the Prussians' limited reorganization of agriculture and their subsidy of some towns. In agriculture, the use of compulsory labor predominated on the large manorial farms, despite the attempts of the Prussian government to at least regulate the labor duties

<sup>1</sup> I[uzas] Zhiugzhda, "Istoricheskoe znachenie prisoedinenia Litvy k Rossii," in Istoricheskie zapiski, XLVI(1954), 210.

<sup>2</sup> Wąsicki, Ziemie polskie, p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> Janulaitis, Užnemunė, pp. 144 ff.; Wąsicki, Ziemie polskie, pp. 246 ff.

of the peasantry.<sup>1</sup> In terms of agrarian history, the main contributions of the Prussians may well have been their precedent of government interference in landowner-peasant relations and the example of the agrarian reforms that were being advanced in Prussia proper.

Some post-war Soviet historiography has portrayed the period of Prussian rule in southwestern Lithuania as a time of unbridled peasant exploitation, economic decline and Germanization. This kind of extreme view has been largely motivated by a desire to show the "progressive" and economically beneficial nature of Russian rule in Lithuania.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, many aspects of Prussian rule were quite harsh. The behavior of Prussian officials, especially at the lower echelons of bureaucracy, was often reprehensible, a fact admitted even by German sources and unmitigated by the genuine concern some officials(for example, New East Prussia's minister Friedrich v. Schrötter) had for the welfare of their subjects.<sup>3</sup> However, there is also evidence that at least some Lithuanian peasants remembered Prussian rule as a period of agricultural progress and relative prosperity. To these villagers, the Prussian King represented a benefactor who had introduced money rents in place of corvée obligations.<sup>4</sup> Thus it is difficult and, perhaps, counterproductive to analyze Trans-Niemen Lithuania's Prussian experience as either "beneficial" or "detrimental."

In any case, Napoleon's defeat of Prussia in 1806 ended Prussian domination of the Užnemunė region. Napoleon's compromise with Alexander I

<sup>1</sup> Wąsicki, Ziemie polskie, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Zhiugzhda, "Istoricheskoe," 210-211.

<sup>3</sup> Janulaitis, Užnemunė, pp. 61-62, 65-67.

<sup>4</sup> See Bonawentura Butkiewicz, "Opis kościołów i parafij w mieście Władysławów i we wsi Gryskaabuda, położonych w gubernii Augustowskiej," in Pamiętnik Religijno-Moralny, XVI(1849), 299-300.

at Tilsit in 1807 resulted in the formation of the Duchy of Warsaw, a vassal state of the French Empire that included southwestern Lithuania. Serfdom was legally abolished by the Constitution of the Duchy the same year.

### CHAPTER III

#### AUGUSTÓW PROVINCE AND TRANS-NIEMEN LITHUANIA: ADMINISTRATION AND DEMOGRAPHY, 1795-1864

##### The Administrative Background.

Before 1794, all of Trans-Niemen Lithuania, as well as the neighboring Slavic areas to the east, were part of the province of Trakai (Pol. Troki) within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. When the Prussians took over eastern Poland and southwestern Lithuania in 1795, they organized the province of New East Prussia; Neuostpreussen, as it was called, was divided into two "departments:" Płock and Białystok. The Lithuanian Užnemunė region was located within the three northern districts of the Białystok department: Marijampolė, Kalvarija and Wigry. The southern areas of Wigry district also included Augustów and some other ethnically Polish and Belorussian regions.

The creation of the Duchy of Warsaw in 1807 changed the administrative picture somewhat. A large southeastern corner of the former Prussian Białystok department was ceded to Russia(including the city of Białystok). The remainder of this department was now renamed the Łomża department; however, the boundaries of the three predominantly Lithuanian districts were left basically intact, except that some territory was added to the Wigry district in the southeast.<sup>1</sup> In 1808 an area around the town of Suwałki was detached from this Wigry district and the district itself was named after the town of Sejny which became its seat. The landed nobility of the so-called "Lithuanian districts" in the north made repeated,

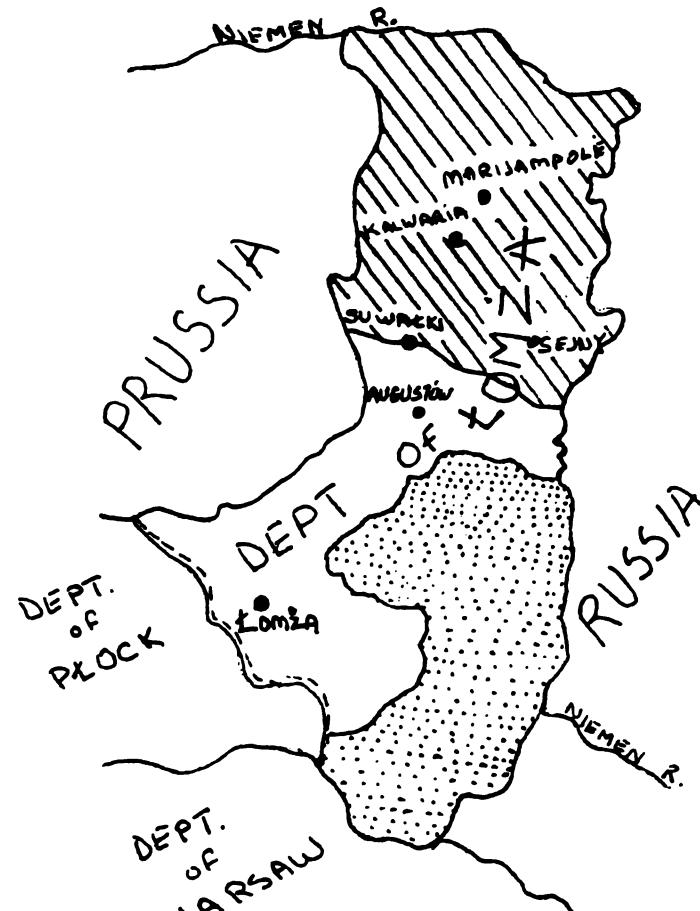
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<sup>1</sup> Renata Żurkowa, "Z dziejów organizacji Departamentu Białostockiego w 1807 r.," in Rocznik Białostocki, II(1961), 314-316.



THE BIAŁYSTOK DEPARTMENT OF  
NEUOSTPREUSSEN

Trans-Niemen  
Lithuania



THE ŁOMŻA DEPARTMENT  
OF THE DUCHY OF WARSAW

Ceded to  
Russia 1807



but unsuccessful, attempts to have the capital of the Łomża department transferred to the more centrally located town of Suwałki. The southern town of Łomża, they argued, was too distant for effective administration of the Lithuanian region. In any case, the Franco-Prussian war of 1812 upset all plans for organizing an efficient administration for the Duchy of Warsaw.

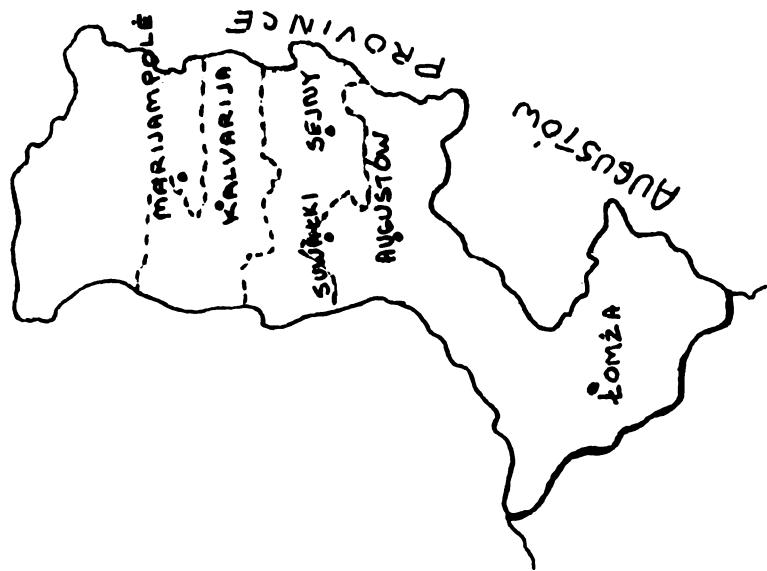
The establishment of an autonomous Kingdom of Poland by the Congress of Vienna in 1815 meant more changes in administrative nomenclature and organization. The original boundaries of the Łomża department were retained, but the area was now renamed "Augustów province."<sup>1</sup> The first site for the capital of the province, the town of Augustów, was found to be unsuitable and the provincial seat was transferred to Suwałki in 1817; however, the province continued to be known as "Augustów province." The importance of Suwałki was enhanced during the 1820s when the town became a link in the Warsaw-Kaunas-St. Petersburg road.<sup>2</sup>

The three predominantly Lithuanian districts of Augustów province were those of Marijampolė, Kalvarija and Sejny; these were also the names of the three most important towns in the Užnemunė region. Sejny was also an ecclesiastical center; it was the seat of the Sejny-Augustów diocese,<sup>3</sup>

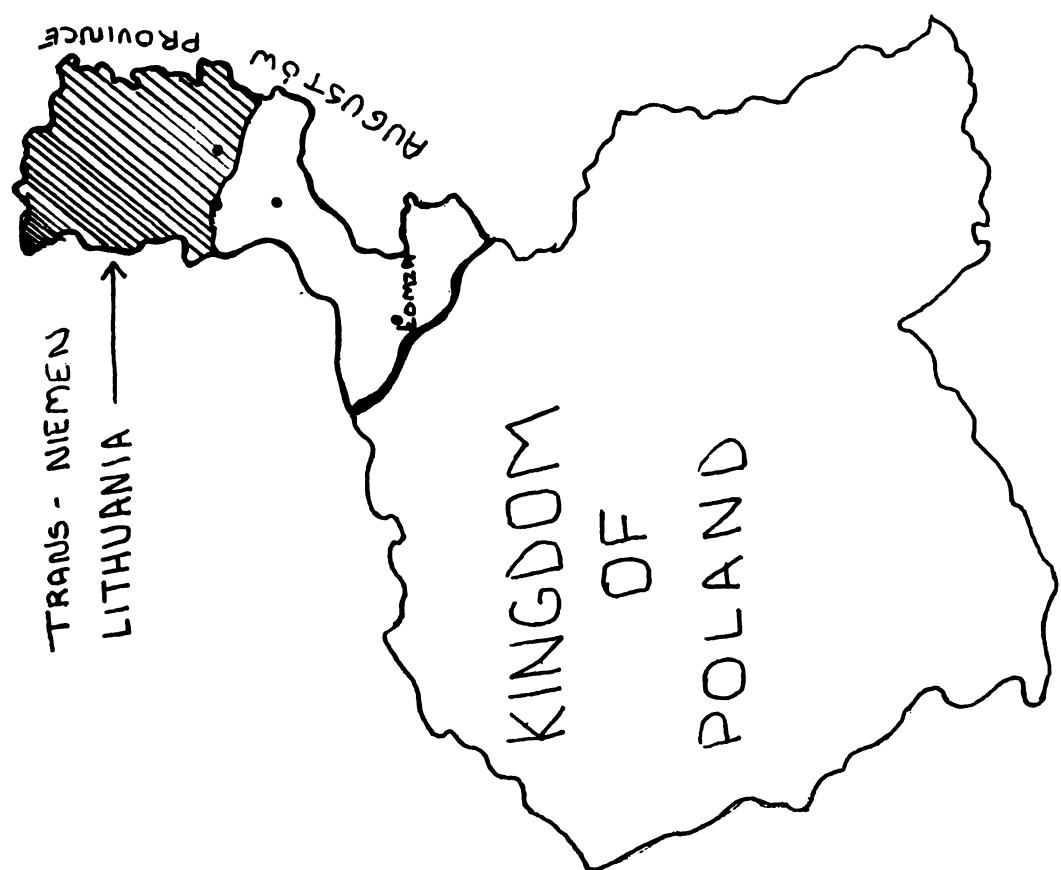
<sup>1</sup> In 1837 every Polish province(województwo) was renamed a "gubernia;" in this study, however, I refer only to "provinces" when speaking of the Kingdom of Poland before the administrative reform of 1867. Until then, I use the term "gubernia" to describe only the provincial divisions of the Russian Empire itself.

<sup>2</sup> On Suwałki see Wojciech Trzebiński, "Rozwój przestrzenny Suwałk od narodzin osady po okres awansu na miasto wojewódzkie," in Studia i materiały do dziejów Suwalszczyzny, 194-199.

<sup>3</sup> The diocese was initially referred to as the "Augustów or Sejny" diocese. Until the 1860s, the term "Augustów diocese" dominates official correspondence; by the turn of the century documents refer to the "Bishop of Sejny." I use the hyphenated form as most accurate. See Witold Jemielity, Diecezja augustowska czyli sejneńska w latach 1818-1872(Lublin, 1972), pp. 28-29.



THE ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS  
OF AUGUSTÓW PROVINCE, 1815-1867.



the boundaries of which corresponded almost exactly with those of Augustów province. The diocese was founded in 1818 and, essentially, it was an expanded version of the old Lithuanian diocese of Wigry. The Church divided the Sejny-Augustów diocese into two so-called "repartitions"(Pol. repartycja) or ecclesiastical districts. The northern ecclesiastical district was called the Lithuanian "repartition" and included most of the ethnically Lithuanian areas of the diocese; the other was the predominantly Polish "repartition" of Łomża.<sup>1</sup>

In 1830 some minor changes were made in the district boundaries of Augustów province. The only change affecting the Lithuanian part of the province was the detachment of the southeastern corner of Sejny district and its inclusion in the neighboring district of Augustów. No further changes were made until 1867 when a major administrative reform divided Augustów province into two separate gubernias: those of Łomża and Suwałki. The latter gubernia was sectioned into seven districts of which five (Kalvarija, Marijampolė, Sejny, Naumiestis[Władysławów], and Vilkaviškis) had a Lithuanian majority. According to the 1897 census of the Russian Empire, Lithuanians formed 52% of the population in Suwałki gubernia.

#### Demographic Characteristics of Augustów Province.

The province of Augustów encompassed an area of about 25,000 square kilometers. The three Lithuanian districts made up roughly 12,500 square kilometers or about half of the province. In terms of population, Marijampolė and Kalvarija districts were the most densely inhabited.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jemielity, Diecezja, pp. 12 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Chańkowski, "Powstanie," p. 39.

On the whole, the Užnemunė region was one of Lithuania's least populated areas in the 18th and 19th centuries. The census of 1790 showed that the province of Trakai (which included Trans-Niemen Lithuania) was the most sparsely inhabited region of the Grand Duchy, although Jerzy Ochmański's estimate of only twelve persons per square kilometer here is probably too low.<sup>1</sup> It is certain that 18th and 19th century statistics are not entirely reliable; for example, the 1790 census of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania did not include the privileged classes and landless peasants, besides containing some obvious errors.<sup>2</sup> However, it is known that population distribution within the Užnemunė region was uneven; while large areas were underpopulated because of the forested terrain, other places, especially in Marijampolė district, were relatively densely inhabited. Thus the statement that Trans-Niemen Lithuania was underpopulated needs some qualification. In general, southwestern Lithuania was less densely populated than Poland or West European countries, but it was considerably more populous than Russia or Scandinavia.<sup>3</sup>

Trans-Niemen Lithuania contained a relatively small, although historically important, part of the total ethnically Lithuanian population. If we estimate the total number of Lithuanians in 1860 at around 1,750,000 (including East Prussia), then the Lithuanians in the Kingdom of Poland accounted for less than 15% of the Lithuanian people. In terms of the total population of Augustów province, the inhabitants of Trans-Niemen

<sup>1</sup> Ochmański, "Zaludnienie Litwy," 275-276.

<sup>2</sup> R[imantas] Jasas and L. Truska, Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės gyventojų surašymas 1790 m. (Vilnius, 1972), pp. 10-15.

<sup>3</sup> Ochmański, "Zaludnienie Litwy," 276-277.

consistently formed slightly over half of the provinces's total number of inhabitants; this is seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1

APPROXIMATE RATIO OF POPULATIONS IN LITHUANIAN  
AND NON-LITHUANIAN DISTRICTS OF AUGUSTÓW PROVINCE  
BETWEEN 1808 and 1856(N=FREQUENCY COUNT, %=PER-  
CENTAGE OF TOTAL)<sup>1</sup>

Year	Lithuanian Districts		Non-Lithuanian Districts		Total
	N	%	N	%	
1808	220,500	54.0	188,000	46.0	408,500
1832	294,000	55.1	240,000	44.9	534,000
1843	338,400	54.3	284,400	45.7	622,800
1856	326,800	53.2	287,000	46.8	613,800

From a national or ethnic point of view, Augustów province was certainly the most varied region of Congress Poland; in fact, it was the only province in the Kingdom in which the Poles were a minority. Unfortunately, 19th century statistics on nationality were notoriously inaccurate and confusing, even more so than other demographic figures. Therefore, Table 2 below represents simply the estimated probable range in the frequency distribution and percentage of the different nationalities or ethnic groups in Augustów province about the year 1860. It is almost impossible to determine with any accuracy the ratio of the different Slavic nationalities since they were statistically often grouped

<sup>1</sup> The figures for Table 1, except for 1843, are taken from Ludwik Wolski, Kalendarz wydawany przez obserwatorium astronomiczne, II(Warsaw, 1858), 97-98, 102. The 1843 statistics are from A. G. A. D., KRSW-6942, Governor Tykiel to KRSW, January 11, 1846, k. 447. The actual figures are approximate and should be viewed as indicating trends only.

together. It is certain, however, that the Poles formed the majority of the Slavic population in Augustów province. Table 2 indicates that, if the different Slavic nationalities are considered separately, then the Lithuanians probably formed a slight plurality of the total population in Augustów province.

TABLE 2

APPROXIMATE BREAKDOWN OF THE POPULATION IN AUGUSTÓW PROVINCE BY NATIONALITY WITH PROBABLE UPPER AND LOWER FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE LIMITS(ABOUT 1860)<sup>1</sup>

	Approximate Population Range in Numbers	Approximate Percentage Range
Lithuanians .....	213,000 - 262,000	35.0 - 40.0
Slavs(Poles, Belorussians, others) .....	265,000 - 281,000	42.0 - 45.0
Jews .....	98,000 - 103,000	15.0 - 17.0
Germans .....	29,000 - 32,000	4.5 - 5.2
Other(Tatars, Gypsies, etc.) .....	? - 1,000	? - 1.0
Best Estimate for TOTAL Population Range .....	613,000 - 630,000	

The people who made up this unique national mosaic of Augustów province lived, as a rule, in their own more or less defined areas. The Polish population predominated in the southernmost districts of Augustów and Łomża. The Poles themselves consisted of several rather distinct

<sup>1</sup> Compiled from Wolski, Kalendarz, III(1859), 85; Jemielity, Diecezja, p. 5; Aleksander Połujański, Opisanie lasów Królestwa Polskiego i guberni zachodnich Cesarstwa Rosyjskiego pod względem historycznym, statystycznym i gospodarczym, I(Warsaw, 1854), 334; Chańkowski, "Powstanie," pp. 37-39. The disparity in sources and times accounts for the inconsistency in the data which, again, is intended only to show approximate trends rather than absolute quantities.

ethnographic types. The most unique and colorful were the more than 16,000 Kurpie who lived in the southwestern part of Augustów province. Nineteenth century contemporaries described these semi-agricultural forest people as fiercely independent and "half-wild" beings. The Kurpie were widely known for their rich folklore and traditions.<sup>1</sup> The Mazovians (Pol. Mazurzy) lived in the southeastern areas of the province, north of Łomża and Szczuczyn and as far north as the environs of Augustów. Their neighbors were the Podlasianie who inhabited the lands east of the town of Augustów, near Lipsk, and in the extreme southeastern corner of the province around Tykocin and Ciechanów. Here lived the petty gentry of Podlasianie stock, mainly concentrated in so-called "gentry villages."<sup>2</sup> Another group of Poles lived in the northern three Lithuanian districts; these were the Mazurian vendors or so-called Polish emigrants (Pol. budniccy mazury, wychodzcy polscy) who worked in the forests collecting iron ore, resin and coal. They lived principally near the large state forests, especially around Pilviškiai and Griškabūdis.<sup>3</sup>

The second largest Slavic national group in Augustów province were the Belorussians, often called Rusini or "Ruthenians" in 19th century Polish sources. The Belorussians lived to the east of the Podlasie region, mainly between the Niemen and Bobra rivers. The noted traveler Aleksander Połujański observed that the Belorussians were a bilingual people "speaking with the upper classes in fluent Polish, and among themselves in Belorussian with an admixture of Lithuanian expressions."<sup>4</sup>

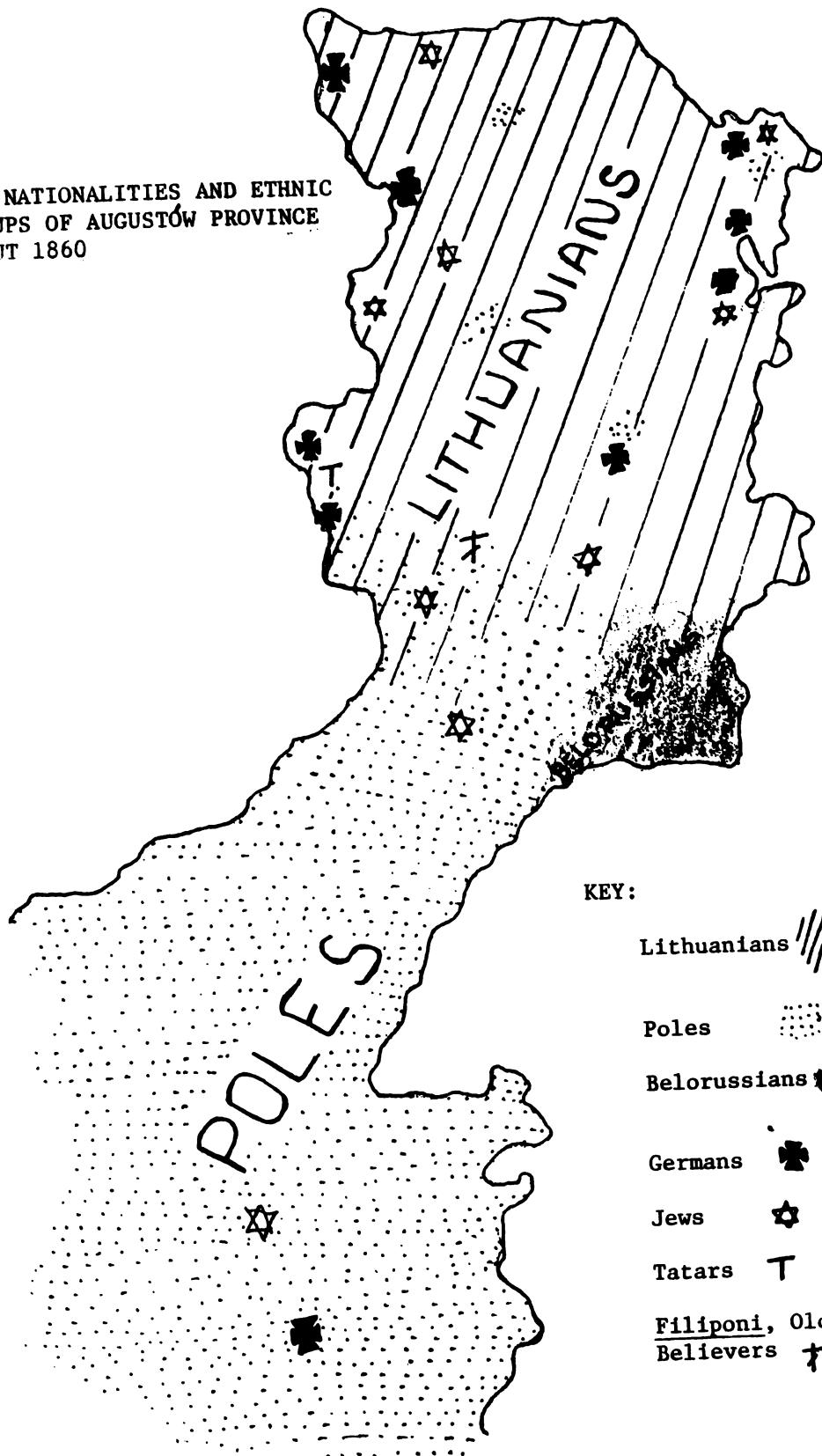
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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Tykiel, "Kilka uwag historyczno-statystycznych o gubernii augustowskiej," in Biblioteka Warszawska, IV(1857), 162-174; Aleksander Połujański, Wędrówki po guberni augustowskiej w celu naukowym odbyte (Warsaw, 1859), pp. 14-16.

<sup>2</sup> Połujański, Wędrówki, pp. 17-18, 31.      <sup>3</sup> Połujański, Wędrówki, pp. 8-9.

<sup>4</sup> Połujański, Wędrówki, p. 210.

THE NATIONALITIES AND ETHNIC GROUPS OF AUGUSTÓW PROVINCE  
ABOUT 1860



Another small, but unique, group of Slavic settlers in Augustów province were the so-called Filiponi, a sect of Russian Old Believers; there were at least several thousand of these people living in the province. Almost 2,000 Filiponi lived in the Lithuanian districts, mostly around Sejny.<sup>1</sup> The Russian element in Augustów province increased somewhat in the 19th century when Russian officials and land-owners came here in growing numbers after 1831. The Russian government tried to colonize Trans-Niemen Lithuania by settling Russians on state lands, but succeeded in raising only slightly the percentage of the Russian population.<sup>2</sup>

The Germans formed a small, but prosperous and influential minority throughout the province. Two areas particularly known for their German colonies were Śniadowo in the Polish Łomża district and the environs of Prienai in Marijampolė district. Many Germans worked as craftsmen in the towns, but they were most admired for their prosperous farms and progressive agricultural methods.<sup>3</sup>

Non-Christian peoples also inhabited Augustów province. The most important group of non-Christians were the Jews who formed the third largest ethnic group in the province. Aside from a small number of Jewish peasants, most Jews lived in the towns. They played a very important role in the peasant's economic life. In addition to the Jews, there were at least several hundred non-Christian Tatars, concentrated primarily in the western part of Kalvarijs and Marijampolė districts.

<sup>1</sup> Tykiel, "Kilka uwag," III(1857), 669.

<sup>2</sup> Wiśniewski, "Dzieje ... sejneńskim," 188-191.

<sup>3</sup> Ignacy Lachnicki, Biografia włościanina nad brzegami Niemna powyżej Łosośney mieszkającego (Warsaw, 1815), p. 115.

The Lithuanian Tatars were descendants of refugees who had fled the civil strife of the Golden Horde and Crimean khanates in the 15th and 16th centuries. Many of them still practiced the Islamic faith in the 19th century; in fact, a new mosque was built for the Moslems at Vinkšnupiai in 1821, reportedly with the help of the government.<sup>1</sup>

The 250,000 or so Lithuanians who inhabited the northern half of Augustów province during the first half of the 19th century were themselves divided linguistically and ethnographically. Trans-Niemen Lithuania's northern and western regions were dominated by speakers of the southwestern highlands Lithuanian dialect (Lith. aukštaičiai). This dialect is the closest idiom to the Lithuanian literary language of today. In the southeastern, poorer areas of the Užnemunė region, the peasants spoke an eastern Lithuanian dialect; these were the so-called dzūkai. In addition to peculiarities of speech, certain differences in dress, housing and customs distinguished these two Lithuanian groups; however, both easily understood one another and both identified themselves as "Lithuanians."

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 24: Bartniki, Acta Visitatio Generalis, June 15, 1822.

CHAPTER IV  
THE PEASANT AND THE LAW, 1807-1864

The Abolition of Serfdom and the Problem of Land in the Duchy of Warsaw, 1807-1815.

An understanding of the basic legal framework in which the peasantry of Trans-Niemen Lithuania lived is essential before studying its economic and social development. The single most important factor that distinguished the legal situation of the peasants in the Užnemunė region from that of the villagers in the rest of Lithuania was the formal abolition of serfdom in the Duchy of Warsaw in 1807.

The emancipation of 1807 was a subject of controversy among the landowning nobility. Many nobles objected to the abolition of serfdom and offered their own, more conservative constitutional projects as a basis for agrarian reform. Cautious Poles argued that the privileged position of the nobility and townspeople, Poland's deep Catholic traditions and the existing system of compulsory labor would make French law unworkable in their country. Napoleon impatiently brushed aside all objections to peasant emancipation and signed the Constitution of the Duchy of Warsaw, based on existing French law, on July 22, 1807.<sup>1</sup> The dispute over the introduction and adaptation of the Napoleonic legal system by Poland continued during the early 19th century,<sup>2</sup> but this did not overshadow

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<sup>1</sup> Hipolit Grynwaser, Pisma, Vol. 1: Kodeks Napoleona w Polsce. Demokracja szlachecka(1795-1831) (Wrocław, 1951), 16-19.

<sup>2</sup> Augustinas Janulaitis, Napoleono teisynas; jo atsiradimas ir veikimas Prancūzijoje, išsiplėtimas svetur o ypatingai Lietuvos Užnemunėje, Lietuvos Universiteto Teisių Fakulteto Darbai, vol. 5, No. 6(Kaunas, 1930), pp. 146 ff.

the most significant provision of the 1807 constitution: the granting of personal liberty to the serfs.

Article Four of the Duchy's Constitution abolished slavery, made all citizens equal in the eyes of the law and placed their "personal freedom" under the protection of the courts. Although some contemporaries argued that serfdom, and not slavery, had existed in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth,<sup>1</sup> the provisions of the 1807 constitution nevertheless clearly ended the peasants' personal dependence on the landowner.

The great Polish latifundists sought to adapt or limit the emancipation of the serfs in such a way as to least disturb traditional agrarian relations. The conservative nobility encountered some opposition in this from the liberals and the Polish "Jacobins." The latter demanded that the peasants receive property rights to the soil they tilled, but this view was easily defeated. On December 21, 1807, Frederick Augustus, the King of Saxony and Duke of Warsaw, proclaimed a royal decree which left all of the village lands, including the peasant holdings, in the hands of the landowning nobility. This decree was primarily the work of Feliks Łubienski, the minister of justice and exponent of the conservative view on agrarian problems. The December decree affirmed the peasant's freedom to transfer to a different holding if he wished and "go to live in the area of the Duchy of Warsaw, which he will choose by free will," provided the villager informed the landlord of his intentions. The latter, supposedly, had "no right to restrain him." Frederick's decree protected peasants from eviction from their holdings for one year; unfortunately, many landlords took this to mean the right to evict villagers

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<sup>1</sup> See Kieniewicz, Emancipation, p. 45.

after this time had elapsed. In addition, the 1807 decree empowered authorities to register "voluntary agreements" between landowners and their tenants. Most important from the peasant's point of view, the royal decree stipulated that, upon leaving his village, the peasant had to relinquish the livestock, tools and seed that "belonged" to the landowner.<sup>1</sup>

The above provisions gave the landowners extensive economic and supervisory powers over their village tenants. The right to evict peasants from their holdings made the provision for "voluntary agreements" on rents largely useless. Furthermore, a later decree of January 8, 1810 set up an internal passport system for the Duchy's rural population and forbade any move by a peasant without the permission of the local gmina mayor (see above) and notification of the landowner. Still another edict of March 12, 1812 ordered villagers to reimburse the landowners for the manor's traditional economic aid and relief that was given the village during hard times.<sup>2</sup> In practice then, the actions of the government contradicted the provision of the 1807 decree which gave the peasants the right of transfer.

#### Peasant Legislation in the Kingdom of Poland, 1815-1864.

Even before the Congress of Vienna established the autonomous Kingdom of Poland in 1815, Prince Adam Czartoryski, Tsar Alexander's friend and chief advisor on Poland, decided to analyze the Polish agrarian problem in depth. In 1814 Czartoryski sent out detailed questionnaires to

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<sup>1</sup> See the text of the decree in Kieniewicz, Emancipation, pp. 248-249.

<sup>2</sup> Stefan Inglot, ed., Historia chłopów polskich, II (Warsaw, 1972), 328.

local officials and prominent private citizens in Poland. The respondents among the landed nobility, on the whole, reacted unfavorably to the idea of extensive agrarian reform; in fact, the disorganized and often reactionary tone of the response to the 1814 questionnaires dealing with reform disappointed reformers among the Polish gentry. The majority of the landowners strongly advocated the continuation of corvée and opposed any encroachment on the nobility's property rights. Some of the more reactionary respondents even advocated a repeal of the 1807 emancipation.<sup>1</sup>

The response in the department of Łomża, which included the predominantly Lithuanian districts of the Kingdom, was somewhat mixed. The department's council came out against compulsory peasant labor and money rents; it proposed the gradual distribution of some land to the peasants in return for payments in grain. The governing council of the Lithuanian Marijampolė district came out against peasant evictions as well as excessive corvée obligations; however, this Marijampolė council also supported limitations on peasant transfers, while the subprefect of the district declared himself against any reform, arguing that the peasants' "freedom of contract" and "personal liberty" were sufficient for the improvement of their condition.<sup>2</sup>

The new 1815 Constitution of the Kingdom of Poland did, at least, reaffirm the peasants' personal liberty; it formally proclaimed the extension of equal protection to all citizens, regardless of estate or condition. Article 24 of the Constitution provided for the right of all citizens in

<sup>1</sup> Kieniewicz, Emancipation, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> See Zofia Kirkor-Kiedroniowa, Włościanie i ich sprawa w dobie organizacyjnej i konstytucyjnej Królestwa Polskiego (Cracow, 1912), pp. 206-254, esp. pp. 219-220; cf. Jučas, Baudžiavos, pp. 223-224.

the Kingdom to move their person and property according to rules "designated by law." For the peasants, this latter provision was only a formality; after all, the 1810 decree requiring the gmina mayor's permission for transfers remained in effect in Congress Poland. On the whole, the government of the Kingdom of Poland maintained a policy of non-interference in peasant-landowner relations, complacently assuming that the owners of private estates knew what was best for themselves and their tenants.<sup>1</sup>

The government took somewhat more interest in the condition of the peasantry on the state, or royal, estates; a group particularly numerous in the Lithuanian districts of the Kingdom. In 1815 and 1816 the provisional government of Viceroy Józef Zajęczek appointed commissions to develop reform projects for the crown domains.<sup>2</sup> In March, 1817, Zajęczek prohibited compulsory hired labor and the traditional gratuitous obligations on state domains; also, the government prescribed severe penalties for leaseholders on crown estates who exacted corvée exceeding established norms. In 1818 the Viceroy created yet a new agency, the Commission for State Domains and Forests, which proposed to do away with compulsory labor entirely and substitute permanent money rents in its place. However, the commission failed in this attempt at reform and was disbanded in December, 1821.<sup>3</sup>

In 1821 the government began the practice of auctioning state lands, together with their peasant holdings, in order to raise investment capital for industrialization. The transfer of state peasants to private juris-

<sup>1</sup> Kirkor-Kiedroniowa, Włościanie, pp. 255-272; Inglot, Historia, 325.

<sup>2</sup> In 19th century Poland, the old royal domains were variously titled "state," "national," "crown," and "royal" estates; all these terms are basically interchangeable. Normally, I prefer the term "state."

<sup>3</sup> Inglot, Historia, 326.

diction aroused liberal opposition in the Kingdom's Assembly or Sejm, primarily because of abuses which accompanied this practice. The anti-Russian insurrection of 1831 in Poland and Lithuania persuaded the government to take another look at the state peasants and the sale of royal estates. A committee was formed to examine ways of improving the lot of the state peasants, but three years after its inception, it concluded that the peasantry was unprepared for a wholesale changeover to money rents; thus the system of corvée on state lands remained. However, the sale of state domains was suspended.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1829 and 1834 none of the state agencies in the Kingdom showed any eagerness in taking up the case of the former state peasants who had been sold to private owners. When the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs inquired into what means could be taken to protect the interests of those peasants who suffered abuses at the hands of their new masters, Poland's attorney general suggested that the peasants hire private lawyers to represent them! The Kingdom's Treasury Commission argued that the government was not obliged to take up the case of the now seigniorial peasants and that, in any case, the villagers' interests conflicted with those of the treasury. Officially, the buyers of state domains were obliged to respect the traditional privileges of the peasants on formerly royal estates;<sup>2</sup> however, abuses in this regard continued while real reform was hindered by the buck-passing of state agencies responsible for the supervision of the peasantry.

Despite obstacles, the government slowly and cautiously proceeded with

<sup>1</sup> Hipolit Grynwasz, Pisma, vol. 2: Kwestia agrarna i ruch włościan w Królestwie Polskim w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku. Przywódcy i 'burzyciele' włościan (Wrocław, 1951), p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6942, Secretary of State Report, January 23, 1845, k. 173-176.

reform on the state lands. The Tsar's ukaz(decree) of October 16, 1835 exemplified the cautious approach to reforming the obligations system of the state peasantry. The 1835 decree affected only those lands which had been donated to higher Russian officials and generals, including estates confiscated from imprisoned or exiled participants of the 1831 insurrection. The Tsar's ukaz gave the peasants on these estates the right to choose the form of their obligations within a six year period from the date of the estate's donation; the obligations could be fulfilled in money, kind or labor,or even some combination of these. During the six year transition period compulsory labor on the manorial farm remained in force, but it was limited to a maximum of three days per week per household. The decree of 1835 cancelled forced hiring and gratuitous contributions. Significantly, the ukaz left as the peasant's property all livestock, agricultural implements and buildings found on his holding at the time of the particular estate's donation. Furthermore, the imperial decree of 1835 stipulated the separation of peasant holdings from the manorial farm and, where possible, the consolidation of these holdings. This latter provision was a precedent; the costs of executing it were to be borne by the manor. Finally, the Tsar's ukaz permitted the state peasants on donated lands to redeem themselves from all their obligations through large cash payments--a kind of forerunner of the redemption payments required by the emancipation of 1861 in Russia.<sup>1</sup> The decree of 1835 was modified and extended to other state domains in 1841 through instructions issued by the State Commission of Revenues and the Treasury.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Grynwaser, Kwestia agrarna, pp. 92-93.

<sup>2</sup> Inglot, Historia, 327.

The Tsar's decree of 1835 is important for the history of agrarian relations in the Kingdom of Poland. It was the first legal "corrective" to the December decree of 1807 recognizing, for the first time, the peasant's right to stay on his holding. The decree was also the first piece of legislation to put a definite limit on corvée obligations. In practice, however, the execution of the 1835 ukaz proceeded very slowly, so that by the 1840s many of the donated estates still maintained the old landlord-peasant relations basically unchanged.

Peasant legislation in the Kingdom of Poland took another step forward when the Tsar issued his decree of 1846. The famous ukaz of 1846 was intended to regulate landowner-peasant relations on the Kingdom's private estates; promulgated on June 7, 1846, it openly admitted that the situation of the private peasants was far worse than that of their counterparts on the state domains. This was so, the Tsar explained, because there were no laws protecting villagers on private estates. The lack of legal protection, the Tsar admitted, resulted in wholesale evictions of peasants and the exaction of excessive obligations from other villagers. The 1846 decree prohibited arbitrary evictions of peasants holding three or more morgi of land and phased out all compulsory hire and traditional gratuitous obligations. In fact, the ukaz cancelled all obligations that were not based on "legal title" as of January 1, 1846. Furthermore, the decree of 1846 stipulated that holdings vacated by the peasants of a particular estate had to be reoccupied by other villagers within two years; they could not be added to the manorial farm. Finally, this decree of Nicholas I required government ratification of rent agreements concluded between landowners and peasants.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Kieniewicz, Emancipation, pp. 256-258.

The legislation of 1846 broke decisively with the Russians' tradition of non-interference in the Kingdom's agrarian affairs, especially on the private estates. The decree itself was issued despite the opposition of Viceroy Ivan Pashkevich and influential conservative nobles. From 1846 on, neither the peasants' holdings nor the obligations could be arbitrarily altered without taking the law into account. There were, however, several major flaws in the ukaz of 1846. First of all, it did not protect the peasant smallholders with holdings of less than three morgi; in fact, their evictions continued unabated after 1846. Secondly, the Tsar left the execution of the decree in the hands of a notoriously reactionary Viceroy (Pashkevich) and the conservative Administrative Council of the Kingdom; naturally, this resulted in a less than enthusiastic execution of its provisions. The council weakened the spirit of the ukaz by interpreting it, whenever possible, in favor of the landowners.<sup>1</sup>

In November, 1858 the government issued a new "interpretation" of the 1846 decree which explained that it included rent-paying peasants as well as those who had various kinds of contracts with their landowners. The following month, the Kingdom's Administrative Council issued another interpretive decision regarding the basis on which peasants could become permanent money renters on private estates. However, since this last decision permitted the consolidation of peasant lands outside the manorial farm without the villagers' consent, it gave some landowners the opportunity to change the peasants' obligations and then "legally" evict those who did not agree to them. In effect, this last regulation had the effect of raising the money rents and labor obligations of some of the private

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<sup>1</sup> Inglot, Historia, II, 332,334.

peasantry. In general, however, the Administrative Council's interpretations of 1858 went further in the direction of the abolition of compulsory labor and the introduction of permanent money rents.<sup>1</sup>

The rise of the "peasant question" and agrarian unrest in Poland and Russia during the late 1850s and early sixties led to legislation that effectively emancipated the Kingdom's peasantry from corvée obligations. Marquis Alexander Wielopolski, the leading conservative in contemporary Polish politics, persuaded his peers that only an end to labor duties could pacify the restive countryside. The result of his lobbying was the decree of May 16, 1861 which permitted peasants who came under the 1846 ukaz to commute their labor duties to a temporary "ransom" payment as of October 1st of the same year. Over 95% of the Polish Kingdom's peasants chose the ransom over continuing corvée and this practically ended compulsory labor in the country.<sup>2</sup> The abolition of compulsory labor stilled, but did not end peasant unrest. Many villagers felt it was unjust, especially since the cash ransom was calculated according to the number of labor days formerly required and was unequally levied: a peasant in one part of the Kingdom might pay twelve silver kopecks for a day of corvée, while a villager in another region paid as little as seven and a half kopecks.<sup>3</sup>

In June, 1862 the government announced another imperial ukaz which was to regulate the peasants' transfer to permanent money rents, but without giving them title to their holdings. The insurrection of 1863

<sup>1</sup> Inglot, Historia, II, 334-335.

<sup>2</sup> Hipolit Grynwasz, Pisma, vol. 3: Sprawa własnościaka w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1861-1862 w świetle źródeł archiwalnych (Wrocław, 1951), pp. 48-63.

<sup>3</sup> Stefan Kieniewicz et al, eds., Wybór tekstów źródłowych z historii Polski w latach 1795-1864 (Warsaw, 1956), p. 714.

made the execution of this decree impossible.<sup>1</sup>

On January 22, 1863, the Provisional National Government of the Polish rebels issued a manifesto granting the peasants title to their lands and abolishing all feudal obligations;<sup>2</sup> however, the defeat of the January Insurrection in 1864 foiled the reformers' intentions. In any case, on March 2, 1864, Alexander II accomplished these same goals by issuing an ukaz which gave all private and state peasants full title to their holdings and cancelled all feudal obligations formerly due the nobility. Unlike the emancipation in Russia proper, the 1864 decree dispensed with redemption payments(though a stiff land tax was enacted) and even included peasant holdings illegally appropriated by the nobility since 1846. Two articles of the 1864 ukaz promised land to the landless villagers, but the result was the distribution of minimal holdings to some and none to others.<sup>3</sup> In regard to the economically important question of servitudes<sup>4</sup> the 1864 reform postponed a final decision, leaving regulations of the time temporarily in force.<sup>5</sup> Despite its flaws, the reform of Alexander II in the Kingdom of Poland basically ended the country's feudal agrarian relations.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Valerijonas Balčiūnas, Lietuvos kaimų žemės tvarkymas istorijos, ūkio ir statistikos šviesoje(Kaunas, 1938), pp. 53-57.

<sup>2</sup> Kieniewicz, Wybór tekstów, pp. 739-740.

<sup>3</sup> Czesława Ohryzko-Włodarska, "Sprawa bezrolnych w reformie uwłaszczeniowej w Królestwie Polskim," in Rocznik Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych, XXIII(1961), 113 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Servitudes(Pol. serwituty) were rights to the use of manorial forests, pastures and other non-arable land.

<sup>5</sup> A good English abridgement of this long decree is contained in Kieniewicz, Emancipation, Appendix I, pp. 259-262.

<sup>6</sup> See I. I. Kostiushko, "Krest'ianskaia reforma 1864 g. v Tsarstve Pol'skom," in Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii Vostochnoi Evropy 1958 g., 243-255 and the same author's later monograph, Krest'ianskaia reforma 1864 goda v Tsarstve Pol'skom(Moscow, 1962).

Such, in outline, were the most important pieces of peasant legislation between 1807 and 1864. Most of this law-making concerned the peasant's economic life. Other legislation of the period defined the legal and administrative structure of the Kingdom's villages and estates.

#### Rural Administration and the Peasants.

The basic administrative unit in the countryside was the rural commune or gmina, a kind of civil parish usually made up of several to a dozen villages, although it could also consist of only one. The rural gmina<sup>1</sup> was headed by the gmina mayor(Pol. wójt) who, in practice, was usually the local landowner himself or his agent. The powers of the gmina mayor increased dramatically during the 19th century. In 1810 the gmina mayors received authority to issue peasant transfer permits which, in effect, tied most peasants to their holdings. These officials were given even greater authority in 1816 and, finally, Viceroy Zajaczek's decree of May 30, 1818, formally proclaimed landowners as mayors of their gmina's. The wójt or gmina mayor was charged with keeping all official records, supervising collection of taxes, keeping order, administering justice in minor criminal matters, and providing peasant recruits for the army. He was also required to refuse admittance to his gmina for individuals without proper documents and to send back "unauthorized persons" to their places of origin. Clearly, the law of 1818 provided few practical limits to the landowners' administrative powers vis-a-vis the peasants.

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I have avoided the term "commune" in order not to confuse the Polish institution of the gmina with the Russian peasant commune(Russ. mir, obshchina) which was something quite different; hereafter, I refer consistently only to the "gmina."

There were a few administrative posts within the village that were normally reserved for the peasants. The gmina mayor usually appointed the village headman(Pol. sołtys). The headman was aided by minor peasant officials who often administered the landowner's justice in the village and called the peasants to work on the manorial farm. In addition, the estate's manorial farm also employed other, lesser peasant supervisors and clerks. The status of the manor's peasant officials improved somewhat during the 19th century but, on the whole, they remained at the bottom of the administrative totem pole.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Poland, the peasant was legally free and under the "protection of the law," but the system of rural administration was so weighted in the landowner's favor that the majority of the obligated villagers, especially on the private estates, remained in a state of actual, if not legal, serfdom. Corporal punishment, the most obviously noxious manifestation of serfdom, was widely used. On some estates in the Užnemunė region, the headman and lesser officials routinely "judged" the villagers and administered floggings; this was a normal phenomenon until 1864.<sup>2</sup> Additional compulsory labor and fines were other forms of punishment common in Russian Lithuania and Poland.<sup>3</sup> The lawlessness and violence exercised against the peasants has been vividly chronicled by contemporary observers.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Danuta Rzepniewska, "Wiejscy oficjalisci," in Społeczeństwo Królestwa Polskiego, ed. Witold Kula, I(Warsaw, 1965), 209-212.

<sup>2</sup> Jonas Basanavičius[R-čiu Jonas], "Gudelių parapijos monografija," in Lietuvių tauta, Vol. 2, No. 3(1914), 417.

<sup>3</sup> K[onstantinas] Jablonskis, ed., Lietuvos TSR istorijos šaltiniai, I(Vilnius, 1955), 320.

<sup>4</sup> See Grynwaser, Kwestia agrarna, p. 61; Kazimierz Deczyński, Żywot chłopa polskiego na początku XIX stulecia(Warsaw, 1907), pp. 55-57, 62-63.

The theoretical right of the peasants to appeal to district courts for redress was only rarely utilized with any success. Even if the villager were able to overcome his fear of the landowner and dare proceed with legal action, the very fact that the gmina mayor, that is, the landowner, was the first link in the chain of legal appeal made a favorable outcome for the peasant extremely unlikely.<sup>1</sup> The government itself reluctantly admitted that the peasants were "not always able to get along" in the courts and were forced into submission by the landowner, thus often winding up with "less advantageous arrangements" for themselves.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to physical intimidation and the administrative powers of the gmina mayor, legal confusion among state agencies, and the ability of the landowning class to manipulate peasant legislation, further eroded the rights of the "free" peasant. In some cases, government agencies showed great ignorance of the law; for example, in 1844 the State Revenues and Treasury Commission asked the Commission for Internal Affairs whether landowners had the right to massively "evict landed peasants to be replaced by foreign colonists." The Treasury Commission did not even know whether villagers could be, in certain cases, transferred, or their status arbitrarily changed.<sup>3</sup> That same year the governor of Płock province still maintained that the petty gentry enjoyed the same rights as the landed and heralded nobility; a frustrated Secretary of State was compelled to remind the governor that the "class of so-called petty

<sup>1</sup> Deczynski, Żywot, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6942, k. 181.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6942, Treasury Commission to KRSW, December 23, 1844, k. 261.

gentry had ceased to [legally] exist by a previous law."<sup>1</sup>

Even in the cases where major legislation was passed, and the peasant's legal status ostensibly clarified(for example, in 1846 and 1858), the nobility of the Kingdom managed to interpret the provisions in a light favorable to itself and detrimental to the village. The landowners, for example, found ways to evict some of the peasants, despite the ukaz of 1846, and still remain "within the law." In fact, some of the nobility's legal shenanigans of the 19th century achieved considerable ingenuity and resourcefulness.<sup>2</sup>

The legal history of the peasantry in the Kingdom of Poland(which, of course, included Trans-Niemen Lithuania) had parallels in Russian Lithuania and East Prussia. In Russian Lithuania, the Kiselev reform of 1838 and the introduction of compulsory estate inventories during the 1840s were attempts to regulate the obligations of the villagers; however, as in the Kingdom, such reforms failed to significantly alleviate the economic plight of the peasantry.<sup>3</sup> If anything, the situation of the peasants in Russian Lithuania was more precarious than that of their counterparts in the Kingdom of Poland. For example, the wholesale eviction of villagers from their holdings was not inhibited, as it was in Poland, by imperial decree; in fact, evictions of the peasants from their holdings

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6942, Secretary of State to KRSW, March 14, 1844, k. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup> For example, see Stefan Kieniewicz, Sprawa włościańska w powstaniu styczniowym(Warsaw, 1953), pp. 40-41.

<sup>3</sup> See J[uozas] Jurginiš, "Baudžiava Lietuvoje XIX amžiaus pirmojoje pusėje," in Lietuvos valstiečiai XIX amžiuje, eds. J[uozas] Žiugžda, K[onstantinas] Jablonskis and J[uozas] Jurginiš(Vilnius, 1957), 22-30. For Kiselev and the 1840s see T. A. Koniukhova, Gosudarstvennaiā derevnia Litvy i reforma P. D. Kiseleva 1840-1857 gg.(Moscow, 1975).

in Russian Lithuania gathered momentum in the 1850s when the land-owners began to sense that the government was about to impose some sort of agrarian reform.<sup>1</sup> Naturally, one basic fact that distinguished the overall situation of the peasantry in Russian-ruled Lithuania from that of the villagers in the Kingdom was the continued existence of serfdom in the Russian Empire during the first half of the 19th century.

The abolition of serfdom in Russia was first signaled by the ranking government official in Russian Lithuania, Governor-General V. I. Nazimov of Vilnius. In 1857 Nazimov issued a rescript directing Lithuania's landed nobility to form committees and then present proposals for the emancipation of the peasants with land. This directive, and especially its provision for emancipation "with land," disturbed many landowners who had looked upon the Polish example of "landless" emancipation as a model.<sup>2</sup> Tsar Alexander II's great Emancipation Edict of March 3, 1861 (Old Style: February 19, 1861) differed in some important respects from the Polish reform of 1864. For one thing, the Russian emancipation stipulated a two-year waiting period, during which the landowner's power over the peasant remained essentially intact. Another important difference was the introduction of burdensome redemption payments; these were intended to reimburse the state for its own compensation of the nobility. By 1864 the peasants of the Kingdom of Poland and East Prussia had acquired land ownership on much easier terms than the Lithuanian peasants in the Russian Empire.

<sup>1</sup> S[tanislav] A. Lazutka, Revoliutsionnaia situatsia v Litve 1859-1862 gg. (Moscow, 1961), pp. 60 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See N[ikolai] N. Ulashchik, "Iz istorii reskripta 20 noiabria 1857 goda," in Istoricheskie zapiski, XXVIII(1949), 166-170 and M[ečislovas] Jučas, "Baudžiavos panaikinimas Lietuvoje," in Lietuvos valstiečiai XIX amžiuje, 86-88.

Generally speaking, however, all Lithuanian peasants, whether they lived in Russian Lithuania, the Kingdom of Poland or East Prussia, shared certain concerns in common. To differing degrees, they all struggled to maintain their holdings against manorial attempts at expropriation during the first half of the 19th century. Only the Lithuanian peasantry of East Prussia escaped the conflict over land ownership in the very acute form manifested in Poland and Russia; actually, Prussian state peasants began receiving title to their lands as early as 1808.<sup>1</sup> Still, even in East Prussia the land problem was not an easy one.

The forms of peasant administration were very similar in all the Lithuanian lands. The landowner on private estates, and the leaseholder on state domains, exercised the decisive administrative power. Where the peasants were allowed some very limited self-government, for example, in electing judges to village courts, jurisdiction was extremely limited. Courts in East Prussia were limited to imposing fines of a thaler or less; in any case, confirmation and veto powers vis-a-vis village officials were usually held by the landowner or the state.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, aside from local variations, the legal and economic situation of the peasantry was similar in all the ethnographically Lithuanian lands in the first half of the 19th century. According to Soviet Lithuanian historians, a key characteristic of Lithuanian history in the first half of the 19th century was a deepening of the process of social stratification

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<sup>1</sup> P[ovilas] Pakarklis, comp. and K[onstantinas] Jablonskis, ed., Prūsijos valdžios gromatos, pagraudėnimas ir apsakymai lietuviams valstiečiams (Vilnius, 1960), pp. 521-526.

<sup>2</sup> Lietuvos TSR istorijos šaltiniai, I, 370; also cf. Pakarklis, Prūsijos, pp. 574-583.

in the countryside, accompanied by "further encroachment by the landlords on the rights and economic life of the peasants and townspeople."<sup>1</sup> In this context, was then the legal emancipation of the peasantry in the Duchy of Warsaw in 1807 meaningless? Economically, most peasants benefited little from their "protection under the law," and their personal "freedom" did not prevent the economic and social plight of many villagers from worsening during the first half of the 19th century.

However, even from this "personal" point of view, the 1807 emancipation was significant for the peasant in several respects. For one thing, the landowner lost his right to interfere in such personal matters as a villager's choice of a mate in marriage: the peasant was no longer the lord's property. Also, despite obstacles, the way to appeal in state courts was now possible for some peasants. More important, the emancipation of 1807 facilitated certain economic changes in the agrarian sector. Marxist historiography has stressed the development of "capitalist relations" in the countryside, for example; the increasing emergence of hired labor on the manorial farm; such developments, it is argued, slowly undermined the social and economic bases of feudalism and the manorial system. Thus, the introduction of the "bourgeois" Napoleonic legal system into Poland was "progressive."<sup>2</sup> Whatever view one takes, there is little doubt that the personal emancipation of the serfs in 1807 helped modernize Polish economic and social life, at least at a somewhat faster rate than in the Russian Empire where serfdom existed until 1861.

<sup>1</sup> M[echislovas] Iuchas and R[imantas] Iasas, comps., Tiazhby litovskikh krest'ian i zhitelei mestechek s upraviteliami imenii, vol. 3: Zhaloby krest'ian i zhitelei mestechek v 1795-1844 gg. (Vilnius, 1960), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Stanisław Śreniowski, Uwłaszczenie chłopów w Polsce (Warsaw, 1956), pp. 84-87.

## CHAPTER V

### SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The social structure of the Kingdom of Poland in the first half of the 19th century was still largely based on traditional agrarian relations that had not been essentially affected by the abolition of legal serfdom in 1807. This was particularly true of the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts which constituted the least developed and urbanized region of Congress Poland.

#### Nobility, Gentry and Townspeople.

The leading social class in Trans-Niemen Lithuania was the landed nobility. However, the landowners did not constitute a monolithic group. The majority were either Poles or descendants of thoroughly Polonized Lithuanian noble families such as the Tyszkiewicz and Pac clans. Other landowners were of German background, like the prominent Baron von Keudell of the Gelgaudiškis estate and Frentzel from Panemunė. After the insurrection of 1831, a number of estates were confiscated and parceled out to Russian landowners. Of course, the landowning class was stratified according to the wealth and size of the estates. Yet despite the differences among the landowners, they had one thing in common: their privileges. The nobility paid few, if any, taxes, were exempt from draft, and held all important military and political posts. In other words, the landed aristocracy ran the political and economic life of southwestern Lithuania in almost every way.

Two other social classes were also distinct from the peasantry: the petty gentry(Pol. drobna szlachta, szlachta częstkowa) and the townspeople. The first group was not significant in the Lithuanian Užnemunė region, consisting of isolated gentry villages and the small Tatar minority; in fact, the general consensus is that the petty gentry of Trans-Niemen Lithuania were a rather impoverished lot.<sup>1</sup> By far the greatest concentration of petty gentry in Poland was in the Podlasie and Mazowsze (Mazurian) regions of the Łomża and Augustów districts in Augustów province. A Prussian census of 1805 counted ten times more households of landed petty gentry in the Polish Łomża district than in the Lithuanian district of Kalvarija, and sixty times more in Łomża than in the district of Marijampolė.<sup>2</sup> Southern Augustów province contained more petty gentry than any other region of the Kingdom.<sup>3</sup> Much of the class of petty gentry were poor smallholders: in 1859 there were 1,300 gentry in Augustów province with less than three morgi of land.<sup>4</sup> Thus, wealthy peasants were often better off than their "noble" neighbors among the petty gentry, the wealthiest of whom rarely exploited the labor of more than one or two corvée villagers.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the petty landowners, there was also a class of landless petty gentry in Lithuania. At the time of the partitions in the late

<sup>1</sup> Totoraitis, Sūduvos-Suvalkijos, p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> Kirkor-Kiedroniowa, Włościanie, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> Wąsicki, Ziemie polskie, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Halina Chamerska, Drobna szlachta w Królestwie Polskim(1832-1864) (Warsaw, 1974), p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> Chamerska, Drobna szlachta, p. 70.

18th century, there were over half a million landless petty gentry in the territory of the former Lithuanian Grand Duchy. They formed an unreliable and volatile element; Russia's Catherine II planned to neutralize it by resettling this gentry in Russia, but this plan was never realized.<sup>1</sup> In the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts, the landless gentry were not prominent in the countryside, although some could be found in the towns.

On the whole, only the petty gentry of Samogitia played a significant role in Lithuanian history during the 19th century; they will be considered in relation to the development of national culture in Lithuania.

Unlike the petty gentry, the class of townspeople were an important element in the social and economic life of the Lithuanian peasantry. Like the nobility and most of the petty gentry(except in Samogitia), the majority of townspeople in Lithuania were alien in custom and speech to the Lithuanian-speaking population of the countryside. During the 19th century the majority of Trans-Niemen Lithuania's burghers were Jewish, with a strong admixture of Poles and Germans. From an economic and social point of view, the townspeople of the Užnemunė region differed greatly among themselves.

Statistically, it seems that the Trans-Niemen region had a higher percentage of urban population than the rest of ethnographic Lithuania in the 19th century. It is difficult, however, to gauge what this higher level of "urbanization" meant. In Russian Lithuania urban settlements were legally divided into real towns(Russ. gorod) and so-called "mini-towns"(Russ. mestechko); the latter often had populations that were no

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<sup>1</sup> Augustinas Janulaitis, Lietuvos bajorai ir jų seimeliai XIX amžiuje 1795-1863(Kaunas, 1936), pp. 68-69, 108-110.

larger than those of villages. In Kaunas(Kovno) gubernia more than half of the "urban" population lived in such "mini-towns." In the Kingdom of Poland, these "mini-towns" did not exist in official statistics; however, some of the smaller "towns" of Trans-Niemen Lithuania were municipalities only in a purely legal sense.<sup>1</sup> Despite the confusing nature of urban statistics in different parts of Lithuania in the 19th century, it would seem that the percentage of townspeople in the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts was somewhat higher than in other parts of Lithuania(for more on towns see Chapter VIII below).

#### The Peasantry.

From the point of view of this study, the most significant social group is, of course, the peasantry. It would be difficult to call the peasantry a social "class," primarily because it included several distinct administrative, legal and socio-economic levels. From a legal and administrative point of view, Lithuanian peasants of the 19th century can be divided several ways. For example, they can be classified by jurisdiction or by the kinds of lands they tilled. Some peasants lived on crown lands and came under the jurisdiction of the state; others worked on private estates and were administered by their landowners. A third group tilled land belonging to towns; historian Krzysztof Groniowski has called these peasants "urban cultivators."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M[echislovas] Iuchas and L[eonas] Muliavichius, Nekotorye voprosy genezisa kapitalizma v Litve(Vilnius, 1968), pp. 8-10.

<sup>2</sup> Krzysztof Groniowski, "Wyniki reformy uwłaszczeniowej w Królestwie Polskim," in Powstanie styczniowe 1863, IX Powszechny Zjazd Historyków Polskich, I(Warsaw, 1963), 100.

It is possible to classify Lithuanian peasants according to the traditional and historical categories of the 18th century, such as the "free" people or the so-called "post-Jesuit" peasants who lived on estates formerly run by the Jesuit order. These categories, however, increasingly lost their relevance during the 19th century; some groups disappeared entirely. For example, in southwestern Lithuania the peasants on large Church estates became part of the state domain as a result of the Prussian policy of confiscating ecclesiastical properties; thus, relatively few villagers remained under Church jurisdiction after 1807. Clearly, from a social and economic point of view, the historical, legal and administrative classifications of the peasant population can be inadequate at best. To meaningfully classify the state, private, Church and town peasantry of the 19th century, it is necessary to find criteria that cut across jurisdictional and legalistic boundaries.

Perhaps, the most obvious criterion in determining a peasant's social and economic status is land. From an economic point of view, the two most basic divisions of the peasantry, which can be said to represent genuinely distinct social classes, are the landed villagers and the landless peasants. Between these two groups existed a "twilight zone" of nominally landed peasants who possessed characteristics of both the landed and the landless. Also, within both the landed and landless categories there existed differing levels of social status and economic condition.

For those peasants with land, the size of the holding was the main factor in defining their labor obligations or money rents, their social status within the village, and the possibilities of economic advancement. Although it was the most important criterion in defining the peasant's social and economic status, the size of the holding was not, in every

case, an absolutely accurate measure. Soil quality, for one, obviously affected the peasant household's standard of living; in addition, the kinds of crops that were raised were another important factor.<sup>1</sup> However, these considerations qualify, but do not invalidate the general axiom: the larger the peasant holding, the wealthier the peasant household.

Several economic and historical factors affected the size of peasant holdings. Villagers who had to perform heavy labor on the manorial farm tended to have small holdings; on the other hand, money renters, who had more time to develop their own economies, tended to have larger holdings. State domains usually contained a higher percentage of large peasant holdings when compared to private estates. In the Lithuanian districts of the Kingdom, the well-to-do crown villagers formed a historically prosperous group who had long been, according to one 19th century landowner, a class of "free and privileged farmers for centuries."<sup>2</sup> The royal peasants themselves would probably have disagreed with their description as "free and privileged," but the fact remains that it was the crown(or state) peasantry who formed the "elite" of the obligated rural population.

Several breakdowns have been suggested for the actual classification of peasant holdings by size. Many of the contemporary government statistics use three categories: (1) holdings of less than three morgi, (2) those between three and fifteen morgi and (3) holdings of fifteen and more morgi. This kind of division is not useful for the Lithuanian region of the Kingdom of Poland where so many peasant holdings fell into the third category. Augustów province as a whole contained the least

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<sup>1</sup> Filomena Bortkiewicz, Nadziały i powinności chłopów pańszczyźnianych w dobrach prywatnych Królestwa Polskiego (Warsaw, 1958), p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> Lachnicki, Biografia, p. 72.

number of small peasant plots and, conversely, the greatest concentration of large village holdings in the entire Kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

For our purposes, a more useful classification of 19th century peasant holdings is that worked out by Krzysztof Groniowski, according to whom village land holdings were basically of three types: (1) the undersized or "stunted" holdings of up to three morgi, (2) the holdings of the peasant smallholders of up to nine morgi, and (3) the holdings of the middle and well-to-do peasants. Groniowski further subdivides the last category into: (a) middle-size holdings of up to 30 morgi, and (b) the holdings of the wealthiest peasants of 30 or more morgi.<sup>2</sup> Groniowski's categories of the landed peasantry provide a useful basis for categorizing the peasantry of the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts, although the limits of each category may have to be adjusted somewhat to fit local conditions such as the quality of arable land, the types of obligations performed by a particular village household, and the level of agricultural technology in a given area.<sup>3</sup>

The range in the size of peasant land holdings was especially striking in Trans-Niemen Lithuania. First of all, there were the truly wealthy peasants; for example, the village of Šilgaliai in Marijampolė district contained a dozen peasant households with holdings of 86 morgi each.<sup>4</sup> Some of the non-Lithuanian colonists had even more impressive land

<sup>1</sup> Bortkiewicz, Nadziały, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> Groniowski, "Wyniki," 106 ff.

<sup>3</sup> See Kirkor-Kiedroniowa, Włościanie, pp. 155-156; Władysław Grabski, Historia Towarzystwa Rolniczego 1858-1861, I(Warsaw, 1904), 410; N[ikolai] N. Ulashchik, "Krepostnaia derevnia Litvy i Zapadnoi Belorusii nakanune reformy 1861 goda," in Voprosy istorii, No. 12(1948), 61.

<sup>4</sup> Totoraitis, Sūduvos-Suvalkijos, pp. 686-687.

holdings. A striking example is the Jewish peasant colony of Przykalety in Sejny district. In 1861 the colony reportedly consisted of five extended households with a total of 31 males. The holdings of the individual households were huge: Mejor Nicielowicz Kalecki's family held 159 morgi, most of it arable, while Mowsze Izraelowicz Kalecki held 168 morgi.<sup>1</sup>

The above examples are atypical even for Trans-Niemen Lithuania, a region known for its prosperous peasantry. Peasant holdings of between 21 and 45 morgi were far more common in the Užnemunė region, with those in the 21-30 range outnumbering the rest.<sup>2</sup> Few peasants holding over 21 morgi could be considered "poor" by contemporary standards, and it seems that villagers who held 15 or more morgi were usually thought of as landed peasants in the true sense. The 1811 inventory of Seirijai parish in Sejny district counted 18 Church peasants: five had holdings of one włóka (or 30 morgi), nine of them occupied 15 morgi each, while the rest held as little as a single morga, a "garden" plot. The landed peasants, regardless of whether they held 15 or 30 morgi, performed the same labor duties; on the other hand, the single morga "garden" peasants were exempt from the usual corvée.<sup>3</sup> The Church village of Gražiskiai in Kalvarija district contained 33 peasant households. The parish inventory termed 15 of these households "fully landed" (Pol. całorolny): each held 15 morgi. Nine households were considered "semi-landed" (Pol. półrolny); these villagers held only seven morgi each. Finally, there

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6598, Augustów Governor's Office to KRSW, April 22, 1861, k. 3-6.

<sup>2</sup> For more statistical detail see Chapter VI below.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 476: Sereje, Acta Visitationes, September 25, 1811.

were nine "garden peasants" who held three morgi of land each.<sup>1</sup>

The above categories listed in the 19th century Church inventories parallel Groniowski's three-way classification of the Kingdom's peasants. The three basic classes of landed peasantry--the medium and well-to-do villagers, the smallholders and the "garden" tillers--turn up time and time again in the inventories, although sometimes under slightly different names. The peasants' holdings themselves were invariably divisions of the 30-morga unit of the włódka established in the 16th century. The three-morga plot was also an ancient holdover: it was the size of the holdings parceled out in earlier centuries to slaves and hired hands.

In some cases, the richest group of peasants were clearly descendants of the Lithuanian peasant "boyars" of the 18th century (see above, p. 8). The 1820 parish inventory of Gražiskiai still listed "boyar" peasants who enjoyed considerably lighter corvée duties than the other villagers.<sup>2</sup> In their confrontation with the Church over corvée obligations in 1817, the "boyar" villagers and garden peasants of Gražiskiai wrote separate petitions to their bishop; this suggests that the "boyars" were quite aware of their heritage.<sup>3</sup> In the village of Joniškis in Sejny district, the local "boyar" peasants managed to maintain their traditional status as rentpayers, quite distinct from the corvée peasants around them.<sup>4</sup> During the first half of the 19th century, the peasant "boyars" often lost their distinctive title in official documents; the Gražiskiai

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 129: Gražyszki, Parish Inventory of 1860.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 129: Gražyszki, Parish Inventory of 1820.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 129: Gražyszki, Peasants to Bishop Gołaszewski, May 25, 1817.

<sup>4</sup> Totoraitis, Sūduvos-Suvalkijos, p. 272.

inventory of 1860 listed the former "boyars" simply as "landholders" (Pol. gospodarz). Still, during the 19th century many of the old "boyar" peasants seem to have maintained themselves in the upper social and economic strata of the landed peasantry.

The peasant landholders formed a diverse group of villagers, divided both by the size of their holdings and different kinds of obligations. The "garden" peasant (Pol. ogrodnik, Lith. daržininkas) was a special case. Since the garden peasants held some land, they could technically be considered as landed villagers; yet official documents never considered the garden peasant a "farmer" (Pol. gospodarz). Obviously, garden peasants were unable to engage in any serious agriculture on their little plots; however, they were also clearly distinct from the manorial servants, seasonal laborers and other peasants who had no permanent abode or land holding. Unfortunately, the garden peasant often descended to the lower, landless class of peasantry either through economic hardship or pressure from the landowner who coveted his small holding.

There were a few people who lived outside villages and were "landed" only in the sense of living in their own cottages. These were the peasants and ex-peasants who lived in or on the edge of forests, mainly on state lands (see above, p. 43). Since these "forest" people did not engage in significant agriculture, economically they formed a rather unimportant fringe of Trans-Niemen Lithuania's agrarian society. The government (and much of the populace) mistrusted the forest dwellers who lived far from villages and could not be easily supervised or observed, thus providing a haven for "suspicious persons."<sup>1</sup> These people can be

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7261, State Forest Administration to Augustów Provincial Commission, February 25, 1819.

considered "landed" only in the sense of living in their own, more or less permanent homesteads.

Aside from the various groups of landed villagers, there were the mass of peasants who could be truly considered as "landless." The number of landless peasants--agricultural laborers, seasonal farm hands, manorial servants, and the like--was on the rise in Poland and Lithuania during the 19th century. In the Kingdom of Poland about 40% of the peasantry was considered landless in 1859; of these, 30% were on state domains, 45% on private estates.<sup>1</sup> This was an increase from an estimated 30% landless peasantry in 1827.<sup>2</sup> In Trans-Niemen Lithuania about 37% of all peasants were classified as landless in 1859: the highest ratio in ethnographic Lithuania. In the western part of Russian Lithuania, about a fourth of the peasantry was considered landless by 1860.<sup>3</sup>

The landless peasantry never really formed a single mass of rural proletariat detached from the land, at least not in the first half of the 19th century. In fact, the majority of landless villagers retained some links with a land holding(for example, through relatives), while others continued to hold tiny "mini-plots." Often, gmina mayors who provided official government statistics in the countryside listed holdings of less than three morgi as those of "landless" peasants. A good number of the landless agricultural labor force on the manorial farms were actually children of landed peasants who served as laborers only temporarily. Thus, the category of landless peasants in 19th century statistics was

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<sup>1</sup> Kieniewicz, Emancipation, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Chamerska, Drobna szlachta, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Iuchas and Muliavichius, "Bezzemel'nye," 90, 92; cf. Ulashchik, Predposylki, pp. 328 ff.

sometimes rather ambiguous and included a number of marginal smallholders. This does not mean, however, that a rural proletariat did not exist in the early 19th century; in fact, there were peasants who had lost all connections to a land holding and were truly "landless."

The village tenant (Pol. komornik, Lith. kumetis, bobelis) was a kind of "transitional" peasant, one who lived in the "twilight zone" between the poorer smallholders and the agricultural workers of the manorial farm. Some of the tenant families lived on their tiny holdings of three morgi or less for generations and were, in fact, impoverished garden peasants. Others, however, lived with landless farmhands and received tiny garden plots as partial payment for their labor.<sup>1</sup> These village tenants epitomize the difficulty of classifying the landless peasantry; the first type above could be called a "landed agricultural laborer," while the second came close to simply being a farmhand. In any case, in return for his quarters, the village tenant was obliged to work on the manorial farm; often he performed the usual corvée of three days per week and worked the remaining days for hire. However, as befits a "transitory" social stratum, the obligations and treatment of the village tenants varied widely.

Another large group of peasants worked on the manor or its farm more or less full time. This group of agricultural workers included both the estate's farmhands and the manorial servants. The farmhands tilled the manor's fields, took care of the estate's draft animals, and supervised the landowner's woodland. Typical of the manorial servants were the maids who were responsible for kitchen and garden work and also helped

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<sup>1</sup> Kieniewicz, Sprawa włościanńska, pp. 63-64.

in caring for some of the manor's animals, such as the cows and pigs. The hired peasant help on both the manor and its farm were usually bound by an annual contract. The estate recruited much of its help from among the unattached day laborers in nearby villages. Another source of help were the children of landed peasants who served on the manor only temporarily.<sup>1</sup> In some cases, the manor's hired help received tiny garden plots for their temporary use as partial compensation for work rendered; invariably, these plots were less than a morga in size. In addition, the manor normally provided its help with housing and fuel for the winter.<sup>2</sup>

It was the day laborers, together with the migrant and seasonal agricultural workers, that can be said to have formed a class of agrarian society that approached a "rural proletariat." Some of these workers labored for well-to-do peasants, often performing the corvée obligations of the landed villagers. Others worked directly for wealthy peasants, helping the latter manage their large holdings. The landed peasant's farmhands were usually treated as part of the household; they ate their meals with their employer, participated in village social life in every way, and enjoyed a degree of "peasant solidarity" with their boss. The seasonal and day laborers on the manorial farm, on the other hand, were exposed to a more difficult situation: they were at the mercy of the estate's overseers who could, and sometimes did, abuse them.

The number of landless laborers, both permanent and seasonal, rose during the 19th century; by 1860 the "rural proletariat" (exclusive of village tenants) formed an estimated one third of the agrarian population in the Kingdom of Poland. On the whole, the percentage of landless

<sup>1</sup> Halina Chamerska, O położeniu i zbiegostwie czeladzi folwarcznej w Królestwie Polskim, 1830-1864 (Warsaw, 1957), p. 5 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Kieniewicz, Sprawa włościańska, p. 65.

laborers was highest in the more economically developed regions and, conversely, lower in those areas considered "backward."<sup>1</sup> Thus, the eastern and southern regions of the Kingdom had relatively lower ratios of landless villagers in their populations. The tendency can be summed up as follows: the economic development and improvement of manorial farms and landed peasant holdings coincided with the impoverishment and "proletarianization" of the landless and marginally landed peasantry.

Yet even among the seasonal hired hands and day laborers there were significant social gradations. In some cases, a migrant laborer was given a cottage and mini-plot of land for his use, just as many manorial farmhands possessed. Such a peasant was on a higher social level than the so-called transient workers(Pol. luźni) who were normally bereft of even temporary quarters. These latter peasants were the most mobile and impoverished group working in agriculture. Migrant laborers and their families would sometimes band together in wandering groups. From the Kingdom, these bands of migrant workers would reach Russian Lithuania and Volhynia; others sometimes immigrated to the Kingdom's southern areas from Galicia.<sup>2</sup> Lithuanian migrant laborors occasionally crossed into Trans-Niemen Lithuania in search of work.

There were also villagers who left agriculture and found employment in non-agrarian enterprises. In the areas adjoining the Niemen River, the bargemen formed a significant group of workers; they were hired to float timber and man the grain boats destined for the Baltic ports. A number of these bargemen came from as far away as Galicia. According

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<sup>1</sup> Danuta Rzepniewska, Sezonowi najemnicy w Królestwie Polskim w połowie XIX wieku(Warsaw, 1957), pp. 23 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Rzepniewska, Sezonowi, pp. 39, 86.

to government figures, there were over a thousand bargemen employed in Augustów province in 1858, 204 of them in Marijampolė district. During the winter, many of the bargemen doubled as lumberjacks.<sup>1</sup> The bargemen's conditions of life were notoriously difficult, especially for those who came from distant lands and whose ignorance of local conditions made them vulnerable to unscrupulous employers.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the bargemen, a small number of other peasants were employed in the towns as workers in mills, inns, construction, and as servants.

Finally, there was a group of the rural population that was either marginally employed or unemployed. These were the various beggars, draft dodgers and other itinerants who were, for one reason or another, unable or unwilling to engage in productive work. Researchers have sometimes tended to overlook this group of the rural unemployed and indigent, perhaps because they played no obviously significant role in rural society or economy. Yet these people, who ranged from temporarily unemployed seasonal workers to the pathetic beggars maintained by the Church, best reflected the frequently harsh conditions of 19th century rural life which was especially difficult for those who had lost their connections with land holdings and family. From a legal point of view, the rural dispossessed lived in almost constant insecurity. Often they came from afar or had been absent for extended periods; thus, they were frequently not registered at any gmina as required by law.

Contemporary documents recorded many such people. Typical was Jerzy Sawicki, a 48-year old native of the Kingdom, who had, as a young man,

<sup>1</sup> Iuchas and Muliavichius, Nekotorye, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> For example, A. G. A. D., KRSW-7211, Austrian Consul to KRSW, June 24, 1851, k. 74, 76.

gone to Russia and worked as a bargeman for over twenty years. In 1846 Sawicki and his companion, one Dominik Bohdanowicz from northeast Lithuania, were arrested by the gmina mayor of Kiduliai(in Marijampolė district) for being without proper identification. Both men had been employed in Tilsit, an important transit point for lumber shipping.<sup>1</sup> Army deserters were another group that swelled the ranks of the rural unemployed; occasionally, they tried to hire themselves out as agricultural workers and succeeded. More often, however, deserters were apprehended and returned to service. Deserters and other "rural vagabonds" sometimes wandered great distances. Ivan Vasilev, an alleged deserter who originated in Moscow gubernia, traveled to Prussia and Austria before he was caught in Augustów province.<sup>2</sup>

Persons without proper identification were considered convenient candidates for induction into the army. Contemporary records revealed one such unfortunate: Jan Dąbrowski from Vilnius gubernia, seized near Šakiai (Marijampolė district) with false identification papers in 1855. Local authorities sent him back to the provincial capital of Suwałki because "there were no means to uncover his origin." Eventually, the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs ordered provincial authorities to register Dąbrowski in the local population list and then turn him over to the army "as being suitable for military service."<sup>3</sup>

The investigation, transport and processing of various rural vagabonds was a costly and time-consuming annoyance for the government of Augustów

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7229, Gmina mayor of Kidule[Kiduliai] to KRSW, March 16, 1846.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7419, Augustów Governor's Office to KRSW, January 4, 1856 and December 4, 1855; also documents on Vasilev in KRSW-7417.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7419, Augustów Governor's Office to KRSW, August 1, 1855 and reply of October 9, 1855.

province; finally, provincial authorities had to instruct district heads to show less zeal in turning such people over to the province and try returning them to their places of origin.<sup>1</sup>

The numbers of rural unemployed of all kinds tended to swell during times of war and famine. At the same time, this shiftless population was most vulnerable to the effects of such disasters. Although they lived on the "fringes" of peasant society, the rural unemployed were not considered "abnormal." Villagers knew that they could be thrown into this class of indigent people at any moment by any number of misfortunes. Also, the lives of the peasants were sometimes deeply affected by the restless element of the rural dispossessed(see Appendix V below).

In addition to those landless and unemployed elements which were dislocated by the threat of military induction, desertion or economic disaster, there were the more "traditional" non-working villagers: the beggars and mendicants of all kinds. According to an 1842 survey, the Lithuanian districts of Augustów province had an unusually high proportion of paupers, almost five times more than the Polish districts(969 to 211 respectively).<sup>2</sup> These figures, of course, included only those that were actually counted. The real number of indigent persons must have been somewhat higher, particularly as the paupers were not always as "visible" as the rest of village society. In western Lithuania, beggars flocked to the towns on All Saints' Day, their numbers swollen by children and adolescents who "crowded the streets through the entire winter."

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7422, Augustów Governor's Office to district chiefs, September 6, 1862.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6994, Augustów Governor's Report for 1842, k. 516.

A good number of these rural beggars were what can be called "popular mendicants," indigent persons who haunted church courtyards, markets and fairs. They were the "fakirs" of Lithuania, performing weird rituals and colorful prayers in return for donations from generous passersby.<sup>1</sup> Parish churches took on some of these mendicants; thus, they were, so to speak, "adopted" and provided with some meager quarters. An 1837 document described a certain Jan Tamoszunas of Pakuonis parish in Mariajampolė district; in his own words, Tamoszunas "had been admitted as a beggar in Pokojnie[Pakuonis] parish during the lifetime of Father Stalgiewicz." He lived in the rectory, together with a child, subsisting on "money from charitable hands."<sup>2</sup>

The beggars, deserters, the rural unemployed generally, represented the most destitute stratum of peasant society. In social and economic terms, the distance between them and the wealthy landed peasantry was great indeed. Southwestern Lithuania's social divisions did not escape the notice of contemporary observers; in fact, they sometimes exaggerated them. To a casual onlooker, the very sight of a wealthy Lithuanian peasant on a Sunday outing in his characteristically large and fancy wagon, driven by an "appropriately clothed" farmhand, was the classic picture of social polarization in the countryside. One local landowner who observed such a sight was tempted to conclude that the Kingdom's Lithuanian peasantry consisted of two groups: "the affluent class, a kind of peasant aristocracy which is paying money rents or capable of it," and the numerous hired hands living "either in garden plots on the manor, or else

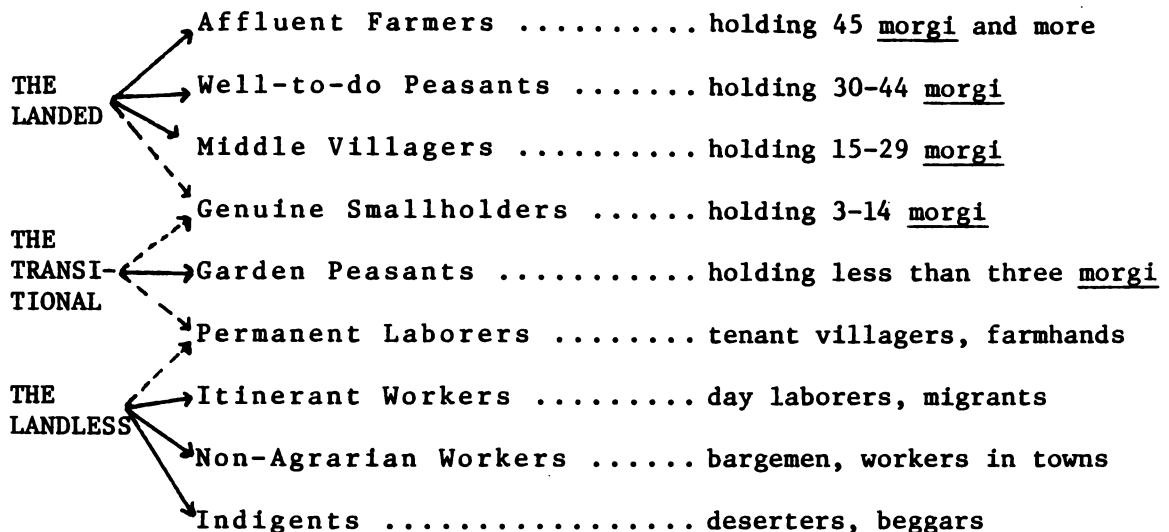
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<sup>1</sup> See "Dyecezja žmudzka," in Pamiętnik Religijno-Moralny, XXIX(1855), 671-678; cf. M[ikalojus] Katkus, Raštai(Vilnius, 1965), pp. 183-193.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 380: Pokoynie, Tamoszunas to Bishop Straszyński, July 27, 1837.

occupying a corner of the landed peasant's house."<sup>1</sup>

In fact, the stratification of Trans-Niemen Lithuania's peasantry was considerably more complex and ambiguous. With some simplifications, its basic social scheme can be broken down into the outline below; here the peasants are seen in terms of descending order.



The above categories were not always entirely distinct or mutually exclusive; to some degree, they overlapped.<sup>2</sup> Thus, a garden peasant could "hold" a small plot of land, but still, in a practical sense, belong to the "landless" category of villagers. Of the different peasant groups and subgroups indicated above, it was the landed peasantry, and particularly the well-to-do and affluent, that most influenced the course of agrarian history in Lithuania during the 19th century.

<sup>1</sup> Adam Goltz, "Kilka słów o północnych powiatach gubernii Augustowskiej," in Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego, X(1847), 286-287.

<sup>2</sup> Dotted lines indicate the overlapping categories; thus, depending on individual circumstances, a smallholder could be either "transitional" to garden peasant status(if he held, say, a four morgi holding of poor quality), or a landed peasant in the true sense(for example, holding fourteen morgi of exceptionally fertile land).

## CHAPTER VI

### PEASANT LAND HOLDINGS AND OBLIGATIONS DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

#### Peasant Land Holdings Before 1864.

Lithuania's southwestern region was one in which large peasant holdings were very conspicuous. The high percentage of well-to-do peasants here was characteristic of western Lithuania as a whole: in fact, village holdings in the western regions had been larger than those of eastern Lithuania and Belorussia even before the 19th century. The largest peasant holdings in all of ethnographic Lithuania were found in the Šiauliai region of Kaunas(Kovno) gubernia in Russian Lithuania. The three northern Lithuanian districts of Augustów province, on the other hand, contained by far the highest ratio of large peasant holdings in the Kingdom of Poland. The Lithuanian areas of Congress Poland had more peasant holdings in the "affluent" category(45 morgi of land and above) than the rest of the Kingdom combined.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, there were significantly fewer garden peasants and smallholders in western Lithuania than in either Russia or Poland; at mid-century, only about a sixth of all peasant holdings in Trans-Niemen Lithuania were in these categories, even less in Kaunas gubernia.<sup>2</sup>

There are very few reliable figures for the distribution of peasant holdings in Trans-Niemen Lithuania by size for the earlier part of the 19th century. However, it is clear that this part of western Lithuania

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<sup>1</sup> Groniowski, "Wyniki," 106 ff. Groniowski's estimates are for the 1860s.

<sup>2</sup> Iuchas and Muliavichius, Nekotorye voprosy, pp. 26-30.

was developing a strong class of wealthier peasantry by the beginning of the 19th century. On the whole, there is evidence that the large holdings of well-to-do peasants became more established during the first half of the 19th century as the difference between permanent and temporary peasant allotments vanished and the two fused into a single holding.<sup>1</sup>

More reliable figures compiled in the late 1850's present a fair picture of the dominant position of the well-to-do villagers among the landed peasantry of southwestern Lithuania; this dominance is especially striking if we compare the distribution by size of peasant holdings in the three Lithuanian districts of Augustów province with the two predominantly Polish districts (those of Łomża and Augustów). Table 3 on the following page presents the frequency count (N) and percentage (P) of peasant holdings according to size on the private estates of Augustów province; each district is presented separately.

The Lithuanian districts clearly outnumbered the Polish ones in the categories of medium-holders, well-to-do peasants and affluent farmers. Statistics indicate an especially noticeable difference in the holdings of twenty morgi and over; in 1859, these holdings constituted three-fourths of the private peasant holdings in the Lithuanian districts, less than a third in the Polish ones. Figure 1 below represents a consolidation of the 1859 data on the private estates of Augustów province; here the percentage distribution of the landed peasantry is contrasted by "ethnic region," that is, the predominantly Polish vs. the predominantly Lithuanian districts. The categories of landed villagers are those used in Chapter V.

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<sup>1</sup> See Jučas, Baudžiavos, p. 104 and above pp. 18-19, 5-6.

TABLE 3

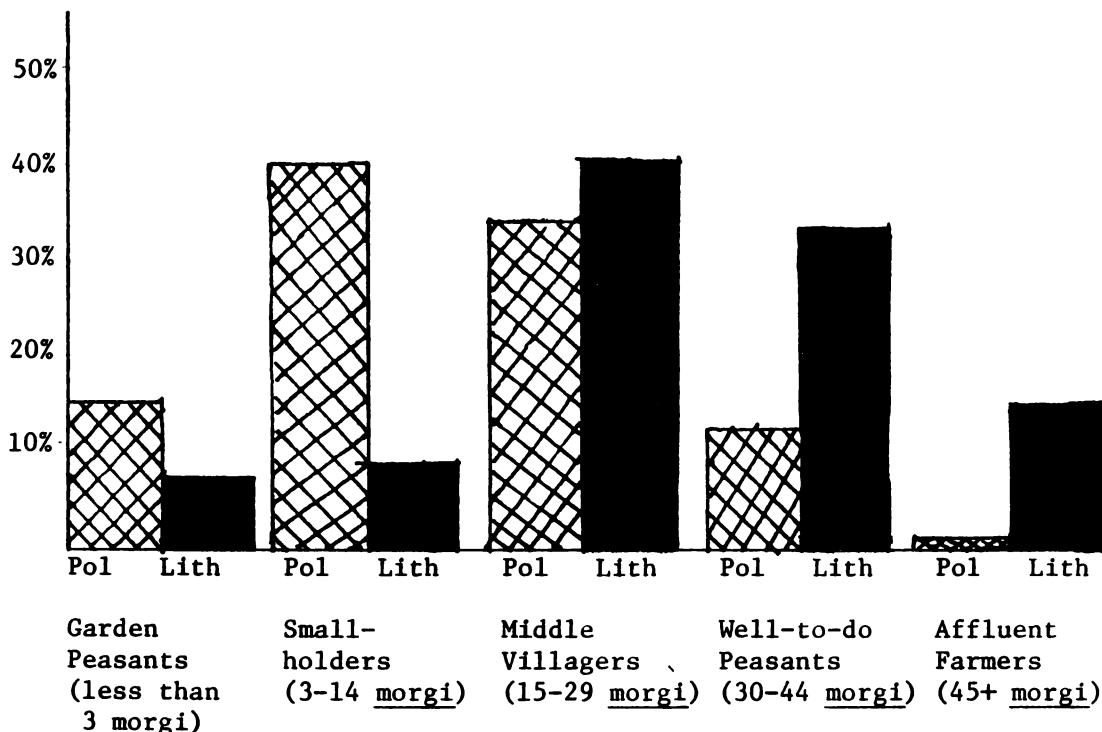
ESTIMATED FREQUENCY(N) AND PERCENTAGE(P) DISTRIBUTION  
OF PEASANT HOLDINGS ON PRIVATE ESTATES IN AUGUSTÓW  
PROVINCE BY PEASANT CATEGORY AND DISTRICT, ABOUT 1859<sup>1</sup>

Peasant Category	Holding Size(in per Ch. V) (morgi)	Districts										Augustów province	
		Augustów		Łomża		Kalvarija		Marijampolė		Sejny		N	P
		N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P
Garden Peasants	less than 3	274	14.0	256	14.9	121	9.9	132	4.4	114	7.2	897	9.4
Small-Holders	3 - 5	111	5.7	115	6.7	37	3.0	76	2.5	18	1.1	357	3.8
	6 - 14	650	33.3	578	33.6	28	2.3	248	8.2	41	2.6	1,545	16.2
	(Subtotal)	761	38.9	693	40.3	65	5.3	324	10.7	59	3.7	1,902	20.0
Middle Villagers	15-19	234	12.0	344	20.0	85	7.0	366	12.1	168	10.5	1,197	12.6
	20-29	409	20.9	231	13.4	460	37.7	511	16.8	750	47.1	2,361	24.8
	(Subtotal)	643	32.9	575	33.5	545	44.6	877	28.9	918	57.6	3,558	37.4
Well-to-do Peasants	30-44	229	11.7	194	11.3	428	35.1	1,070	35.3	406	25.5	2,327	24.4
Affluent Farmers	45+	47	2.4	0	0.0	62	5.1	629	20.7	96	6.0	834	8.8
Total Peasant Holdings on Private Domains		1,954		1,718		1,221		3,032		1,593		9,518	

<sup>1</sup> Based on Grabski, Historia, I, 420.

FIGURE 1

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF LANDED PEASANTS ON PRIVATE ESTATES BY HOLDING SIZE IN THE LITHUANIAN AND POLISH AREAS OF AUGUSTÓW PROVINCE ABOUT 1859  
(POL=POLISH, LITH=LITHUANIAN)<sup>1</sup>



So far, only the peasants on private estates have been considered.

In the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts, the private peasantry accounted for about a fourth of all landed villagers. Even a cursory glance at the distribution of peasant holdings on the non-private or public lands shows that the preponderance of large peasant holdings was much greater here than on the private estates (for a more detailed definition of "public" and "private" estates see Chapter VIII below). The vast majority of the public estates were crown domains. Table 4 below shows the distribution of peasant holdings on public lands; in this case, the categories of the

<sup>1</sup> Based on Grabski, Historia, I, 420.

TABLE 4

ESTIMATED FREQUENCY(N) AND PERCENTAGE(P) DISTRIBUTION  
OF PEASANT HOLDINGS ON PUBLIC(NON-PRIVATE) ESTATES IN  
AUGUSTÓW PROVINCE BY PEASANT CATEGORY AND DISTRICT,  
ABOUT 1859<sup>1</sup>

Peasant Category (per Ch. V)	Holding Size (in morgi)	Districts										Augustów province	
		Augustów		Łomża		Kalvarija		Marijampolė		Sejny		N	P
		N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P
Garden Peasants and Smallholders	less than 15	2,276	43.0	1,553	36.3	984	16.8	874	13.6	750	17.0	6,437	24.5
Middle Villagers	15-29	1,409	26.6	2,378	55.5	1,174	20.1	1,307	20.4	1,062	24.1	7,330	27.9
Well-to-do and Affluent Peasants	30+	1,611	30.4	352	8.2	3,692	63.1	4,238	66.0	2,596	58.9	12,489	47.6
Total Peasant Holdings on Public Land		5,296		4,383		5,850		6,419		4,408		26,256	

<sup>1</sup> Based on Grabski, *Historia*, I, 420; and also Iuchas and Muliavichius, "Bezzemel'nye," 90-91.

landed peasantry are fused into three groupings, primarily because the sources of my data on the state and public peasantry used such a consolidated scheme.

As Table 4 indicates, the public estates, and especially the crown domains, supported a very high percentage of large peasant holdings; in comparison to the private estates, this was true of both the Polish and Lithuanian districts of Augustów province in the 19th century. The predominance of large peasant holdings on crown lands greatly inflated the percentage of well-to-do and affluent peasantry among the total village population, as indicated by Table 5 below which shows the overall distribution of landed peasants in Trans-Niemen Lithuania. Table 5 includes the domains of both the private and public sector.

TABLE 5

ESTIMATED FREQUENCY(N) AND PERCENTAGE(P) DISTRIBUTION OF PEASANT HOLDINGS ON ALL ESTATES BY PEASANT CATEGORY AND LITHUANIAN DISTRICT OF AUGUSTÓW PROVINCE, ABOUT 1859<sup>1</sup>

	Kalvarija		Marijampolė		Sejny		All Lithuanian Districts	
	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P
<b>Garden Peasants and Smallholders</b>								
Smallholders	1,170	16.6	1,330	14.1	923	15.4	3,423	15.2
<b>Middle Villagers</b>								
Middle Villagers	1,719	24.3	2,184	23.1	1,980	33.0	5,883	26.1
<b>Well-to-do and Affluent Peasants</b>								
Well-to-do and Affluent Peasants	4,182	59.1	5,937	62.8	3,098	51.6	13,217	58.7
<b>Total Holdings</b>								
Total Holdings	7,071		9,451		6,001		22,523	

<sup>1</sup> Based on Iuchas and Muliavichius, "Bezzemel'nye," 90-91.

The predominance of large peasant holdings on crown lands was a phenomenon that held true not only in the Lithuanian Užnemunė region and Augustów province, but one that was characteristic of the Kingdom of Poland as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Another aspect that distinguished crown estates was the relatively low percentage of landless peasants; as a rule, the ratio of landless peasantry was always higher on the private estates.

In southwestern Lithuania, besides the numerous and powerful class of well-to-do peasants, there also existed a substantial proportion of landless villagers. Kalvariija district counted 36% of its villagers as landless in 1859; there were 41.6% in Marijampolė district, while in Sejny the landless proportion reached 31.3%. On the whole, the Polish districts of Augustów province had a higher percentage of landless villagers than the Lithuanian ones. In general, however, the number of landless peasants had always been higher in western Lithuania than in eastern Lithuania and Belorussia.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the extremes of the peasantry, both the well-to-do and the landless, were well represented in Trans-Niemen Lithuania. As far as the Polish and Lithuanian districts of Augustów province were concerned, the greatest difference lay in the number of smallholders; while this group formed a large percentage of the Polish villagers in the province, it was relatively insignificant in the Lithuanian districts.

The figures and tables presented above leave no doubt concerning the overwhelming preponderance of large peasant holdings in the Kingdom's

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<sup>1</sup> Stanisław Arnold, ed., Zarys historii gospodarstwa wiejskiego w Polsce, II (Warsaw, 1964), 346.

<sup>2</sup> See Iuchas and Muliavichius, "Bezzemel'nye," 85-92.

Lithuanian districts, even if we recognize the notoriously unreliable nature of 19th century statistics.<sup>1</sup> However, holding size was not the only important factor that determined the wealth of a peasant household. The comminution of the land and the question of manorial obligations were issues of great relevance to the problem of peasant land tenure.

#### The Problem of the Comminution and Consolidation of Land Before 1864.

The problem of land comminution was one that aroused considerable interest in the 19th century. The scattered, patchwork type of land tenure (Pol. szachownica) still dominated the rural landscape when the Tsar proclaimed his great reform of 1864 in Poland. The alienation of peasant lands into many widely scattered plots was very noticeable in Augustów province, particularly in the western part of Marijampolė district.

Krzysztof Groniowski, an agrarian historian who studied the comminution problem here in some detail, found the holdings of the local prosperous peasants in a state of considerable fragmentation. Groniowski distinguished two basic types of land alienation: (1) the internal scattering of land strips which affected the holdings within the same village and (2) external comminution which involved lands of different villages or different jurisdictions (for example, the mixture of village lands with those of manorial farms and towns). Apparently, the land alienation that affected the prosperous Lithuanian villagers of Marijampolė district was primarily "internal." This made peasant holdings easier to consolidate.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Elżbieta Kaczyńska, "Gubernia suwalska w świetle oficjalnych danych statystycznych w latach 1866-1914," in Studia i materiały do dziejów Suwalszczyzny, 283-285.

<sup>2</sup> Krzysztof Groniowski, "Przymusowe scalanie ziemi w Królestwie Polskim," in Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materiałnej, No. 2(1961), 215.

The most common form of land distribution in southwestern Lithuania, as elsewhere in eastern Europe, was the division of peasant holdings into long strips radiating outwards from the village. These strips varied in length but were rarely more than several meters wide. The strips of land were usually bunched together by type. Thus, if a village followed the three-field system of agriculture, the summer, winter and fallow lands were kept together in adjoining strips. When possible, the peasants preferred their strips to adjoin their homesteads, so as to facilitate plowing and give the livestock access to the land.<sup>1</sup> However, it was often impossible to maintain any rational pattern in the distribution of land strips and, over the years, haphazard and extremely confused arrangements frequently emerged.<sup>2</sup>

Land comminution was obviously inefficient. The peasants found their strips too narrow to plow easily and, since the strips were often scattered, they had to drag their equipment from place to place. Compounding inefficiency in agriculture, the extreme alienation of peasant holdings caused problems of jurisdiction. In 1845, the landed peasants of two villages in Marijampolė district asked to be included in the municipality of Sudargai. This unusual request resulted from the comminution of town and village holdings; the peasants feared that they would eventually lose some of their land strips to the municipality.<sup>3</sup> A typical case of land comminution affected the estate of August Pusch and the holdings of the parish of Pakuonis in Marijampolė district. One particular area consisted

<sup>1</sup> Basanavičius, "Gudelių parapijos," 417.

<sup>2</sup> For an example of extreme land comminution in petty gentry villages see Balčiūnas, Lietuvos kaimų, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-201, Petition of Szymon Juszkatys and others, June 23, 1845, k. 414-416.

of twenty five adjacent land strips distributed in the following way:<sup>1</sup>

<u>Strip Number</u>	<u>Holder or Owner</u>	<u>Basis of Tenure</u>
1 .....	Common to all .....	Pasture(?)
2 .....	Maciej Grygonis, peasant .....	leased for six years from landowner Pusch
3 .....	Maciej Rybokas, peasant .....	leased for six years from landowner Pusch
4 .....	Michał Iwaszkiewicz, peasant .....	leased for seven years from landowner Pusch
5 .....	Jakób Buras, peasant .....	leased for seven years from landowner Pusch
6 .....	Maciej Pauksztys, peasant .....	leased for six years from landowner Pusch
7 .....	Piotr Laurykaytis, peasant .....	listed as a holding of a "corvée peasant"
8 .....	August Pusch, landowner .....	manorial farm of Pusch
9 .....	Jakob Tamoszunas, peasant .....	leased for six years from landowner Pusch
10-11 ....	August Pusch, landowner .....	manorial farm of Pusch
12-15 ....	Pokojnie[Pakuonis] Church .....	made up "one sixth of the income" of the church
16 .....	August Pusch, landowner .....	manorial farm of Pusch
17 .....	Karol Brzozowski, peasant .....	listed as a holding of a "corvée peasant"
18-19 ....	August Pusch, landowner .....	manorial farm of Pusch
20 .....	Józef Matulewicz, peasant .....	leased for six years from landowner Pusch
21 .....	August Pusch, landowner .....	manorial farm of Pusch
22 .....	Michał Podziunas, peasant .....	listed as a holding of a "corvée peasant"
23-25 ....	August Pusch, landowner .....	manorial farm of Pusch

In this single 25-strip area of land we can distinguish five basic types of land holding: (1) the strips of land cultivated for the land-owner that made up the manorial farm, (2) the holdings leased to individual peasants by contract, (3) the strips held by the corvée peasants of

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<sup>1</sup> Based on A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 380: Pokoynie, Depositions of Pusch, Laurykaytis, Brzozowski and Podziunas, August 3, 1847.

the Pusch estate, (4) the parish or Church lands and (5) the single strip listed as "common to all."

Many contemporaries realized the inhibiting nature of such land comminution which made progressive agriculture impossible.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the consolidation of village and manorial lands made considerable progress in Trans-Niemen Lithuania during the first half of the 19th century. The introduction of money renting on state lands stimulated the breaking up of traditional villages and the separation of individual homesteads on consolidated holdings. In 1820 sixteen villages were "separated out" into individualized holdings. The Tsar's decree of 1846(see above Chapter IV) halted land consolidation and rent reform on private estates; however, the consolidation of peasant holdings resumed during the 1850s and early 1860s. In fact, with the exception of the Warsaw region, the Lithuanian districts of the Kingdom had advanced land consolidation further than any other region of Poland before 1864; by this time, almost 40% of the more than 3,000 villages of Trans-Niemen Lithuania held consolidated holdings. Ironically, the rate of land consolidation slowed after 1864, so that by the end of the 19th century, 42.3% of the villages in the Lithuanian Užnemunė region still held unconsolidated lands.<sup>2</sup>

In general, the western regions of ethnographic Lithuania had a much greater number of consolidated peasant holdings than eastern Lithuania, at

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the pastor of Lazdijai complained that land comminution had forced him to rent parish plots to the town, because cultivation of the parish farm had become impossible. A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 295: Łozdzieje, Pastor to Consistory of Augustów Diocese, April 10, 1845. A similar case is recorded in A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 27: Beržniki, Pastor's Deposition of September 17, 1827, k. 225-227.

<sup>2</sup> Zdzisław Ludkiewicz, Komasacja gruntów wiejskich(Warsaw, 1927), p. 120; also cf. Butkevičius, Lietuvos valstiečių, pp. 68-72.

least in the 19th century. Some researchers think that the process of peasant land consolidation was helped along by example. In this view, the example of consolidation in East Prussia stirred some of the land-owners and peasants in neighboring Trans-Niemen Lithuania to support consolidation on their own lands in the early 19th century. In a similar fashion, the relatively strong consolidation movement that developed in the northern Suwałki region supposedly influenced the Lithuanian peasants across the Niemen River in southern Kaunas gubernia to begin pulling together their own scattered holdings.<sup>1</sup>

In Samogitia consolidated peasant holdings were sometimes the product of strong initiatives by individual landowners. In the early 19th century Prince Ireneusz Ogiński consolidated the holdings of his peasants into single plots of between twenty and fifty hectares. Also, the Samogitians avoided family repartitions of peasant land which tended to inhibit the alienation of village holdings into numerous strips.<sup>2</sup> In any case, the consolidation of peasant holdings in the 19th century, like the emergence of a wealthy peasant class, was a characteristic of western Lithuania.<sup>3</sup>

In Trans-Niemen Lithuania serious land consolidation was initiated on the state lands about 1820. The consolidation of peasant holdings was normally accompanied by the introduction of money rents. The process of land consolidation was unregulated until 1835, when the Tsar issued

<sup>1</sup> See Balčiūnas, Lietuvos kaimų, pp. 61-62; Ludkiewicz, Komasacja, p. 66; Butkevičius, Lietuvos valstiečių, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Balčiūnas, Lietuvos kaimų, pp. 63-65.

<sup>3</sup> Ludkiewicz, Komasacja, pp. 60 ff.; Balčiūnas, Lietuvos kaimų, pp. 63 ff.

his ukaz concerning the donated estates(see above Chapter IV). As mentioned before, the Tsar's decree of 1846 temporarily slowed the process of land consolidation on private estates by hindering the introduction of money rents on these domains, but the process continued unabated on state lands.<sup>1</sup> The establishment of consolidated farmsteads at the initiative of the peasants themselves was an especially impressive characteristic of Poland's Lithuanian districts after 1864.<sup>2</sup>

Land consolidation was often an economic plus for the prosperous peasantry. The Sejny area is a good example; it contained a number of large donated estates which were affected by the decree of 1835. The village lands of the donated estates here were consolidated rather quickly, leaving many peasant households with plots of thirty morgi and more. In the Puńsk area of Sejny district, the introduction of money rents and land consolidation resulted in a dramatic increase in the size of Lithuanian peasant holdings. According to historian Wiśniewski, this development greatly strengthened the economic position of the Lithuanian population which now "began quickly gaining the advantage over the Polish peasants who had not yet been completely freed from feudal bonds in the estates to the south."<sup>3</sup>

#### The Villagers and Their Obligations to the Estate.

From the peasant's point of view, the problem of "feudal bonds," that is, the system of the various labor and money obligations by which the

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<sup>1</sup> Kieniewicz, Emancipation, pp. 143-144.

<sup>2</sup> Balčiūnas, Lietuvos kaimų, p. 58; Ludkiewicz, Komasacja, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> Wiśniewski, "Dzieje ... sejneńskim," 191-192.

estate exploited the villager, overshadowed the problem of land consolidation. The peasant knew that unless the manor's system of obligations could be reformed or abolished, there was little hope for his economic independence.

The system of corvée and other obligations that burdened the peasants was one that had changed little over the centuries. In fact, compulsory labor was finally eliminated from the agrarian scene in the Kingdom of Poland only during the early 1860s. The kinds of obligations exacted from the Lithuanian peasantry of the Užnemunė region were essentially the same that had prevailed in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the 18th century(see above Chapter I).

In general, it seems safe to assume that obligations to the estate accounted for about four-fifths of the peasant holding's total "indebt-edness." Filomena Bortkiewicz, in her careful study of village holdings and peasant obligations in Congress Poland, estimated that between 86.5% to 88% of the villagers' economic obligations consisted of the various duties owed the manor. An additional 10% to 13% went for taxes, while the Church took the smallest slice of peasant "output:" .5% to 1.2% of the total.<sup>1</sup> This breakdown, of course, differed with the locality, but an examination of selected estate inventories would confirm the general pattern.

The corvée or compulsory labor obligations were the ones which truly defined economic serfdom and, as a result, were the most detested by the peasants. The major portion of compulsory labor consisted of the regular weekly work on the manorial farm. One commonly used estimate is that the

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<sup>1</sup> Bortkiewicz, Nadziały, p. 182.

regular labor averaged three days of "draft" or "harnessed" work(that is, that performed with the peasant holding's livestock), and three days of so-called "pedestrian" work without draft animals.<sup>1</sup> However, obligations traditionally differed with the size of the peasant holding. In any case, the Lithuanian region of the Kingdom seems to have averaged about three to four days of different combinations of both "draft" and "pedestrian" work.<sup>2</sup>

Specific examples best illustrate the wide range of obligations that existed in southwestern Lithuania. For example, the private peasants of the Iwonyszki estate in Gudeliai parish supplied three days of "draft" corvée and an additional "gratuitous" day of work per week; on the average, the peasants here held thirty morgi of land. In addition, the peasants of Iwonyszki performed seasonal harvest obligations and did road repairs. Prior to the 1864 reform, these peasants also paid a traditional tribute of four rubles in cash and some grain; such heavy work duties left the villagers only limited spare time to labor on their own fields, which they sometimes had to do at night.<sup>3</sup>

Inventories provide even more detailed lists of peasant obligations. The Kunigiškiai village, described as "belonging to the pastor of Pojewon [Pajevony]," contained ten peasant households. According to the parish inventory of 1814, six of the households had holdings of 22 morgi, while four households held seven morgi of land each. Krzysztof Szakaytis, a

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<sup>1</sup> Stanisław Szczotka, Zaburzenia chłopskie w Białostocczyźnie (1861-1869) (Warsaw, 1953), pp. 52-53.

<sup>2</sup> Lachnicki, Biografija, pp. 24-25. <sup>3</sup> Basanavičius, "Gudelių parapijos," 415-416.

22-morga holder, performed two days of "draft" work per week; he also paid a money rent of eight złoty annually, contributed another 18 złoty for the commutation of his transport obligations, and paid still another eight złoty for the state household levy. Szakaytis' fellow villager Józef Danieszkiewicz, a 7-morga smallholder, owned only a third of his neighbor's land, but was required to contribute exactly half of the labor and money obligations of those with the larger holdings.

According to the Pajevonys inventory, some of the obligations were required in equal measure from both the 22-morga middle peasants and the smallholders. Both groups were required to provide two kinds of seasonal secondary corvée: the harvesting of the winter grain crop and the collecting of the parish farm's vegetable crop. According to the inventory's instructions, the seasonal work was to be performed "with the entire family." The pastor also required "the women of all the [village] inhabitants" to engage in weeding the pastor's own garden plots, to shear the parish's sheep and to spread fertilizer wherever directed; all this, of course, "without any deduction in the regular weekly obligations." The Pajevonys inventory remitted the 18 złoty transport levy for the largeholders "if they are used once on the road to Königsberg, or twice to Instrut[Germ. Insterburg] or Tilsit," in order to ship the parish farm's produce to market.<sup>1</sup>

The villagers of Kunigiškiai were primarily corvée peasants, although some of the secondary obligations were commuted to cash. In other villages, however, money renters coexisted with corvée and what could be called "semi-corvée" peasants. The Church villages of Balbieriškis

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 378: Pojewoń, Parish Inventory of July 26, 1814.

parish indicate that land tenure and obligations patterns could be very diverse, even within a single parish estate. Here the peasants ranged from primarily corvée villagers to those whose obligations were "mixed" (in both money and labor) and, finally, to others who were termed "general renters" (Pol. ogólny czynszownik). For example, the village of Petrašiūnai consisted of twelve peasant households; of these, two were listed as "general renters" who paid an annual 90 and 80 złoty rent respectively as the basic obligation. In another village, smallholders predominated; they were split between money renters and corvée workers. The renters paid an annual cash levy of 20 złoty, while the corvée smallholders contributed 20 days of work for the parish manorial farm. Most of the middle peasants of this village were required to give "one day of draft and one day of pedestrian labor [per week] from June 24th to November 11th of every year." For the middle peasants, there were also minor cash payments and seasonal work obligations (garden work, wood-cutting, etc.).

The village of Nišeikiai in this same Balbieriškis parish contained five Church peasants in the middle villager category. They were required to work at least one day per week with draft animals and two days as "pedestrians." Minor obligations included three days of harvest work per household; this could be "cashed in" at the rate of one złoty and 20 groszy per day. Each household of Nišeikiai was liable for the transport obligation to Vilnius or Kaunas, commutable to a cash fee of twelve złoty. In addition, all households paid a gratuitous tribute which included a quantity of rye.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 17: Balwierzyszki, Visitatio.

Early 19th-century Church inventories and other documents indicate that the dividing line between "corvée peasants" and "money renters" was often blurred. In fact, the majority of the landed peasantry in the Kingdom of Poland contributed both compulsory labor and money rents to the manor. Thus, the division of peasants into corvée villagers and renters is a conditional rather than absolute one. Historian I. I. Kostiushko concluded that there were few "purely corvée" peasants in the Kingdom since most paid some money in addition to their labor duties.<sup>1</sup> Filomena Bortkiewicz has disagreed with this assumption; in her view, the money payments of corvée peasants were not necessarily rents, but rather additional feudal obligations, like the transport levy or the so-called gratuitous tribute(Pol. danina). The problem is significant; Bortkiewicz estimated that the corvée peasants of Augustów province paid more of these additional cash contributions than the peasants in other provinces(for example, fifteen times more than the villagers of Radom province).<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, it has been impossible to determine whether many of the corvée peasants' money payments constituted a partial "cashing in" of the regular weekly labor duties, or whether they were additional secondary obligations.

In most 19th-century statistics, the peasants were broken down into three basic categories by obligations. First, there were the corvée villagers who paid little or no money and performed regular weekly labor

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<sup>1</sup> I[van] I. Kostiushko, "Razlozhenie feodalnykh otnoshenii i razvitiye kapitalizma v sel'skom khoziaistve Tsarstva Pol'skogo(30-e--nachalo 60-kh godov XIX v.)," in Uchenye zapiski Instituta Slavianovedeniia, X(1954), 222.

<sup>2</sup> Bortkiewicz, Nadziały, p. 128.

duties, usually three or more days per week. The second category were the money renters who performed only limited corvée. As a rule, they were not engaged in the regular weekly labor on the manorial farm. Thirdly, there were the "genuine" money renters who did no compulsory labor but had all their duties commuted to a money payment. The noted agrarian historian Władysław Grabski included the last two categories in the money renting class of peasants, his criterion being whether a peasant contributed regular weekly corvée or not. On the whole, such a breakdown seems practical enough and is statistically useful; however, doubtful cases can still crop up. For example, the so-called "boyar" peasants of Gražiskiai village present a problem. These villagers did regular corvée consisting of only a single day of "draft" work weekly. The annual money payment of the "boyars" (36 złoty) was almost certainly a genuine rent in lieu of corvée.<sup>1</sup> Depending on how one wanted to view that single day of regular corvée, such peasants could be considered as either corvée villagers or money renters, although they were clearly distinct from most peasants who performed regular compulsory labor. Fortunately, there seem to have been relatively few such cases so that they probably do not overly distort contemporary statistical summaries.

Money renting peasants who performed no labor obligations at all formed a very small percentage of the peasants on the private estates of Trans-Niemen Lithuania. It is estimated that barely 11% of all private peasant holdings above three morgi in area were those of exclusive money renters in Augustów province: this was the lowest percentage in the entire Kingdom. A much higher percentage of the province's private

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 129: Grażyszki, Parish Inventory of 1820.

peasantry were classified as money renters with limited corvée duties (21%), while the remaining 61% were regarded as primarily corvée peasants.<sup>1</sup>

Peasant money renting was far more prevalent on state lands than on the private domains; it is estimated that by 1859 over 90% of the crown peasants were money renters.<sup>2</sup> As early as 1830 it is probable that up to half of the villagers on crown lands were paying money rents in lieu of compulsory labor.<sup>3</sup> These figures are for the Kingdom as a whole; there is no evidence that the situation was much different in the Lithuanian districts of Augustów province. A series of degrees and regulations (for example, in 1835 and 1841) insured the Kingdom's state peasants more advantageous and well-defined guidelines for the transfer of labor duties to money rents than was the case on private domains.

A couple of factors suggest that the introduction of money rents was related to peasant prosperity and the emergence of a strong class of well-to-do landed villagers. One is the statistical relationship of holding size to the type of obligation a household performed. The other, to be considered in more detail later, is the violence with which the villagers of the Užnemunė region objected to compulsory labor and demanded some kind of rent reform.

It is clear that, on the whole, money renters had a tendency toward large holdings. Nineteenth-century statistics estimated that, by the middle of the century, only 19% of corvée peasant households had holdings of more than twenty morgi. On the other hand, 24% of the landed households that combined corvée with money rents had such holdings, while 35%

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<sup>1</sup> Bortkiewicz, Nadziały, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Inglot, Historia, II, 348.

<sup>3</sup> Grabski, Historia, I, 100.

of the "real" money renters fell into this category. Conversely, more of the corvée peasants had small holdings.<sup>1</sup> Such were the figures for the Kingdom of Poland; the connection of money renting to holding size (and hence affluence) was obvious in Trans-Niemen Lithuania as well. Well over half(61.2%) of the money renters on private estates here had holdings of thirty morgi or more; only 32.5% of the corvée villagers had holdings of that size. Of the affluent peasants(those with holdings of 45 morgi or more) on southwestern Lithuania's private estates, four-fifths were money renters. Conversely, 71% of Trans-Niemen Lithuania's smallholders on private domains were corvée peasants.<sup>2</sup> This was the situation on private estates in 1859; the crown domains need not be considered since by this time the overwhelming majority of the landed peasantry on public estates were money renters. Clearly, money renting and large peasant holdings went hand in hand. The largest corvée holdings were an anomaly; in fact, historian Grabski described them as "relics of the ancient past."<sup>3</sup>

A major reason for the prosperity of the money renters was their liberation from many of the burdensome and irritating obligations that hindered the economic development of the household which contributed compulsory labor. For example, the corvée villager was forced to maintain draft animals that he used on the manorial farm with his own resources. If the corvée family lacked enough grown children, it was forced to hire farmhands solely to help fulfill the manorial labor duties.<sup>4</sup> Obviously, the peasant who performed compulsory labor had less

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<sup>1</sup> See Bortkiewicz, Nadziały, pp. 189-191. <sup>2</sup> Grabski, Historia, I, 420.

<sup>3</sup> Grabski, Historia, I, 421.

<sup>4</sup> Grabski, Historia, I, 410.

time and energy to plan and organize the production on his own holding. Only the wealthier corvée peasants, those who were able to hire farm-hands to fulfill most of their labor duties, approached the relative economic freedom of action enjoyed by the well-to-do and affluent money renting villagers.

The introduction of money rents and the decline in the importance of corvée was a twin process that continued throughout the first half of the 19th century. On the state lands, this process went relatively smoothly. On the private and Church domains, the elimination of corvée was a far more difficult process and was, on the whole, far less beneficial to the peasants. The larger private estates were more apt to introduce rent reform, while the smaller ones tended to hold on more stubbornly to the compulsory labor system. Small estates often lacked the capital necessary to invest in the reorganization of the manorial farm's agricultural production, especially in the hiring of free labor to replace corvée work.

During the 19th century, there was an undercurrent that ran directly opposite the general trend towards rent reform: the persistence, and even intensification, of the corvée system on some estates. Now it was not at all unusual for the land tenure and obligations structure of a certain village to change over a number of years. The Church peasants of Kunigiškiai village underwent considerable change in the reapportionment of their holdings and obligations between 1804 and 1814. However, since only half of the households listed in 1814 were clearly related to the peasants of the 1804 inventory, there is a strong possibility that the changes in the village of Kunigiškiai were effected by the devastation

and dislocation of the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>1</sup>

The case of the peasants of Gražiskiai village, on the other hand, was quite different; the changes in the obligations structure that occurred here had no obvious relation to an outside calamity. As mentioned above, the 1820 inventory of Gražiskiai listed a number of peasant "boyars" who performed minimal corvée in return for a money rent payment. The 1860 parish inventory of this same Gražiskiai village made no mention of any "boyar" peasants; there were only "fully landed"(Pol. całorolni) peasants who were now required to perform two days of regular weekly "draft" corvée from April 23rd to September 29th, and one day each of "draft" and "pedestrian" labor weekly during the rest of the year. The rent payment in 1860 was four silver rubles and 19 kopecks annually, equal to about 28 złoty, almost the same rent that was paid forty years previously. The transport levy was the same as it had been in 1820.<sup>2</sup> In comparing the 1860 Gražiskiai inventory to the one in 1820, it is evident that the labor duties of the landed peasants had increased considerably over the forty years with no significant reduction in the money rent payment.

The plight of the Gražiskiai peasants was by no means atypical for the smaller private and Church estates where rent reform lagged behind the state lands and the large private estates.<sup>3</sup> The persistence of corvée is evident in statistics collected by Władysław Grabski which show virtually no momentum in the introduction of money rents on private

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 378: Pojewoń, Akt wizitacyji, 1804 and Parish Inventory of July 26, 1814.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 129: Gražyszki, Parish Inventory of 1860.

<sup>3</sup> Kostiushko, "Razloženie," 192.

estates in Trans-Niemen Lithuania between 1846 and 1859. This stagnation in rent reform contrasted with other areas of the Kingdom where the number of peasants paying money rents increased sharply.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the increase in the labor duties of the corvée peasantry, regardless of rent reform, was noticeable during this same period in Russian Lithuania<sup>2</sup> as well as the Kingdom of Poland;<sup>3</sup> this was a major cause of peasant unrest.

Available information indicates that the regular corvée obligations of the peasants in Lithuania's Užnemunė region, heavy as they were, averaged out to be among the lowest in the entire Kingdom of Poland. The district of Marijampolė, according to 1859 figures, had the lowest regular weekly corvée obligations in the country, even though the holdings of the corvée peasants were the largest in the Kingdom. On the other hand, the compulsory labor duties of the peasants living in the Polish areas of Augustów province were about twice as burdensome as those of the villagers in the Lithuanian districts. Lower corvée duties were a characteristic of western Lithuania as a whole, especially Samogitia; in the minds of contemporary observers, there was no doubt that lower labor duties and the peasant's economic prosperity were tied together. One 19th century ethnographer observed:

The peasants here [in Samogitia] are less oppressed by corvée than anywhere else for they usually pay money rents. However, those who do work for the landowner labor no more than two or three days per week. Since they have more time for their own work, [these peasants] also have a far better level of prosperity than those of other areas.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Grabski, Historia, I, 401, 403. <sup>2</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos, pp. 268 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Kostiushko, "Razloženie," 198 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Adam Jucewicz, "Kilka słów o wieśniakach żmudzkich, wyjęte z 'Wspomnień Żmudzi'," Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego, VII(1845), 181.

Again, the logic is clear: the less corvée, the more time for the peasant to develop his own holding. Easier labor duties, combined with large holdings in the Užnemunė region (and western Lithuania generally) offer at least one strong explanation for the emergence of a prosperous peasant class, even among corvée villagers.

Such a conclusion, however, must also consider several peculiarities of the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts which would make the obligations of the local peasantry somewhat more burdensome than they seem initially. For one thing, the corvée peasants of Trans-Niemen Lithuania paid more of the "additional" money rents than anywhere else in the Kingdom (see above, p. 100). Furthermore, the transport levy in Augustów province averaged ten times that of the rest of the Kingdom. This can be at least partially explained by the proximity of the province to the major seaports of Königsberg and Memel (Klaipėda) as well as the role of the Niemen River, the major grain export route for this region. The transport levy persisted in southwestern Lithuania right up to the 1864 reform, despite the fact that the ukaz of 1846 ostensibly forbade the traditional "gratuitous" obligations which included both the tribute in kind and the transport levy. However, some landowners were able to rewrite their estate inventories in such a way as to interpret the transport levy as no longer a "gratuitous" obligation.<sup>1</sup> In the Lithuanian districts, the transport obligation was frequently translated into a cash payment, a form of the obligation that the peasants preferred but that nonetheless constituted an irritating burden.

The controversy over the Tyzenhauz reforms of the 1760s (see Chapter I), and the peasantry's struggles with the landowners over labor duties in the

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<sup>1</sup> Bortkiewicz, Nadziały, pp. 122-123.

19th century, clearly showed that the peasants considered corvée as the one great burden which, more than anything else, denied them opportunity of economic development. Labor duties, unlike the money rents, were never seen by the peasantry as a progressive factor, a step in the right direction. The peasants clung to corvée only when they feared sham rent reform or expropriation of their holdings.

An important issue that eventually surfaced between the peasantry and the landowners was the question of the basis on which obligations were demanded. Simple precedent was clearly the primary basis, although not the only one. In 1843 the Kingdom's Secretary of State noted that the duties, rights and privileges of corvée peasants on crown lands had been established primarily through "local customs." On the other hand, some estates gave their peasants "privileges"(for example, free use of timber resources, fishing rights, etc.) based on specific charters. The holders of mills, inns and other "specialized" real estate sometimes held their lands simply "in perpetuity."<sup>1</sup> On some private estates, peasants occupied their holdings on the basis of so-called "perpetual contracts" passed down through the generations. Others held their land, or at least part of it, by virtue of a temporary lease(for example, see above, p. 92).

The overwhelming majority of the peasantry, however, held its land without the benefit of any type of written document. It is estimated that 93% of the holdings on private and Church estates in Augustów province belonged to this last category.<sup>2</sup> State peasants and those living

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6942, Secretary of State Report, January 23, 1845.

<sup>2</sup> Bortkiewicz, Nadziały, p. 20.

on donated estates did not need legal contracts since their duties, at least in theory, were regulated not by the holder or manager of the estate, but by the crown. At any rate, the government's encouragement of so-called "voluntary contracts" between private landowners and the peasants did not significantly diminish the landowners' arbitrary economic powers over the corvée villagers.

In general, the system of agrarian obligations remained confused, diverse and largely arbitrary throughout the first half of the 19th century, particularly on the private estates.<sup>1</sup> For example, on state lands, the village tenants (Pol. komornik) were free from most labor duties, but on private estates the duties of these villagers depended entirely on local precedent and the will of the landowner.<sup>2</sup> Repeated attempts to regulate, standardize and reform the obligations system met with failure. These attempts were finally overshadowed by the violent events of the early 1860s. It was then that the obligations dilemma was solved "from above" by the Tsar.

#### The Obligations to the State and the Church.

The labor duties and money rents that the peasants contributed to the manor for the right to use their holdings were the villagers' major, but by no means only, economic obligations. The peasantry owed taxes and services to institutions outside the boundaries of the estate and the village, specifically to the State and the Church. The major state tax

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<sup>1</sup> See Augustów Governor Tykiel's letter to the Commission for Internal Affairs in Grynwasz, Kwestia agrarna, 96-97.

<sup>2</sup> Stanisław Śreniowski, Studia nad prawiem i stosunkami agrarnymi Królestwa Polskiego 1831-1864 (Warsaw, 1963), pp. 52-53.

on the peasants in the Kingdom was the so-called chimney or "smoke" levy(Pol. podymny, Lith. padūmė), established in Poland and Lithuania as early as the 17th century.<sup>1</sup> The podymny was levied on each peasant homestead or inhabited building. If there were several peasant households living in the same building, but farming their own separate holdings, then the state counted each peasant family as a separate taxable unit.<sup>2</sup> Basically, the podymny levy was a land tax. In the Trans-Niemen region of Lithuania during the late 18th century, it averaged roughly eight złoty per household. During the first half of the 19th century, the peasants paid something approximating this amount. The Church peasants of Seirijai parish paid between four and six złoty,<sup>3</sup> while the villagers of Kunigiškiai contributed eight złoty to the chimney levy. This latter amount is about the highest podymny levy for peasants that we meet up with in the Church inventories of Trans-Niemen Lithuania. The podymny levy was not only a tax on the peasantry; actually, it was paid by monasteries, rectories--even manorial property came under this tax.

Another state levy which afflicted the village populace was the road construction and maintenance obligation(Pol. szarwarka). In 1816 the Kingdom's Administrative Council placed the responsibility for maintaining roads on the rural gmina which was required to provide labor and/or money for this purpose. The road levy was in addition to the payments collected on roads and bridges by other agencies, such as the

<sup>1</sup> W. Trzetrzeński, O podatkach gruntowych stałych w Królestwie Polskim obecnie istniejącym, 2nd ed.(Warsaw, 1861), pp. 52-55.

<sup>2</sup> A[ntanas] Veriga-Darevskis, Dvaro padūmės mokesčis Užnemunėje, Vytauto Didžiojo Universiteto Teisių Fakulteto Darbai, Vol. 6, No. 7 (Kaunas, 1932), pp. 393-394.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 476: Sereje, Acta Visitationes, September 25, 1811.

tolls that the towns collected on market days (see below Chapter XII).

The road maintenance obligation rarely exceeded more than six days of labor annually. In 1858 the government combined the podymny tax and the road maintenance obligation into a single levy.<sup>1</sup>

There were still other burdens. The peasants were forced to pay a recruit levy to defray military costs. Until 1816 this levy was collected in kind; afterwards, it was paid in cash. The recruit levy often exceeded the land tax and was a burden held mainly by the state peasants.<sup>2</sup> The village gmina, meaning the peasants, was required to contribute to the transport of vagabonds and escapees to the towns; this was another irksome obligation.<sup>3</sup> The various state taxes, as well as such levies as the tax on salt and other goods, were a considerable fiscal burden on the peasantry.

Besides the obligations that the state exacted in labor, kind and money, it also collected a levy in "people" through the infamous military draft. As a rule, the government required a certain number of recruits from each rural gmina, according to its size. Service in the army was long and hard, usually ten years or more in the Kingdom of Poland. The draftees came primarily from the poorer peasants since wealthier villagers were often able to buy their way out of the draft.<sup>4</sup> The threat of the draft was a major incentive for peasants to flee their village; thus, military recruitment contributed to populating the countryside with

<sup>1</sup> Trzetrzewiński, O podatkach, pp. 65 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Kirkor-Kiedroniowa, Włościanie, pp. 292-295.

<sup>3</sup> Sbornik administrativnykh postanovlenii Tsarstva Pol'skogo, Vol. I, No. 4: Gminnye povinnosti (Warsaw, 1867), 14 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Oskar Kolberg, Dzieła wszystkie, Vol. 53: Litwa, ed. Medard Tarko (Warsaw, 1966), 53 ff.

a restless, sometimes criminal element.

The manorial obligations and the burdens exacted by the state still did not exhaust the list of peasant responsibilities. The Church also took its share of peasant wealth, although in Trans-Niemen Lithuania it did so in a manner different from that in the rest of the Kingdom. In the Polish areas of the Kingdom, the Church tithe (Pol. dziesięcina, Lith. dešimtinė) was the basic "tax" that the peasant paid to his parish and it survived in many areas until the middle of the 19th century.<sup>1</sup> The Church tithe as such did not exist in most parts of the Lithuanian Užnemunė region in the 19th century, although some documents indicate that it had been paid in earlier times.<sup>2</sup> In the Lithuanian districts, the peasants' main contribution to the Church was exacted during the clergy's traditional Christmas visitation of the parishioners (Pol. koleda, Lith. kalėdojimas). The contributions, usually in kind, that the pastors and their curates collected during the course of their annual visits were supposed to be voluntary. In fact, these visits sometimes turned into outright extortions. Some pastors saw the annual visitations as an opportunity to "make up" for the lack of a regular tithe in the Lithuanian parishes. This was especially true where the parish lacked a farm of its own. These enforced contributions from the peasants not only abused the Lithuanian villagers' traditional hospitality, but they were illegal to boot.<sup>3</sup> The abuse of the Christmas visitation by some of the clergy in the Lithuanian parishes led to unseemly disputes among certain priests

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<sup>1</sup> Bortkiewicz, Nadziały, pp. 136-141.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 378: Pojewon, Parish Inventory of July 26, 1814.

<sup>3</sup> Jemielity, Diecezja, pp. 200-201.

over their respective "territories." In 1838 a certain Father Lewicki complained to the bishop that a priest from a neighboring church had "collected the kolęda from the parish belonging to me, from which he left me barely a third of the grain, while keeping two thirds [of the grain] as well as the meat and flax. This he then sold for 260 złoty in cash."<sup>1</sup> Such episodes were indicative of the fact that, although the visitation contributions were in no way legal or based on any inventory of obligations, they practically constituted a Church tax on the peasants.

The Catholic Church also collected payments or honorariums, known as the jura stolae payments, for the various services that its priests provided the parishioners; these included masses, funerals, weddings, christenings and the like. Remuneration for such services was "progressive." All parishioners were divided into three "classes." The first consisted of landed nobility and high government officials, the second was made up of petty gentry and townspeople, while the peasants formed the third group. This last class of parishioners enjoyed the cheapest rates. The peasant's jura stolae contributions ranged from two złoty for a wedding to three złoty for a vigil that was sung. The Church charged three złoty for burial "with chanting for persons over fifteen years of age," but there was a discount of two złoty for anyone under fifteen. One could also pay for special frills, such as bells, additional candles and singing.<sup>2</sup> Needless to say, such commercialism led to abuses by a number of pastors with a consequent loss of respect for the Church among some of the peasantry.

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 219: Kraśny, Lewicki to Bishop Straszyński, February 10, 1838.

<sup>2</sup> Kazys Grinius, "Keletas dokumentų Seinų vyskupystės historijai," in Lietuvių tauta, Vol. 1, No. 3(1907-1910), 396-397.

The list of the peasantry's economic burdens has not been entirely exhausted, but the most important obligations have been mentioned.<sup>1</sup> From the peasant's point of view, these obligations hindered his economic development. They inhibited his ability to use his own labor to improve the individual holding's productivity and acquire the things that could bring the peasant a reasonable level of affluence. The villagers saw the money rents as the least of all evils within the obligations system since they enabled the peasants to organize their own labor and resources more freely. In other words, the money rent gave villagers a degree of economic autonomy.

Yet, despite the burdens of obligations and taxes, a strong class of prosperous peasantry emerged in southwestern Lithuania during the first half of the 19th century and, although its prosperity was based on the relatively large peasant land holdings in the Užnemunė region, the affluence of well-to-do villagers also depended on the peasant holding's agricultural productivity.

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<sup>1</sup> The problem of the liquor monopoly, rights to pasture and woodland, and estate fees is considered in later chapters. These methods of exploiting the peasants were not "obligations" in the strict sense.

CHAPTER VII  
AGRICULTURE AND THE PEASANT ECONOMY

The Sources of Peasant Wealth.

Contemporary observers who noticed the relative prosperity of the peasants in the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts came away impressed not only with the large holdings of the villagers, but also with their possessions and sound agricultural practices. Władysław Grabski collected some description of prosperous "superpeasants" in southwestern Lithuania, taken from the archives of the Agricultural Society and dating from the middle of the 19th century.

The holdings of Augustów gubernia's Lithuanians are noted for their wealth. Gilis from Poniemun[Panemuné], a corvée peasant, has sixty morgi of land, keeps eight work horses, five colts, four oxen and 24 other head of cattle; he also sows clover in the [formerly] fallow fields. Woyczaytis from Oszkobole[Ožkabaliai] in Kalwaria[Kalvarija] district, a 51-morga holder, also plants clover . . . , owns two looms, has buildings with brick foundations, three iron-shod wagons, iron harrows, and gets an eight-fold yield. Mejsztas from . . . [Marijampolė district] holds 58 morgi, of which 17 is poor quality pasture, but [he] keeps seven horses, 28 head of cattle, 20 sheep and 20 pigs. Olszewski from Skrawdzie[Skriaudžiai] has a homestead consisting of 33 morgi of arable land and ten morgi of meadows, keeps 12 horses, eight oxen, 12 cows, 12 lambs, 45 sheep and 15 pigs. Olszewski's household contains 28 people. In Samogitia[sic], therefore, we have examples of a high degree of affluence among peasant households.<sup>1</sup>

The households described above were exceptionally rich by any standard of the time. These households contained the major elements of the Lithuanian well-to-do peasantry's prosperity: the use of new and "progressive" crops(for example, clover), new methods of land use(such as planting on

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<sup>1</sup> Grabski, Historia, I, 450. Grabski, like a few of his Polish contemporaries, termed Trans-Niemen Lithuania "Samogitia," apparently considering the latter an extension of the former; this is inaccurate.

formerly fallow fields), high yields, the large number of domestic animals, improved housing and the use of better agricultural tools.

Naturally, the relative prosperity of the Lithuanian peasants of Augustów province aroused some comment among the landed nobility. One local landowner who called them the "richest in the entire Kingdom" noticed that some of the Lithuanian peasants "have begun to degenerate into estate owners with frock coats."<sup>1</sup> In fact, one peasant from the prosperous Šilgaliai village (see above, p. 74) seems to have actually become a genuine landowner. This villager reportedly bought the Kaimeliai estate from the wealthy Tyszkiewicz family for 25,000 rubles. Furthermore, to show that he was now a "landowner and sire," he Polonized his surname from Povilaitis to Pawłowicz.<sup>2</sup>

Inevitably, different theories were offered to explain the preponderance of wealthy peasant households among the landed villagers of the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts. Some landowners maintained that the peasants of this region had profited from "numerous plunders during the time of the disastrous French retreat." Others attributed the prosperity of the peasants to the businesslike, no-nonsense character of the Lithuanian villagers themselves. More sober observers thought that the geographic position of southwestern Lithuania put her in a favorable position for trade, thus enhancing the development of the peasant economy. Some believed that the villagers' prosperity was the result of the "traditional protection which the local peasants enjoyed," especially the practice of money renting on the crown lands, and the reasonable

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<sup>1</sup> Goltz, "Kilka słów," 285.

<sup>2</sup> Totoraitis, Sūduvos-Suvalkijos, pp. 686-687; Połujanśki, Wędrówki, p. 384.

labor duties "rarely exceeding three days per week here." Finally, others were impressed with the agricultural nature of the locality which was ostensibly "favorable for the maintenance of cattle and horses, as well as for the growing of flax."<sup>1</sup>

The "plundering" accusation can be easily dismissed as an important causative factor in the emergence of a prosperous peasantry. Psychological characteristics of the villagers--the alleged industriousness, intelligence, orderly nature and thrift of the Lithuanian peasants--are mentioned by several serious scholars such as Grabski and Połujanński and, therefore, should be dealt with. Grabski bolstered the psychological argument by pointing out that the Belorussians and Ukrainians of the Kingdom had the same advantageous conditions for their agricultural development as the Lithuanians of Augustów province: large holdings, good soil, extensive meadows and pasture for animal husbandry, etc. The relatively lower level of economic prosperity among these Slavic peasants, Grabski maintained, was due to the fact that the people were "less intelligent and did not understand the need for progress in agriculture, did not appreciate order and, for this reason, were less able to take advantage of their possessions."<sup>2</sup> Grabski also attacked the Polish peasants of the Kingdom for their lack of "ingenuity and resourcefulness," qualities he attributed to the Lithuanian peasants of Augustów province.<sup>3</sup> Aleksander Połujanński, the well-known traveler and ethnographer, also thought he discerned a more serious, "orderly" side to the Lithuanian peasant when compared to his Slavic neighbors. Połujanński described

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<sup>1</sup> Goltz, "Kilka słów," 285-286.

<sup>2</sup> Grabski, Historia, I, 450.

<sup>3</sup> Grabski, Historia, I, 451.

vividly the neat, prosperous homesteads of the well-to-do villagers in the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts.<sup>1</sup> On the whole, 19th-century observers tended to place more faith in "national" psychological traits as causative factors in human behavior than we do today. There is no doubt that prosperous peasants behaved differently from poorer ones. In the Lithuanian districts, where the well-to-do villagers were more concentrated, it was, perhaps, tempting to see the prosperous peasant "type" as a regional phenomenon rather than a social or historical one, and to assume that certain psychological characteristics or behavior caused prosperity, without considering that the opposite could just as well be true.

In any case, the search for psychological factors in the emergence of an affluent peasant class would be a hazy and unrewarding task, one obvious obstacle being the lack of reliable sources of any kind. A description of certain agricultural factors would be, perhaps, the simplest way of explaining the bases, if not the exact causes, of the relative economic well-being that was a characteristic of so many villagers in southwestern Lithuania.

Grabski's description of affluent peasant holdings above points up at least one extremely important source of village wealth in Trans-Niemen Lithuania: the very large number of horses, cattle and livestock in general. Połujański, after traveling extensively throughout the Trans-Niemen region, calculated that a Lithuanian 30-morga holder "keeps, during the winter, four horses, four oxen, three cows, four calves, thirty sheep, a herd of ten pigs, six geese, twelve chickens."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Połujański, Wędrówki, p. 441.

<sup>2</sup> Połujański, Wędrówki, pp. 440-441.

In fact, Augustów province had the highest number of cattle and horses per peasant holding in the entire Kingdom. Not surprisingly, it was Marijampolė district, the most fertile and developed of the Lithuanian districts, that had the highest average: an estimated three draft horses per thirty morgi(one włoka) of peasant land in the mid-1840s. The average for the Kingdom was 1.3 draft horses per włoka. In terms of cattle, it is estimated that there were 4.5 heads per one peasant włoka in Marijampolé district; this compares with 3.4 heads per włoka for the entire Kingdom of Poland. The two other Lithuanian districts(Kalvarija and Sejny) had lower ratios of horses and cattle when compared to Marijampolé, but still substantially higher ones than those for Poland as a whole.<sup>1</sup> The figures for the peasant ownership of livestock would be even more lopsided in favor of the Lithuanian areas of the Kingdom if we considered them by household; there were many 30-morga holdings in Trans-Niemen Lithuania, far fewer in the rest of Poland.

The relatively large number of cattle and horses on peasant holdings was also a characteristic of western Russian Lithuania, especially Samogitia and the Šiauliai area. An 1836 estimate for an affluent peasant holding in the rich Šiauliai district(uezd) is that it kept between two to five horses, up to four oxen, five or six cows. In general, the abundance of cattle and horses was an aspect of the western Lithuanian lands and is not noticeable in eastern Lithuania and Belorussia.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Marian Żychowski, "Stan gospodarstwa wiejskiego w Królestwie Polskim w świetle statystyk z lat 1842-1848," in Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych, XIX(1957), 146-147 and A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 241A: Lissków, Liszków Parish Inventory of March 11, 1817.

<sup>2</sup> N[ikolai] N. Ulashchik, "Skotovodstvo v Litve i Zapadnoi Belorussii (1811-1861)," in Materialy po istorii sel'skogo khoziaistva i krest'ianstva SSSR, IV(Moscow, 1960), 162-163.

The peasant considered his livestock an extremely important economic asset. Połujański noted that even many 15-morga holders of modest means would keep as many as five or six horses and a dozen head of cattle.<sup>1</sup> Even poor smallholders would try to hold on to a horse.<sup>2</sup> Animal husbandry on peasant holdings played a more important role in Augustów province than in the rest of the Kingdom. During the first quarter of the 19th century, for example, Augustów province was next to last in grain production, but third among the provinces of the Kingdom in the number of cattle, despite a relatively small population.<sup>3</sup>

The livestock, especially horses and cattle, were critical to the landed peasant's economic well-being in several ways. First of all, horses and oxen provided essential draft power for plowing. It was during the first half of the 19th century that horses increasingly replaced oxen as the source of power for plowing, especially in western and southwestern Lithuania.<sup>4</sup> Although oxen were generally cheaper to maintain, horses proved stronger, more adaptable and considerably more versatile.<sup>5</sup> Besides draft power, the peasant holding's livestock provided the peasant with the only source of fertilizer that he knew in the 19th century. Cattle and the lesser animals were also sources of meat, milk products, wool, leather and fat.

Another important way in which horses and cattle helped establish the peasant's prosperity was as a source of capital. A good horse or

<sup>1</sup> Połujański, Lasy, I, 364-365.      <sup>2</sup> Goltz, "Kilka słów," 282.

<sup>3</sup> Czesław Strzeszewski, Kryzys rolniczy na ziemiach Księstwa Warszawskiego i Królestwa Polskiego 1807-1830(Lublin, 1934), pp. 21-22.

<sup>4</sup> Ulashchik, Predposylki, p. 185.

<sup>5</sup> Dundulienė, Zemdirbystė, pp. 139, 145-146.

ox could, as capital, be the peasant's most prized possession. Between 1826 and 1832 prices in Sejny for horses and oxen were over 100 złoty. A cow cost about 70 złoty, a sheep brought in ten złoty, while a pig went for about seven złoty.<sup>1</sup> If these prices are compared to those of some other commodities in the countryside, then the value of the peasant's livestock becomes readily apparent. During this time, the peasant's house was valued at prices as low as 140 złoty; in fact, few houses exceeded the value of 300 złoty.<sup>2</sup> The annual payment for money renters on a large holding rarely topped 80 or 90 złoty. Thus, a horse or ox that could be sold on the market was a valuable item for the peasant who needed to raise cash. In a sense, a horse could be a peasant's money as well as draft power.

One problem with this type of "capital" was its vulnerability during the lean years, just at the time when the peasant needed it most. Villagers who owned many animals had trouble feeding them during poor harvests. On the other hand, cattle, and even horses, provided needed food reserves during emergencies. It is reported that during bad harvests or low flax prices, some peasants were able to "save themselves by slaughtering [their] horses and oxen."<sup>3</sup> Finally, the horse export trade, mainly to Prussia, provided a source of revenue for the local economy of Trans-Niemen Lithuania. The peasants' smaller domestic animals, especially sheep and pigs, provided a supplementary source of income for the village. However, neither Augustów province nor its Lithuanian districts were

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<sup>1</sup> Witold Jemielity, "Parafialne szkoły elementarne w guberni augustowskiej(1815-1848)," in Rocznik Białostocki, XII(1974), 238.

<sup>2</sup> Grabski, Historia, I, 449; cf. A. G. A. D., KRSW-7609, Gmina Mayor of Balwierzyszki[Balbieriškis] to KRSW, May 1, 1852, k. 107-110.

<sup>3</sup> Butkiewicz, "Opis," 294.

especially notable in this area.<sup>1</sup>

Although animal husbandry, and especially the horse and cattle trade, played an especially important role in the economy of the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts, the raising of crops was, naturally, the most important activity of most peasants. In this regard, two factors distinguished the Lithuanian districts from the rest of the Kingdom: the high ratio of peasant holdings to manorial lands, and the importance of the flax industry to the village economy. The peasants of Augustów province held more estate land than did peasants in any other region of Poland. One historian estimated that, at the beginning of the 19th century(1810), the peasants held 63% of the plowland in Augustów province.<sup>2</sup> As time went on, this percentage rose; according to Marian Żychowski, the province's villagers held three-fourths of the land by the 1840s. At the same time, it is estimated that the figure for the entire Kingdom of Poland was 44.5%.<sup>3</sup> The prevalence of money renters on the numerous state domains of Augustów province, with a consequent shrinking of the manorial farms, tended to increase the peasants' share of the land. The Lithuanian districts of Augustów province had a higher proportion of peasant holdings in relation to the manorial farms than the province as a whole. In fact, during the first half of the 19th century, Marijampolė district had a higher percentage of peasant-held land than any other district in the Kingdom.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Żychowski, "Stan," 150-151.

<sup>2</sup> Kirkor-Kiedroniowa, Włościanie, pp. 143, 174.

<sup>3</sup> Żychowski, "Stan," 147.

<sup>4</sup> Iuchas and Muliavichius, Nekotorye voprosy, pp. 18-19; T. Szczechura, Ruch chłopski w walce o ziemię 1861-1864(Warsaw, 1962), p. 13.

In Trans-Niemen Lithuania the proportion of peasant land on the estates rose during the first half of the 19th century. This was in contrast to developments in Russian Lithuania; here the private manorial farms consistently expanded faster than the peasant holdings. In fact, this manorial expansion was partly at the expense of village lands.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the peasant holdings on private and Church lands in the Užnemunė region did shrink, but this was the exception in an area where the state peasants formed a majority of the obligated rural population.

Besides the peasant domination of arable land, the second most noticeable characteristic of southwestern Lithuania's agriculture was the importance of flax as a crop.<sup>2</sup> Linen weaving was a significant secondary source of income for most village households. In some areas, for example, Prienai, Naumiestis(Władysławów) and Vilkaviškis, flax production was the major peasant concern. "This article [flax] constitutes their wealth," wrote one contemporary, "and for this reason, the Lithuanian peasants devote most of their land to flax and do not spare the most arduous toils and exertions to raise it."<sup>3</sup> Most of the commercial cloth produced in the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts came from the peasants' homes. The weaving of linen involved mainly women, although, on occasion, men and children also participated in the work. Most Lithuanian peasant homes had at least one loom, while some households had several. The governor of Augustów province estimated that during the years 1850-1854 there

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<sup>1</sup> N[ikolai] N. Ulashchik, "Obezzemlivanie krest'ian Litvy i Zapadnoi Belorussii nakanune otmeny krepostnogo prava," in Revoliutsionnaia situatsia v Rossii, I(Moscow, 1960), 54-55.

<sup>2</sup> Witold Kula, "Włościański przemysł domowy tkacki w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1848-1865," in Przegląd Socjologiczny, VI(1938), 212-213.

<sup>3</sup> Kula, "Włościański przemysł," 203-204.

were between 47,000 and 56,000 looms in his province (including those in towns); these looms produced an estimated three million meters of cloth annually.<sup>1</sup> Between 1848 and 1865 the province of Augustów supplied 36% of the Kingdom's cloth production. The three Lithuanian districts alone accounted for about a fourth of the total which, in turn, represented about 65% of the textile output in Augustów province.<sup>2</sup>

There are differing contemporary estimates as to how much of their linen production the peasants sold; anywhere between one-fifth and one-third of peasant output is thought to have gone to market. The peasants often employed middlemen to transport their cloth to distant markets. Much of the Kingdom's Lithuanian linen went to Warsaw; raw flax, on the other hand, went across the border to Prussia.<sup>3</sup> The villagers also produced linen for local markets, both as an article of exchange within the village itself, and as something to be sold at the fairs and markets in the towns.<sup>4</sup>

At the beginning of the 19th century, flax and the cloth produced from it constituted Lithuania's major agricultural export and article of trade. In central Russian Lithuania, commercial flax made up two-thirds of the state peasants' gross agricultural yield in the early 19th century.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Iuchas and Muliavichius, Nekotorye voprosy, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Kula, "Włościanski przemysł," 167.

<sup>3</sup> Irena Kostrowicka, "Produkcja roślinna w Królestwie Polskim (1815-1864)," in Studia z Dziejów Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego, IV(1961), 37.

<sup>4</sup> Kula, "Włościanski przemysł," 192-195.

<sup>5</sup> V[ytautas] Iu. Merkis, "Eksport zerna i l'na iz Litvy 1795-1861 g.," in Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii Vostochnoi Evropy 1963 g., 437.

Flax remained a major source of revenue for the village even after prices declined dramatically at mid-century.<sup>1</sup> The Lithuanian areas of Poland did not avoid the effects from the decline of flax prices. In the long run, peasant linen was pushed out of the market by domestic factory textiles, as well as by imports. This process, however, was barely visible during the first half of the 19th century.<sup>2</sup>

The government recognized the critical importance of flax to the peasant economy. The government of Augustów province noted in an 1829 report that flax was for many peasant households "the only crop giving the farmer the ability to fulfill his public duties[i.e. taxes], as well as meet other pressing economic needs."<sup>3</sup> In Kaunas gubernia, where it was estimated that flax constituted anywhere from a third to a fourth of the well-to-do peasantry's spring crop, the governor became seriously concerned about soil exhaustion; in 1850 he proposed a ceiling on the area of land that a peasant household could seed with flax. Here, as in Trans-Niemen Lithuania, the flax industry formed the "basis of popular wealth."<sup>4</sup>

Large peasant holdings, the prominence of animal husbandry, and the flax industry were the most obvious agricultural factors that distinguished Trans-Niemen Lithuania's peasant economy from that of the rest

<sup>1</sup> Ulashchik, Predposylki, pp. 172-173.

<sup>2</sup> Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 36-37; Juliusz Łukasiewicz, Przewrót techniczny w przemyśle Królestwa Polskiego w latach 1852-1886(Warsaw, 1963), pp. 14-23.

<sup>3</sup> As quoted in Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 37.

<sup>4</sup> T. A. Koniukhova, "Sel'skoe khoziaistvo gosudarstvennikh krest'ian Vilenskoi i Kovenskoi gubernii v period reformy P. D. Kiseleva," in Materialy po istorii sel'skogo khoziaistva i krest'ianstva SSSR, IV(1960), 241-242.

of the Kingdom. The Lithuanian peasants here were also affected by the general changes in agriculture and agricultural technology that were taking place during the first half of the 19th century.

The Agrarian Revolution and Agriculture in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century.

The 18th century began, and the 19th century continued, a series of basic changes in agriculture all over eastern Europe. Taken together, these changes are sometimes termed an "agrarian revolution."<sup>1</sup> Leaving aside the social ferment in the countryside that occurred at this time and concentrating only on agriculture itself, the changes can be classified into three broad categories: changes in the use of the land, the development of new and improved agricultural tools and the introduction of new crops. In regard to these changes, the first half of the 19th century was a truly transitional stage; while new methods of agriculture were making headway, the traditional ways persisted stubbornly. In the more backward areas of Poland and Lithuania, older methods of farming continued even after newer technology had become dominant.

The most obvious change that occurred in terms of land use in agriculture was the expansion in the area of agriculturally useful land. According to a recent estimate, Poland's arable land increased by about 40% between 1816 and 1859, while land classified as meadows and pasture expanded by 38%. At the same time, the forested areas of the Kingdom shrank by a third; land considered "unutilized and unsuitable for agri-

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<sup>1</sup> Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 9.

culture" decreased in area by about 45%. To some extent, manorial farms in the Kingdom of Poland expanded their areas at the expense of peasant holdings which were deprived of the better lands.<sup>1</sup>

The increase in the area of agriculturally useful land was accompanied by a slow, but steady change in the way this land was utilized. The basic method of farming during the first half of the 19th century remained the three-field system, the traditional form of agriculture known in Lithuania since before the agrarian reforms of the 16th century.<sup>2</sup> Since three-field farming left at least a third of the arable land fallow throughout the year, it was relatively inefficient and allowed an increase in productivity only through exhausting the soil and expanding the area under cultivation.<sup>3</sup> The introduction of new crops was important in enabling some peasant holdings and manorial farms to switch to the more productive system of three-field rotation without the fallow stage. The use of modern crop rotation did not begin on a larger scale until the second half of the 19th century.<sup>4</sup>

Relatively few of the prosperous peasants of Samogitia and Trans-Niemen Lithuania departed from the old three-field system. Larger estates found it easier to adopt new ways of farming. In the mid-1840s several estates introduced crop rotation on their manorial farms, particularly in the more developed and fertile areas of Marijampolė district and the western part of Kalvarija district along the Prussian border.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kostiushko, "Razloženje," 161, 236-237; cf. Arnold, Zarys, II, 326.

<sup>2</sup> Dundulienė, Zemdirbystė, p. 43.      <sup>3</sup> Grabski, Historia, I, 71-72.

<sup>4</sup> Inglot, Historia, II, 306.

<sup>5</sup> Goltz, "Kilka słów," 281-282.

Among the peasants, crop rotation was first noticed on the consolidated holdings of well-to-do and affluent villagers.<sup>1</sup> The poorer landed peasants of Lithuania sometimes adhered to land use even more primitive than the three-field system, including the older two-field system and, in forested areas, extensive use of slash-and-burn agriculture.<sup>2</sup> In general, despite individual efforts to introduce new methods of crop rotation into Poland and Lithuania, the prevailing methods of land use changed only slowly during the first half of the 19th century.

More noticeable changes in agriculture occurred in the area of new crops. The most important new crop, and the one that had the greatest impact on the peasant economy during the early part of the 19th century, was the potato. This crop had been introduced into Lithuania during the 18th century, but it came into its own only during the early 1800s. In Poland, the potato became a basic subsistence crop, instead of just a garden vegetable, during the period of the Duchy of Warsaw. The importance of the potato became apparent during the lean years of 1816 and 1817 when it provided basic subsistence for the peasants.<sup>3</sup> In Russian Lithuania and Belorussia as well, potato cultivation grew dramatically during the early 19th century.<sup>4</sup> The swift rise in potato production, a four-fold increase in the Kingdom during the first half of the 19th century, can be largely explained by the advantages this crop offered

<sup>1</sup> Dundulienė, Žemdirbystė, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos, pp. 40-41.

<sup>3</sup> Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 19; Grabski, Historia, I, 72.

<sup>4</sup> N[ikolai] N. Ulashchik, "Izmeneniiia v khoziaistve krepostnoi Litvy i Zapadnoi Belorussii v sviazi z vvedeniem novykh kultur(kartofel')," in Materialy po istorii sel'skogo khoziaistva i krest'ianstva SSSR, V(1962), 308-311.

the cultivator. The potato gave a greater yield than any other food crop then known, even under relatively poor soil conditions. It provided the poorer peasants with their only defense against starvation during bad grain harvests.<sup>1</sup> Potatoes also enabled more peasants to raise pigs by supplying a source of feed.<sup>2</sup>

The landowner, meanwhile, encouraged the raising of potatoes as a new raw material for the distilling of vodka; it is estimated that land seeded with potatoes provided at least four times more vodka than an equivalent area of grain, while the end product differed little in either taste or quality.<sup>3</sup>

One problem with the potato was that while it gave the peasant small-holder more food from his limited holding, it also made him more vulnerable when the crop failed. The European potato famine struck Poland in the late 1840s; it caused great suffering for the peasantry of the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts as well. In Augustów province, the potato harvest declined by an estimated 60% at this time.<sup>4</sup> This was a serious hardship for the poorer peasantry especially, but it was only a temporary setback for potato production; large harvests resumed by the late 1850s, and the importance of the potato relative to other crops increased during the rest of the 19th century.

In Trans-Niemen Lithuania, the progress of the potato paralleled the

<sup>1</sup> Ulashchik, Predposylki, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> Inglot, Historia, II, 303.

<sup>3</sup> Ulashchik, "Izmenenia," 320-321.

<sup>4</sup> Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 23.

Kingdom as a whole, although with some local variations. Despite the potato famine, the overall production of this crop grew in both Marijampolė and Kalvarija districts between 1842 and 1863; in fact, the yields here were estimated at 16% and 23% higher respectively than was the average for the Kingdom. Sejny district, on the other hand, suffered more intensely from the potato disease of the 1840s. The yield here fell by more than half during the same period.<sup>1</sup>

Aside from the potato, several other new crops gained in prominence during the earlier part of the 19th century. These included flax, hemp and sugar beets. The first has already been discussed. The others were only marginal for the peasant economies of southwestern Lithuania, though they made headway in other parts of the Kingdom of Poland. For example, sugar beets formed the basis for a significant sugar industry in some areas of Poland during the 19th century, but they were virtually unknown in the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts.

During the 19th century, the most important crops from the peasant's point of view were still the traditional grains: wheat, rye, barley and oats. Wheat was crop grown primarily on the manorial farm. More than half of the wheat harvest normally went to market, much of it for export.<sup>2</sup> It was not a particularly important grain in southwestern Lithuania; in fact, Augustów province had the lowest percentage of land seeded with wheat than any other province of the Kingdom during the first half of the 19th century.<sup>3</sup> For one thing, the Lithuanian areas of Poland had

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<sup>1</sup> Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 90-91.

<sup>2</sup> Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 52.

<sup>3</sup> Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 110.

a relatively small ratio of manorial farm land to peasant holdings, and it was on the former that wheat was popular. In addition, the lack of good land transport hindered the organization of wheat exports.

The largest grain harvests during the 19th century were those of rye. This was the staple from which the Lithuanian peasant baked his black bread. Unlike wheat, the surplus rye harvest was earmarked primarily for the domestic market. Although rye was less profitable than wheat (and its market value declined steadily during the 19th century), both peasants and landowners clung to it as the staple grain crop. First of all, rye was easier to grow under the still prevalent three-field system of agriculture. Rye was also a "safer" crop than wheat: it was more resistant to disease and less vulnerable to climatic changes.<sup>1</sup> Rye grew well in the Lithuanian region of the Kingdom. Government figures for 1842 showed that Marijampolė district had one of the highest rye yields in the Kingdom; in 1864 this district led Poland in rye yields.<sup>2</sup>

Barley was destined primarily for consumption and use as a raw material for the estate's distilleries and breweries. It was also widely used as a feed for livestock. Barley harvests increased substantially in Trans-Niemen Lithuania during the first half of the 19th century; according to official statistics, two-and-a-half times between 1842 and 1864. There was also an impressive gain in the yield per land area. Kalvarija district accounted for most of this gain in barley production; it grew more barley per capita than any other district in Poland.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 60.

<sup>2</sup> Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 102.

<sup>3</sup> Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 63, 103.

Oats were another popular crop among the peasants; in southwestern Lithuania, it was only second to rye in land area seeded. In general, the Lithuanian districts produced somewhat higher harvests of oats than other areas of the Kingdom. Sejny district made the most noticeable gains in production: an almost fourfold increase between the early 1840s and mid-1860s. The relative importance of oats in the Užnemunė region is not surprising: this crop was used primarily for feeding livestock, and only secondarily for human consumption and in vodka production. Oats were highly valued for their sturdiness as a crop and their relatively mild effect on the soil.<sup>1</sup>

The last of the major "traditional" crops were peas, one of the oldest foods known in eastern Europe. It was important to the peasant's diet, providing a major source of protein. Peas took up a relatively small area of land, less than a tenth of that used for rye in the Lithuanian districts of the Kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

Aside from the above traditional crops, during the 19th century the peasants still cultivated certain "relict" crops of which the most prominent were buckwheat and millet. These so-called relict crops had once formed a peasant staple during medieval times, but provided only supplementary food in the 19th century. Buckwheat was an exceptionally hardy plant and grew well in relatively poor soil; however, the yield was low. It provided a kind of gruel and was also made into flour. Of the Lithuanian districts, only Sejny produced any appreciable amounts of buckwheat. If contemporary statistics are to be believed, millet

<sup>1</sup> Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 64-65, 104.

<sup>2</sup> Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 105.

was unknown in the Lithuanian areas of the Kingdom, although it was grown in Augustów province's Łomża district.<sup>1</sup>

In general, with the exception of the "relict" crops, there was a rise in the production of most grains during the first half of the 19th century. One estimate is that world-wide harvests increased by about two and a half times between the early 1820s and the mid-1860s. In eastern Europe, this rise in production was somewhat slower. In the Kingdom of Poland, the growth in harvests and yields went through two distinct stages prior to 1864. During the first stage of growth, between the 1820s and 1840s, extensive methods were used to expand agricultural production, primarily through the increase in the area of arable land. During this period, the potato was an important factor in increasing the food supply and freeing additional land for grain. The second stage, lasting approximately from the mid-1840s to the reform of 1864, was marked by an increase in yields, as well as agricultural productivity generally. In other words, this meant the introduction of more intensive methods of agriculture: improved land use, more and better fertilizers, and the like.

Yet the improvement in agriculture was slowed by the continued prevalence of the outmoded three-field system, the very slow introduction of improved farming tools and the general lack of fertilizer. These were important stumbling blocks to the modernization of agriculture. Perhaps the most significant, and certainly the most debated, obstacle to progress was the backwardness inherent in the use of compulsory peasant labor. Corvée guaranteed the estate a certain level of income and production even with the most outmoded and primitive agricultural

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<sup>1</sup> Kostrowicka, 68-69, 111.

technology; thus, there was little stimulus for modernization. Contemporary landowners were aware of these problems, and during the first half of the 19th century they produced numerous tracts on modern agronomy. Some of the nobility criticized the backwardness of the corvée system and emphasized the need for a new approach to agrarian relations in the Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> In Russian Lithuania there also emerged a considerable interest in agronomy and the modernization of agriculture among the more enlightened nobility.<sup>2</sup> The problem of corvée, as well as the peasants' and landowners' response to it, is considered in more detail in Chapters X and XI.

#### The Agricultural Technology of the Peasant.

Although the first half of the 19th century was a time of slow improvement in land use, introduction of new crops and higher yields, very little progress was made in the area of the peasant's agricultural technology. The basic agricultural tool during this time remained the traditional wooden plow which, despite some local variations, was similar in all of Eastern Europe(Russ. sokha, Pol. socha, Lith. žagrė, arklas). This plow type came with either one or two moldboards. In northern Lithuania, the single-moldboard type of plow predominated, while in the area south of the Niemen River, including the Užnemunė region, the plow usually had two moldboards.<sup>3</sup> The shares were traditionally the only metal parts of the otherwise wooden plow. The persistence of the wooden plow

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<sup>1</sup> Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 81-83.

<sup>2</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos, pp. 210 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Dundulienė, Zemdirbystė, pp. 88-89.

was due to its simplicity, lightness and cheapness; it required relatively little draft power.<sup>1</sup> The twin-moldboard version of the simple wooden plow was known as the "Lithuanian" or "Prussian" type in contemporary agrarian literature. A number of 19th century authors praised it as a relatively efficient tool. Adam Goltz, a landowner from Marijampolė district, thought it was superior to the wooden plow of the Polish Podlasie region, primarily because it was "well-constructed, light and adequate for plowing."<sup>2</sup> M. Oczapowski, one of Lithuania's foremost 19th century agronomists, and V. Mikhel'son, a Russian agrarian expert, extolled the good qualities of the traditional Lithuanian plow; the latter wrote a separate article on the subject in 1849. The Lithuanian plow may have had certain advantages when compared to other, less efficient plowing tools of the time, but its negative qualities became increasingly apparent during the 19th century. The wooden parts of the plow were tied together with rope, and the whole thing often came apart.<sup>3</sup> Working with this light plow quickly exhausted the peasant as he tried to maintain a firm grip when it bounced on the turf. Light plows made shallow furrows which, agronomists came to realize, had harmful effects on the topsoil. Furthermore, new developments in agriculture, such as the introduction of bulbous plants (the potato) and the increasing dependence on fertilizers, demanded deeper plowing of the soil.<sup>4</sup>

During the early 19th century, a growing number of estates began to introduce new iron plows of factory make to replace the inadequate wooden

<sup>1</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Goltz, "Kilka słów," 283.

<sup>3</sup> See Dundulienė, Žemdirbystė, p. 145.

<sup>4</sup> Dundulienė, Žemdirbystė, pp. 88-91; Jučas, Baudžiavos, p. 34.

tools of the peasants. The new iron plows appeared in Poland and the Baltic area in larger numbers during the 1830s and 1840s. They were used almost exclusively on manorial farms, particularly on those where modern crop rotation replaced the old three-field system of agriculture. There is no evidence that peasants used the iron factory plows before the 1860s, although it is possible that a few of the wealthiest villagers may have had them before then. The traditional wooden plow became virtually extinct in Poland and Lithuania only during the early part of the 20th century.<sup>1</sup>

The harrow, used to break up and level the plowed soil, was the other basic tool that the peasant utilized to prepare the ground for planting. Peasant harrows changed little during the first half of the 19th century, except for a tendency to use metal in place of wooden teeth on the harrow boards. As in the case of the plow, metal did not replace wood until the turn of the present century. Metal-toothed harrows were most common among the wealthier peasantry.<sup>2</sup>

Virtually no new or improved harvesting tools came into use on the peasant holdings and manorial farms of Lithuania during the 19th century; however, there was an important reversal of work roles between men and women in regard to harvesting. Until the late 18th and early 19th centuries, peasants used the sickle for reaping, while the scythe was utilized primarily for cutting hay. When the sickle was the major tool for harvesting, it was the women who did the reaping, while the men followed, tying the grain stalks into small bundles and later gathering them into large stacks. It was only natural that, in their traditional reaping

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<sup>1</sup> Dundulienė, Žemdirbystė, pp. 113-114.

<sup>2</sup> Dundulienė, Žemdirbystė, pp. 125-129.

songs, women complained of their own hard work, accusing the men, who ostensibly had the lighter duties, of being lazy and frivolous. This harvesting situation changed when the scythe came into widespread use as a reaping tool during the early 19th century. Since the scythe was much heavier than the sickle, men began to take over the reaping duties; the women, meanwhile, worked at the lighter task of stacking the harvested grain.

Thus, even where no new tool was introduced, a change in the use of existing technology could affect the forms of the peasant household's agriculture, especially its work habits. With a new innovation there were accompanying changes in work roles and, eventually, social conduct. For example, the potato greatly influenced the economy of both the peasant holding and the manorial farm; it also had a practical effect on the village women by giving them the "privilege" of digging up the potato harvest.<sup>1</sup>

Only several of the most important changes in 19th century peasant agriculture have been mentioned; however, these examples suffice to show that the first half of the 19th century was a period of "mixed" traditional and modern agriculture. Despite some limited innovations, traditional agriculture still held sway in Poland and Lithuania. Later in the 19th century older agricultural methods, such as the three-field system and the wooden plow, gave way to more modern technology.

New agricultural technology required capital; for this reason, it appeared first on the manorial farms. Only the very wealthiest peasants could afford to invest any money in new tools. Very few villagers, even

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<sup>1</sup> Dundulienė, Zemdirbystė, pp. 176-178; Katkus, Raštai, pp. 45-46.

among the affluent colonists on exceptionally large holdings, could hope to clear more than a hundred rubles' profit annually before 1864. In fact, relatively few of the well-to-do or affluent peasants could manage half that amount in surplus,<sup>1</sup> while most villagers counted themselves lucky to break even financially. Although Trans-Niemen Lithuania had a much higher percentage of well-to-do peasant households than any other area of the Kingdom, there is no evidence of any massive introduction of new agricultural technology, either in terms of land use, new crops, or agricultural tools. The enlightened and prosperous peasants described above by Władysław Grabski(p.115) were still very much the exception in the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts during the years before 1864.

It was only after the abolition of compulsory labor duties and the enfranchisement of the peasants with land that the villagers of Trans-Niemen Lithuania translated their economic wealth into genuine progress in agricultural modernization, outdistancing the less prosperous peasantry of Poland and Russia in this regard. The iron factory-produced plow, for example, became the basic agricultural tool in western Lithuania by the beginning of the 20th century. In most parts of Russia, on the other hand, the lack of draft power and what Alexander Gerschenkron has called the "depressing effect of the obshchina," the Russian village commune, hindered the introduction of even a simple Western plow.<sup>2</sup> It is clear that the relative wealth of western Lithuania's peasantry was important as a potential cause of its later, more rapid, economic progress.

<sup>1</sup> Julian Bartys, Początki mechanizacji rolnictwa polskiego(Wrocław, 1966), p. 427.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Gerschenkron, Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective(Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 223.

### Harvests, Trade and Regionalism.

Backward agricultural technology and outmoded land usage were not the only obstacles to the development of peasant agriculture in the first half of the 19th century. There were the wars and natural disasters: adverse climate, crop and livestock diseases, poor harvests, human epidemics, floods and hail. To be sure, the peasants had had to put up with such banes ever since the beginnings of agriculture, but the first half of the 19th century seems to have had more than its share of these setbacks. The more prominent natural and man-made disasters are listed below. They significantly altered agricultural production in Poland and Lithuania within the chronological limits of this study. Those that affected southwestern Lithuania with particular severity are marked with an asterisk(\*).<sup>1</sup>

<u>Years</u>	<u>Disasters</u>
1810-1818 .....	*Napoleonic Wars; consistently poor harvests
1820-1821 .....	Famine; primarily eastern Lithuania and Belorussia
1822 .....	*Summer drought; exceptionally cold winter
1829 .....	Livestock epidemic
1830 .....	Partial famine
1830-1831 .....	*November Insurrection; war devastation
1834-1-35 .....	Poor harvests; alternating droughts and floods
1839-1840 .....	Exceptionally small yields; inflation
1843-1845 .....	*Excessive summer rains; very poor harvests; famine; cattle epidemics

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<sup>1</sup> Compiled from Stanisław Siegel, Ceny w Warszawie 1816-1914 (Poznań, 1949), pp. 93-94; Śreniowski, Studia nad prawem, pp. 64-68; Bortkiewicz, Nadziały, pp. 54-55; Inglot, Historia, II, 20-21.

<u>Years</u>	<u>Disasters</u>
1846-1852 .....	*Potato disease; lean years; cholera; partial famine; cattle deaths reach massive proportions
1849-1850 .....	*General loss of livestock
1855 .....	Scarce harvests; epidemics; inflation
1857 .....	Severe hailstorms; floods
1860-1862 .....	*Peasant unrest
1863-1864 .....	*January Insurrection; war devastation
1865 .....	Cholera

Naturally, although each of these setbacks had repercussions throughout Poland and Lithuania, different regions and social classes were affected differently. The state peasants of Kaunas gubernia in Russian Lithuania, for example, escaped the severest effects of the particularly harsh years of the mid and late forties, in large part because of their exceptionally fertile lands and a relatively well-developed export trade.<sup>1</sup> The Lithuanian peasants of the Kingdom, on the other hand, suffered extensively during the same time.<sup>2</sup> On the whole, poor harvests hurt most landed and landless peasants, and threatened the poorer villagers with famine; however, the accompanying rise in grain prices and other foodstuffs meant profits for a number of wealthier peasantry and townspeople who engaged in speculation.<sup>3</sup>

To be sure, there were certain institutions designed to help the peasants during the lean years. The most important were the so-called peasant grain magazines and the communal cash banks. In most of the

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<sup>1</sup> Koniukhova, "Sel'skoe khozaiistvo," 218.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6942, Augustów Governor's Report, January 4, 1846, k. 415-417.

<sup>3</sup> Koniukhova, "Sel'skoe khozaiistvo," 227.

Lithuanian lands, these institutions, like the peasant courts, were administered by elected peasant officials who were, in turn, supervised by landowners or the state. In times when harvests were scarce, peasants could receive loans at interest, either in grain from the magazine, or in cash from the communal bank. Naturally, the villagers had to make annual contributions of money or grain to these banks. Both types of reserve institutions were already known in the 18th century.<sup>1</sup>

The grain warehouses and peasant communal banks were not particularly successful in Trans-Niemen Lithuania. Grain magazines on the private estates were few, while those on the state domains and in the parishes proved inadequate during the critical years of the 1840s.<sup>2</sup> It is true, however, that the Lithuanian districts of Augustów province were in a somewhat better situation than the Polish areas where there were virtually no grain magazines on private estates. In fact, the grain magazine in the gmina of Panemunė (Poniemuń) in the Lithuanian Marijampolė district was held up as an example for the rest of the Kingdom. The local land-owner and gmina mayor, Józef Fergliss, presented his 1824 contract with the peasants as a "progressive" model of a fair and efficient grain magazine for the villagers.<sup>3</sup> Despite individual initiatives, the grain reserve system, particularly on the private estates, remained very modest. Sejny district, for example, had one small private grain warehouse in 1843, but because of the particularly bad harvest of 1844, the peasants

<sup>1</sup> R. Strazdūnaitė, "Valstiečių kasos ir teismai Lietuvoje XIX a. pirmojoje pusėje," in LTSRMA Darbai, Ser. A, VI(1959), 155-156; and the same author's "Valstiečių grūdų magazinai Lietuvoje," in Iš lietuvių kultūros istorijos, LTSRMA, Istorijos Institutas, I(Vilnius, 1959), 234.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7034, Governor Tykiel to KRSW, June 27, 1847, k. 177.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7047, Fergliss to KRSW, May 4, 1824.

could not replace the reserves which they had borrowed the previous spring, and so the magazine failed. Kalvarijs district reported one functioning grain magazine in 1847 that stored rye, barley and oats. The richer Marijampolė district had several private grain magazines.<sup>1</sup>

Mismanagement was a common reason for the failure of grain magazines. One such magazine was established in Kalvarijs district in 1833, but it soon failed "as a result of corruption in the administration."<sup>2</sup> On the Zyliai estate in Marijampolė district, the villagers complained that the estate misused funds from the peasants' communal treasury, and a government investigation during the forties and fifties seems to have confirmed this charge.<sup>3</sup> But even under the best management, grain warehouses provided insufficient reserves against a major calamity. Adam Goltz, a progressive landowner, reestablished the defunct grain magazine in Kalvarijs district (mentioned above) in 1844, introducing a comprehensive bookkeeping system which included a daily withdrawal and deposit record, as well as a master file on each peasant household on the estate. The warehouse itself was guarded and managed by a village headman elected by the estate's peasants; it was considered the "property of the community." Under Goltz's system, every member of this "cooperative" contributed 16 garncy<sup>4</sup> of rye annually, as well as the same amount of barley and twice that amount in oats. A peasant was not allowed to borrow more than one korzec of rye, half this amount of barley, or three korce of

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7048, Governor Tykiel to KRSW, November 29, 1847, k. 180-181.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7048, Contract of the Communal Grain Magazine of Promiež Estate, August 19, 1844, k. 184-186.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7048, Governor Tykiel to KRSW, May 5, 1848, k. 268 ff.

<sup>4</sup> 32 garncy = one korzec = 120 liters or 98 kilograms.

oats at any one time. Interest was payable, in grain, on anything that a peasant withdrew in time of need. The very next spring after this system was established, it had to be modified since the peasants were unable to make their annual contributions on account of the "very critical" harvest situation. A council of village headmen had to release the peasants from their grain payments, and postponed them to the next year, so as not to "expose the villagers to the sufferings of hunger."<sup>1</sup>

In 1850 the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs asked the provincial governments to collect data on the peasant communal grain magazines, and to reform them where necessary.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence, however, that the grain reserve system was improved. The grain warehouses and communal cash banks never became important deterrents to hunger in Trans-Niemen Lithuania. In the final analysis, peasants had few means to protect themselves economically from poor harvests and the various natural calamities. If the estate helped the peasant, it simply put him deeper in debt.

The problem of scarce harvests was related to another important factor that limited the peasant's economic potential: fluctuations in grain prices. Grain prices had long had an impact on the agriculture of western Lithuania, primarily because the Niemen River and the proximity of the Baltic ports made grain an important export. According to land-owner Goltz, Trans-Niemen Lithuania "directed all commercial life towards the Niemen River" and the north, so that consequently there was little

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7048, December, 1850 Session of KRSW Administrative Session.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7048, KRSW to Treasury Commission, May 9, 1850, k. 290.

interest here in trade with the rest of the Kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

Some of western Lithuania's grain and other exports(such as flax) went through Memel(Klaipēda), but even more important for Trans-Niemen Lithuania's trade was the role of the Niemen River in shipping grain exports via Königsberg on the Prussian coast. According to one contemporary estimate, about 300 river craft shipped over 4,000,000 rubles worth of goods for export via the Niemen River in 1860, mainly grain but also flax and forest products. The trade was not spectacular, but it was considerable, especially in view of the complaints regarding the disorganized nature of commerce on the Niemen.<sup>2</sup>

Trans-Niemen Lithuania's major trade partner was her neighbor Prussia. In its trade with Prussia, Augustów province ran up an impressive trade surplus during the first half of the 19th century. In 1843 almost 450,000 rubles worth of goods went to Prussia, but only 136,000 rubles worth was imported from there. Even during the very difficult and hungry year of 1844, the province managed to export a quarter million rubles in goods, while importing only half that amount. About 50% of the exports from Augustów province consisted of flax products(both fiber and seed); the rest was about evenly divided between grains and livestock. Almost all of the Prussian imports, at least during the 1840s, were products associated with weaving and textiles: raw cotton, cotton textiles, and silks.<sup>3</sup> However, southwestern Lithuania, though favorably situated close to the Niemen and Prussia, was hindered in its trade by poor internal

<sup>1</sup> Goltz, "Kilka słów," 275. The one exception was the flax trade with Warsaw.

<sup>2</sup> Gazeta Warszawska, August 7, 1861.

<sup>3</sup> Iuchas and Muliavichius, Nekotorye voprosy, pp. 68-69.

communications and could not take full advantage of the general improvement in commerce during the 1850s.<sup>1</sup>

In its northerly and western orientation in trade, Trans-Niemen Lithuania was utilizing the natural markets and trade outlets which it had exploited during earlier centuries as part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In general, as far as commerce and trade were concerned, the Lithuanian districts of the Kingdom had more in common with Lithuania than Poland.

The peasants were directly affected by the export trade since it, in turn, influenced domestic grain prices. This was important for those peasants who were forced to turn to the domestic market as buyers, either because of a poor harvest or high estate and state obligations which swallowed up most of the villagers' production. In Russian Lithuania the price of grain doubled between 1844 and 1846, and then again during the early 1850s. Even though the forties were difficult years, grain exports continued, spurred on by increased demand in Western Europe which was suffering a grain shortage of its own. As a rule, grain exports came primarily from the manorial farms, but it was also supplemented by peasant production which was bought up in local markets and then resold abroad at higher prices. During the early 19th century, Prussia became a center for speculation in Russian grains headed for England, Denmark and Sweden.<sup>2</sup>

Generally, prices in the Kingdom of Poland paralleled those in Russia. During the forties, grain prices rose in the Kingdom, and continued to do so through the late 1850s. In Trans-Niemen Lithuania wheat prices rose

<sup>1</sup> Grabski, Historia, I, 187-189.

<sup>2</sup> Koniukhova, "Sel'skoe khozaiistvo," 228-229.

somewhat more slowly during the 1850s when compared to other regions of the Kingdom and Russian Lithuania. On the whole, it can be said that, in the Kingdom, prices remained relatively stable until the mid-1840s when they began to rise and continued to do so, with very few exceptions, throughout the rest of the 19th century.<sup>1</sup>

This inflation in grain prices had a dire effect on the less prosperous peasantry. For example, the price of rye, the peasant staple in southwestern Lithuania, averaged about six złoty per korzec in the late 1820s. Wheat was about 23 złoty.<sup>2</sup> By 1858, however, the price for rye had reached 17 złoty per korzec, by 1861 it was already 21 złoty.<sup>3</sup> In the meantime, the peasant's costs and obligations had also increased. In addition, the village household had to, of course, feed and clothe its members and pay the hired hands. Furthermore, a part of the peasant's grain crop had to be set aside for animal feed. A good portion of the peasant's income went for the purchase of salt, the maintenance of agricultural tools, accumulation of a dowry for the unmarried girls, and other expenses. Thus, the average landed peasant household was almost always financially overextended. Even if a peasant could collect a surplus after his subsistence needs and obligations had been met, and could, perhaps, sell some of his produce, he would receive for it barely enough to pay taxes.

Price fluctuations, crop failures, and consistently low yields forced many landed peasants, especially the smallholders, to abandon agriculture altogether, a phenomenon particularly noticeable in the 1840s. Higher

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<sup>1</sup> Siegel, Ceny, pp. 99-100.

<sup>2</sup> Jemielity, "Parafialne szkoły," 238.

<sup>3</sup> Kostrowicka, "Produkcja," 113.

grain prices became especially harmful for those villagers who were no longer grain producers themselves: the landless peasantry. However, a rise in grain prices was not necessarily a disaster for the wealthier peasantry of Trans-Niemen Lithuania; it is known that some well-to-do villagers actually made considerable profit from speculation in grain. But, on the whole, since grain scarcity was a main cause of higher prices, landed peasants suffered from them as well; of course, they were able to meet their consumption needs better than the poorer villagers.

Another factor that stymied the development of modern agriculture in Trans-Niemen Lithuania was regionalism. The harmful economic effects of regionalism were particularly evident in the confusion prevalent in the system of weights and measures. During the first two decades of the 19th century, both Polish and Lithuanian measures were used in Augustów province. The prefect of the Łomża department made a survey of his province in 1810-1811 and found considerable variety in the local measuring systems. The Polish areas of the department used the old Varsovian weights and measures, while the Lithuanian districts utilized both the Lithuanian measures of the Grand Duchy period, and Polish ones.<sup>1</sup> In 1818 the Kingdom's government introduced a new system of weights and measures known as the "New Polish" system. It preserved most of the traditional terminology prevalent in weights and measures, but subdivided them decimally. However, this system never gained universal acceptance, and the peasantry continued using the older, more familiar Polish measuring system, as well as various local variations.<sup>2</sup> In the Lithuanian districts, this meant

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<sup>1</sup> Witold Kula, Miary i ludzie (Warsaw, 1970), p. 342.

<sup>2</sup> See the Augustów governor's 1841 complaint to the government in Kula, Miary, p. 370.

using the "Lithuanian" włóka, which ranged from 30 to 33 morgi and was slightly larger than the "New Polish" włóka. In 1848 an imperial ukaz introduced Russian measures into all public and private dealings in the Kingdom; however, the populace continued to use both pre-partition and "New Polish" measures, especially in land measurements. Not only did the confusing variety of weights and measures impede peasant trade at the market, but it also aroused some antagonism between the peasantry on the one hand, and the townspeople and landowners on the other, because the latter occasionally tried to exploit the changes in measurements to cheat the villagers in business dealings.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, throughout the first half of the 19th century, the agricultural economy of the peasants was influenced by two opposing tendencies. One was the general, if slow, progress in farming methods, increased agricultural production, the introduction of new crops: in short, the progressive direction that was most noticeable on the manorial farm and among affluent villagers. On the other hand were the regressive factors: the persistence of compulsory labor, the backwardness in agricultural technology, and the natural and man-made disasters that prevented much of the peasantry, especially the middle and poorer strata, from reaping the benefits of improvements in agriculture.

#### The Landless Peasants and Industry.

Before concluding this brief survey of agriculture in Trans-Niemen Lithuania, some consideration should be given the landless laborers and industry; that is, the peasant earnings and economic activity not

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<sup>1</sup> Kula, Miary, pp. 358 ff.

tied to a peasant holding. This aspect of the rural economy became increasingly important during the first half of the 19th century as the number of landless peasants rose. The landless villagers sustained themselves not by raising crops in the manner of landed peasants, but rather by selling their labor either to the wealthier peasants or the estate. Landless villagers were a factor in the increasing prominence of what has been termed "capitalistic agriculture," that is, the use of hired rather than compulsory labor on the manorial farm.<sup>1</sup> During the 1850s the procurement of field hands in Poland became more organized. The land-owners established special employment bureaus to recruit farm workers from within the Kingdom and even foreign countries, although some of the nobility opposed this practice, preferring to depend on the local labor supply.<sup>2</sup> The practice of hiring landless peasants as agricultural laborers was also widely known among the peasantry of western Lithuania, especially since the end of the 18th century. In an 1850 survey, the Russian agronomist E. Peterson noticed that almost all Samogitian landed peasants had farmhands; in fact, some of western Lithuania's wealthier villagers employed six or more hired hands.<sup>3</sup>

The conditions of life for the landless agricultural workers were very difficult, both on the manorial farm and in the village. Many, though not all, received small plots of land for their personal use on a temporary basis, but these "holdings" provided only minimal subsistence.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Janina Leskiewiczowa, "System odrobkowy w gospodarce folwarcznej Królestwa Polskiego przed uwłaszczeniem," in Przegląd Historyczny, Vol. 44, No. 1-2(1953), 153-168 and J. Chmura, Problem siły roboczej w rolnictwie Królestwa Polskiego przed uwłaszczeniem(Warsaw, 1959), pp. 168 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Rzepniewska, Sezonowi, pp. 56 ff.      <sup>3</sup> Ulashchik, Predposylki, p. 328.

<sup>4</sup> Rzepniewska, Sezonowi, pp. 83-84; Kostiushko, "Razlozhenie," 229.

The most difficult time of year for the landless laborers was winter and the period before harvests; this was particularly true of regions without significant industry which could employ some of the excess landless populace during the off season.

The wages of agricultural workers depended on the season: pay was considerably lower during the difficult winter months, sometimes half that during the peak harvesting season in August. Women and adolescents averaged between one-half and two-thirds the wages of men during the late 1850s. In fact, wages were never stable and differed considerably according to locality and season.<sup>1</sup>

The wages of agricultural workers rose somewhat during the first half of the 19th century, especially during the 1850s, but they could not keep up with the inflation in food and apparel prices. The inflation in grain prices and the recurring scarcity of food affected the landless laborers more than the rest of the peasantry; not only did such calamities raise the cost of living, but they created intense competition for the fewer jobs available during hard times (see below, Chapter XIII). It would seem reasonable to conclude that during the first half of the 19th century, the already pitiful standard of living among the landless peasantry declined even further.<sup>2</sup> According to some estimates, the wages of the average village laborer were not enough to cover basic food and clothing costs.<sup>3</sup>

During particularly bad times, for example, the early and mid-1840s

<sup>1</sup> Rzepniewska, Sezonowi, pp. 89-92.

<sup>2</sup> Rzepniewska, Sezonowi, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Józef Śmiałkowski, "Place i zarobki pozarolnicze chłopów w Królestwie Polskim," Przegląd Historyczny, Vol. 64(1973), 318-319.

in southwestern Lithuania, even landed peasants were forced to look for "non-agrarian" work to supplement their incomes. In 1846 the Kingdom's government proposed a public works program for Augustów province costing 260,000 rubles; this was to employ peasants in the most hard pressed villages so that they could purchase grain on the market with their wages.<sup>1</sup> Thus, during difficult times, the medium villagers and small-holders could become, temporarily or even permanently, landless laborers engaged in work outside agriculture. During such times, the landed peasant himself depended more heavily than usual on the non-farming activities that supplemented his subsistence needs: hunting, fishing, mushroom picking, and the like.

Trans-Niemen Lithuania, like much of the rest of the Kingdom, suffered periodically from both labor shortages and labor gluts throughout the 19th century.<sup>2</sup> Aggravating the labor problem during the busy harvest season was the recruitment of local peasants for work elsewhere. For example, agents from the Drybus estates in Sochaczewski district, as well as sugar plantations and refineries from southern Poland, recruited farm workers from the Lithuanian Marijampolė and Sejny areas during the 1850s.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts received some labor immigration from other regions, including farm workers from Prussia. An 1842 survey showed 188 registered foreign farm hands in Trans-Niemen Lithuania, almost all of them from Prussia.<sup>4</sup> Surnames indicated that

<sup>1</sup> Stanisław Śreniowski, "O zarobkowaniu chłopów pańszczyźnianych w Królestwie Polskim," in Przegląd Historyczny, Vol. 47, No. 4-5(1956), 161.

<sup>2</sup> See Chmura, Problem for details.

<sup>3</sup> Rzepniewska, Sezonowi, pp. 41-42.

<sup>4</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6994, Augustów Governor's 1842 Report, k. 562.

many of these farm laborers were Lithuanians from East Prussia.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the registers of farmhands were incomplete; it is, therefore, difficult to determine how significant this immigration from East Prussia was. However, available data does indicate that Prussian Lithuanians tended, quite naturally, to seek work in the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts. In some cases, these Prussian Lithuanians stayed on and established themselves in the Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> It is also probable that the number of Prussian immigrants was somewhat greater than the several hundred indicated in the registers. Illegal traffic across the Polish-Prussian border is known to have been fairly common.

During the first half of the 19th century, some regions of the Kingdom of Poland began to develop industries which provided employment for some of the unemployed landless agricultural laborers. The Lithuanian districts, however, possessed virtually no industry aside from the individual craftsmen in the towns and the traditional estate "industries" such as distilleries. Only a few attempts were made to establish real manufacturing enterprises in Trans-Niemen Lithuania utilizing the flax crop. The most serious effort was made by Karl Dombrowicz who established a textile factory on the Dobrawola estate in Marijampolė district in 1839. The factory began operation with an investment of over 41,000 rubles. Soon a nearby bleachery was built, and by 1845 the combined works employed some 70 people. In addition, Dombrowicz utilized the labor of several hundred peasant households to produce yarn for the

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7158, Mariampol[Marijampolė] District Chief to KRSW, December 14, 1847, k. 6; KRSW-7158, k. 6-9; KRSW-7211, k. 516-531; KRSW-7813, Augustów Governor's Office to KRSW, May 9, 1838; KRSW-7816, k. 37 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The Polish districts of Augustów province, on the other hand, received many farmhands from Prussian Poland and Bohemia. A. G. A. D., KRSW-7211, k. 518-524.

factory. For a while, this enterprise fared reasonably well. In the 1860s, Dombrowicz managed to purchase some machinery with a government loan; in the long run, however, the small factory was unable to withstand competition from the large Żyrardów enterprise in central Poland.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps a more typical example of "industry" in Trans-Niemen Lithuania was the tiny weaving enterprise on the Godlewski estate in Garliava village (Marijampolė district). Since 1830 German weavers had operated a small factory-shop here; in 1842 the government reported that it employed ten masters and thirteen apprentices. This enterprise collapsed in 1853 because of a lack of investment capital and profits.<sup>2</sup> Clearly, the only significant non-agrarian pursuits in the Užnemunė region were the crafts in the towns. There was no modern industrial development or investment in southwestern Lithuania to speak of during the first half of the 19th century, and very little thereafter, a factor which contributed to peasant emigration abroad, especially to America, at the turn of the 20th century. Southwestern Lithuania was not necessarily poor in the consumer sense, but in terms of industrial development it was, in the words of one of the area's most meticulous historians, "the most backward region of the Kingdom."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Iuchas and Muliavichius, Nekotorye voprosy, pp. 63-66; Kula, "Włościański przemysł," 196-200; Łukasiewicz, Przewrót, pp. 15-16, pp. 121-122.

<sup>2</sup> Iuchas and Muliavichius, Nekotorye voprosy, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> Kaczyńska, "Gubernia suwalska," 283; on industry in Lithuania generally before 1861 see V[ytautas] Merkys, "Lietuvos pramonės raidos 1795-1861 metais klausimu," LTSRMA Darbai, VIII(1960), 93-122.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ESTATES AND TOWNS BEFORE 1864

#### The Structure and Types of Estates.

The estate was the center of both the peasant's and landowner's economic world during the 19th century. For the peasant, the forms and extent of his obligations to the estate defined the possibilities of his own holding's economic development. For the landowner and his family, the estate represented their source of income and power.

The center or headquarters of the estate consisted of the manor and manorial complex which housed the landowner and/or the estate manager, their families, and a number of servants. Naturally, manors differed considerably depending on the size and wealth of the estate. In Lithuania and Poland they ranged from the relatively simple wooden structures of small and medium landowners to the ornate complexes of the great latifundists that are now preserved as museums. Often the large manors served as social centers for the nobility.

The rest of the estate that lay outside of the manorial complex of buildings and grounds was divided into several parts. First of all, there was the manorial farm. Traditionally, corvée labor provided the work force for the manorial farm, but during the early 19th century "capitalistic" manorial farms utilizing hired labor appeared. There were some estates that did not have farms, but among the majority that did, there was a vast difference in the size and affluence of their manorial farms. Some of the more advanced manorial farms consolidated their lands, while

others were intermingled with the estate's peasant holdings. The ratio between the manorial farm land and peasant holdings was unusually favorable to the latter in Trans-Niemen Lithuania. In large part, this was due to the predominance of state lands and money renting in the Lithuanian districts. Where money rents were in force, manorial land was either rented out to the villagers or worked with hired labor.

Outside the manorial farm were the villages and peasant holdings of the estate which, with the exception of the very few peasant landowners of the pre-1864 period, also legally belonged to the manor. The Tsar's decree of 1846, which forbade the eviction of peasant landholders, somewhat weakened the hold of private estates on village lands.

As already noted, state domains predominated in the Lithuanian region of the Kingdom of Poland. Already in the 18th century, the huge royal economy of Alytus and the leased state lands constituted the vast majority of estate land in southwestern Lithuania.<sup>1</sup> After the Prussians took over this region in 1795, they counted 174 state(or crown) estates with a total of 1,635 villages and 174 consolidated peasant homesteads in the three Lithuanian districts of Białystok department. At the same time, there were only an estimated 23 large private estates in this area encompassing a total of several hundred villages.<sup>2</sup>

The dismantling of the centralized Lithuanian economies, such as the Alytus economy in the Užnemunė region, resulted in the long-term leasing

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the Alytus economy, which stretched from the town of Alytus on the banks of the Niemen River westward all the way to the Prussian border, included 165 villages and four towns in the late 18th century. According to government figures, there were close to 12,000 peasant households in the Alytus economy. (Kościałkowski, Tyzenhauz, I, 65-68).

<sup>2</sup> Janulaitis, Užnemunė, pp. 229, 236-237.

of these state lands to private holders. Many of the state(or crown) domains were leased to the nobility under the right of emphyteusis, a long term lease by which the holder of the land could pass on the use of the estate to his heirs and utilize it as he pleased, as long as he did not split up the land and paid the required rent.<sup>1</sup> Otherwise, the state made special arrangements over shorter periods of time with the leaseholders of state lands. Supervision of the state domains was entrusted to the Forest and Estate Administration of the Kingdom's Commission of the Treasury and Incomes. The government was responsible for approving contracts with leaseholders on state domains, as well as protecting the state peasants against unwarranted exploitation. In practice, the effectiveness of government supervision depended on the attitude of provincial and district authorities.<sup>2</sup>

The predominance of state domains in Trans-Niemen Lithuania continued throughout the 19th century; it is particularly evident in the distribution of peasant holdings by type of estate. Two of the estate types listed in Table 6 below may require some additional explanation. The donated estates were entailed under the rules of primogeniture, could not be alienated, and were regulated by the government as to landowner-peasant relations ever since 1835(see Chapter IV). Practically, these donated estates were considered state domains. The institutional estates were mainly Church benefices, but they also included lands belonging to hospitals, charitable societies and schools. Table 6 below, showing the distribution of peasant holdings on different types of estates, is based chiefly on N. N. Miliutin's survey of the Kingdom in 1859.

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<sup>1</sup> Janulaitis, Užnemunė, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold, Zarys, II, 333.

TABLE 6

DISTRIBUTION OF PEASANT HOLDINGS BY  
 TYPE OF ESTATE IN AUGUSTÓW PROVINCE  
 IN 1859<sup>1</sup>

Estate Type	Number of Holdings	Percentage of Total
State(or Crown) Domains	21,293	59.5%
Privately Owned Estates	9,518	26.6%
Donated or Entailed Estates	4,648	13.0%
Institutional Estates	315	.9%
Total Landed Peasant Holdings	35,774	100.0%

Thus, the private estates of Augustów province made up only about a fourth of all the landed domains. Within the Kingdom as a whole, private estates were the majority; therefore, Augustów province was rather unique in Poland for no other province had such a predominance of state and state-regulated estates. Within the Lithuanian districts, the ratio of these lands was about the same as for the province as a whole. In Table 7 below, the above four categories of estates have been combined into two groups. The state domains, entailed estates and institutional lands are collectively termed "Public Estates;" these estates were not privately owned in the proper sense, and they were regulated by the government or ecclesiastical authorities. Thus, the so-called public estates differed basically from the private ones on

<sup>1</sup> Compiled from Iuchas and Muliavichius, "Bezzemel'nye," 90-91.

which landowner-peasant relations were not regulated in any significant way, at least not until the Tsar's decree of 1846 forbidding evictions (see Chapter IV).

TABLE 7

DISTRIBUTION OF PEASANT HOLDINGS ON  
PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ESTATES IN THE  
LITHUANIAN DISTRICTS OF AUGUSTÓW  
PROVINCE IN 1859(N=NUMBER OF PEASANT  
HOLDINGS, P=PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL)<sup>1</sup>

District	Private Estates		Public Estates		Total Holdings N
	N	P	N	P	
Kalvarija	1,221	17.3%	5,850	82.7%	7,071
Marijampolė	3,032	32.1%	6,419	67.9%	9,451
Sejny	1,593	26.5%	4,408	75.5%	6,001
Trans-Niemen Lithuania	5,846	26.0%	16,677	74.0%	22,523

Naturally, the above figures concern only the landed peasantry. As for the landless peasants, they were more numerous on private estates than on the state and state-regulated, or public, estates. In Augustów province, slightly more than half of the peasantry on the private lands (50.2% in 1859) were classified as "landless" on the eve of the 1864 reform. Less than a third(30% in 1859) were considered landless on the public domains, that is, the state, donated and institutional estates during this time. This pattern in Augustów province corresponded, in general, to that in the Lithuanian districts as well.<sup>2</sup>

The estates of Trans-Niemen Lithuania differed considerably in their size and number of peasant holdings. As a rule, the state-owned domains

<sup>1</sup> Based on Grabski, Historia, I, 420; also Iuchas and Muliavichius, "Bezzemel'nye," 90-91.

<sup>2</sup> See Iuchas and Muliavichius, "Bezzemel'nye," 90-92.

were the largest. Institutional domains, especially the Church estates, were the smallest; in fact, some of them hardly corresponded to what could normally be imagined as a manorial estate. The different estates of the Bartininkai parish in Marijampolė district showed a wide variety in type and size. In 1822 there were two state estates in this parish: one of them contained only a single manor and one village, while the other one had eighteen villages. There were two small private estates in the area; one had four villages and the other six. In addition, there were several small Tatar estates totalling seven villages in all.<sup>1</sup> An 1837 survey of Prienai parish revealed the same kind of diversity. The Bagrėnas state domain owned two villages with a total of 39 peasant holdings. On the other hand, the state lands held by Paweł Sapieha were enormous: eight manorial farms, 157 villages, and a goodly number of inns, a paper mill and other property. A few other estates of Prienai parish were listed as owning about a dozen peasant holdings each; one of the "estates" was recorded as having only a single peasant holding attached to it.<sup>2</sup>

Even the smaller Church estates had a range of sizes, although none of them approached the dimensions of the large state domains. The parish of Beržniki had one of the larger estates: over 400 morgi of land, including woods and pasture. The Balbieriškis parish had a respectable estate of thirty peasant households in three villages.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, one pastor reportedly had only 150 morgi of land which he worked

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 24: Bartniki, Acta Visitatio Generalis, June 15, 1822.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. B, 188: Wykaz Ogólny z Całego Dekanatu Sapieżyńskiego, k. 2-5.

<sup>3</sup> Jemielity, Diecezja, p. 195; see above, pp. 102-103.

himself, aided by two corvée peasants.<sup>1</sup> The manorial farm of Bartininkai parish consisted of only 90 morgi of land "lying in the state village of Bartniki[Bartininkai]" and containing "two [peasants] performing obligations and four garden peasants." The two obligated peasants did two days of manual labor(Pol. ręcznica) per week for a total of 208 days annually.<sup>2</sup> The smallest estates of the Užnemunė region, for example those of the Church and the Tatars, were not landed estates in the true sense; in nature and size, they approached the small farms of the petty gentry typical of the Polish districts of Augustów province.

The pattern of state domination of estate lands in Trans-Niemen Lithuania continued throughout the first half of the 19th century; however, there were some significant changes in the ownership, nature and size of many estates. During the Prussian period, for example, the Church lost most of its lands to the state. Still greater changes occurred after the anti-Russian insurrection of 1831 when a number of private estates were confiscated from those Polish landowners who had participated in the uprising. These estates were later handed over to Russian generals and officials. This action was intended not only to dispossess the rebellious landowners, but also to Russify the Kingdom by Russifying its propertied classes. It was forbidden for the holder of a "donated" (i.e. confiscated) estate to sell the land to a non-Orthodox buyer, and the inheritance of these estates was entailed.<sup>3</sup> The Lithuanian districts of the Kingdom had a number of these estates; for example, the sizeable

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<sup>1</sup> Jonas Ratelaitis, "Leipalingio monografija," in Tauta ir Žodis, III(Kaunas, 1925), 257, 263.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 24: Bartniki, Acta Visitatio Generalis, June 15, 1822.

<sup>3</sup> Wiśniewski, "Dzieje ... sejneńskim," 185.

Suchoczewski estate in Kalvarija district; the Daugeliškiai estate of the Lippich family in Marijampolė district; the huge Balbieriškis estate of the Tyszkiewicz's; and the Radziwiłłowicze domain of the Radziwiłł family in Sejny district.<sup>1</sup> In all of Augustów province, 25 estates were confiscated after the 1831 insurrection. The Tyszkiewicz domain was the largest with an estimated value of almost two million złoty.<sup>2</sup>

While the government confiscated a number of estates, it also sold some of the state lands into private ownership during the late 1820s and early 1830s. The estate of the Pusch family in Marijampolė district was such a domain. According to a document in the Church archives, August Pusch bought the estate in 1837 "as a result of negotiations during the time when it was allowed for state domains to be sold as property."<sup>3</sup> The sale of state lands to private landowners was suspended by the government in 1834, but the Pusch case suggests the possibility that some of the state domains, considered for sale during the period when it was allowed(1829-1834), were actually transferred later. In general, the number of private estates in Trans-Niemen Lithuania increased somewhat during the first half of the 19th century but state lands continued to predominate here.

Church lands suffered the most pronounced shrinkage in terms of land and wealth during the early 19th century. As a result, the Church domains of southwestern Lithuania were small, with lands mingled

<sup>1</sup> Józef Kaczkowski, Konfiskaty na ziemiach polskich pod zaborem rosyjskim po powstaniach roku 1831 i 1863(Warsaw, 1918), p. 345; and for the legal and financial process of confiscation see pp. 40 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Janusz Iwaszkiewicz, Wykaz dóbr ziemskich skonfiskowanych przez rządy zaborcze 1773-1867(Warsaw, 1929), pp. 25-26.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 380: Pokoynie, W. Sakowicz to Bishop Straszyński, February 20, 1847.

with those of other estates. Church estates often had to struggle to maintain the little land left them from encroachments by other landowners and, sometimes, the peasants.<sup>1</sup> In the mid-1850s, less than forty villages were listed as "making up the income of the Roman Catholic clergy" in the Lithuanian districts of Augustów province. These villages, at the most, contained but a few hundred households which were, in some cases, scattered among secular private and state domains.<sup>2</sup> In 1865 the state took over all Church lands in the Kingdom of Poland, leaving only six morgi per parish.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the nature and ownership of the different types of estates often changed either through government confiscation, regulation of peasant-landowner relations, or encouragement for settlement. Private estates also frequently changed hands through the time honored methods of sale and bankruptcy. Most private estates changed hands at least several times during their existence. The large Gelgaudiškis estate in Marijampolė district first belonged to the Giełgud family; it was later taken over by the Czartoryski's in the 18th century. During the early 19th century it was owned by the influential Baron von Keudell.<sup>4</sup> Most of the private estates in the Kingdom of Poland were mortgaged to a greater or lesser degree, as the nobility sank deeper in debt during the 19th century.<sup>5</sup> In Russian Lithuania, some of the landowners' debts exceeded the value

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., CWW-213, Diocesan Administrator Butkiewicz to KRSW, February 22, 1856, k. 43-44; also letter of October 11, 1856, k. 81.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., CWW-213, KRSW Report of September 10, 1855, k. 17-19; KRSW to Augustów Diocesan Administration, November 10, 1856, k. 85.

<sup>3</sup> Jemielity, Diecezja, p. 197.      <sup>4</sup> Połujański, Wedrówki, pp. 391-392.

<sup>5</sup> Kostiushko, Krest'iantskaia reforma, pp. 21-22.

of their estates in both principal and interest.<sup>1</sup> In case of default on a loan, of course, creditors could take over an indebted estate. Before this stage was reached, however, a landowner would often sell his estate to a wealthier noble who could assume the financial obligation. The changes in ownership and leases of the various estates sometimes disrupted the agricultural economy of the manor, but in other cases, absentee landowners would keep the same estate management at work with little or no change in day-to-day operation.

Clearly then, the estates were not, as some of the defenders of corvée labor insisted, the harmonious and stable economic units in which landowner and peasant cooperated. Not only were landowners in almost constant conflict and litigation with their villagers and the towns(as seen below), but they often warred among themselves. Invariably, quarrels between different landowners involved land or its use; naturally, it was the smaller and weaker of the estates that suffered the most. For example, secular landowners or leaseholders often encroached on Church lands not only because these were small and comminuted, but also because the legal status of parish estates was weakened by successive encroachments.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ulashchik, Predposylki, pp. 300-302.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the case based on A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 241A: Liszków, Inventory of March 11, 1817. In 1629 the Liškiava[Liszków] parish church received over 360 morgi of land and woods from a certain Mikołaj Radzimiński. After 1795, the Prussians confiscated the parish woodland, and paid the pastor an "allowance in wood" in return. After the end of Prussian rule, the Church was naturally anxious for the woodland to revert to the parish. The neighboring landowner, Major Koc, however, disregarded the Church claim and took over the woodland in 1808, allegedly because he harbored a "personal resentment against Father Cybulski," the pastor of Liškiava. The Church charged that the major even prevented Father Cybulski from using timber on the parish farmland. It seems that the Church had few defenders in the dispute; the 1817 inventory showed the parish with only 180 morgi of land left, worked by the pastor together with his five peasant households.

The comminution of estate lands with one another also contributed to litigation between different landowners.<sup>1</sup> Another source of conflict between different estates, and especially between the manors and towns, was the liquor monopoly(Pol. propinacja). During the 1840s, for example, the Balbieriškis estate registered repeated complaints against the pastor of the local parish over the latter's distilling of liquor, claiming that the Church had no right to a liquor monopoly there. In this case, the provincial government ruled against the pastor, even though the Balbieriškis church could prove it had once possessed the right to distill liquor. The governor's office did not recognize the pastor's distilling rights because "the receipt of income from liquor monopoly rights had long since gone out of practice," and asked the bishop of the diocese to forbid the parish's distilling activities.<sup>2</sup>

The rights to woodlands and pastures was yet another focus of conflict between estates, towns and peasants. Forests were especially important resources in the countryside; they provided a major source of construction material, as well as fuel during the winter months. The forests and woodlands were divided by type in a pattern very similar to the classification of estates. There were state forests which were leased out on a long-term basis, as well as private and institutional woodlands; in addition, there were forests which belonged to towns. As with estates, some of the forests were confiscated after the anti-Russian insurrections of the 19th century and donated to new holders. Marijampolė district was the richest in timber resources

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<sup>1</sup> One example is in A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 380: Pokoynie, Father Sakowicz to Bishop Straszyński, February 20, 1847.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł, Ser. A, 16: Balwierzyszki, Augustów Governor's Office to Bishop Straszyński, August 26, 1844.

within Augustów province which was itself one of the most heavily forested regions of the Kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

The rights to woodlands, pastures and meadows were known as servitudes (Pol. serwituty). Traditionally, most estates allowed their peasants free access to woodlands and pastures. This practice began to change during the first half of the 19th century when landowners and leaseholders began restricting the peasants' use of forest and pasture resources, causing considerable friction between manor and village. With the elimination of corvée in the Kingdom during the early 1860s, servitude rights became a really major issue that continued to plague landowner-peasant relations until World War I. On the whole, the Lithuanian peasants of the Kingdom received far better servitude rights than their counterparts in Russian Lithuania; in the Kingdom, servitude rights were specifically retained by law and were fairly comprehensive. The Tsar's decree of 1864 restored even those servitude rights which had been usurped by the estates after 1846.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the more important economic needs of construction and fuel that the forests fulfilled, there were the less important, though still significant benefits that they provided for both the estate and the village: hunting and fishing were activities that supplemented the peasant's diet, and provided the estate with additional food. The gathering of mushrooms and berries were popular and profitable pastimes with the villagers.

<sup>1</sup> Połujański, Lasy, I, 335-340.

<sup>2</sup> R. Strazdūnaitė, "Agrariniai santykiai Užnemunėje 1795-1864 m.," in Lietuvos valstiečiai XIX amžiuje, 211.

The manor's control of much of the non-arable land, such as the forests and pastures, had the effect of maintaining the peasant economy's dependence on the estate. Even though peasant households held most of the arable land, they usually held relatively little of the woodlands and pastures. This was especially true of corvée peasants on the private estates. On the whole, however, the situation of the peasants in the Lithuanian districts was somewhat better than that of those in the rest of the Kingdom. For example, while corvée peasants on private estates held only between 10% and 18% of the Kingdom's meadowland, the figure for Marijampolė district was an estimated 26.4%--the highest percentage in Poland.<sup>1</sup>

The one part of the estate that became the most important center of conflict between the manor and the village was the manorial farm. Mečislovas Jučas, one of Lithuania's foremost agrarian historians, has termed the division of estate land into the manorial farm and village holdings the "essence of serfdom."<sup>2</sup> The manorial farm depended primarily on compulsory labor, the most hated feature of the contemporary agrarian system from the peasants' point of view. Antagonism against the manorial farm was an important peasant attitude in Trans-Niemen Lithuania throughout the 19th century, even though manorial farms were less extensive and widespread here than in Russian Lithuania or the rest of the Kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

The estates, both public and private, differed in the size and number of the manorial farms that they maintained. Invariably, the

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<sup>1</sup> Bortkiewicz, Nadziały, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos, p. 87; N[ikolai] N. Ulaschik, "Obezzemlivanie krest'ian Litvy i Zapadnoi Belorussii nakanune otmeny krepostnogo prava," in Revoliutsionnaia situatsia v Rossii, I(Moscow, 1960), 54-55.

estates with large manorial farms made the most noticeable progress in agricultural technology and efficiency during the first half of the 19th century. The large Gielgudiškis estate in northern Marijampolė district was a good example of such progress. Data collected on seven of the estate's manorial farms showed a steady rise in rye, wheat and oats production between 1800 and 1831, despite fluctuations due to climatic conditions.<sup>1</sup> Greater yields on the large manorial farms were apparent throughout Lithuania and Poland even before the great agrarian reforms of the 1860s.<sup>2</sup>

As already noted, some of the large estates began to switch from compulsory to hired labor during the 19th century. This change had a great impact on the manorial economy. One of the main features of the feudal estate's economy was its isolation. "The corvée estate," wrote Juozas Jurginiš, "made up an independent, isolated universe with a weak link to the outside world."<sup>3</sup> At the same time, however, manorial efforts to increase production during the 19th century, in order to satisfy the growing foreign and domestic market, went against this economic isolation. Unproductive corvée labor gradually gave way to hired labor and the money renting system. The use of hired labor was particularly important in breaking down the economic independence of an estate by making it more reliant on the existing labor pool in the countryside. Agrarian observers of the 19th century increasingly recognized the manorial farm based on corvée as an anachronism. By the middle of the 19th century, there

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<sup>1</sup> Jucas, Baudžiavos, pp. 73-74.

<sup>2</sup> Ulashchik, "Krepostnaia derevnia," 58-60.

<sup>3</sup> Jurginiš, "Baudžiava," 8.

were few defenders of compulsory labor; however, it remained an emotional issue since, for a long time, corvée was the backbone of the manorial farm system which, in turn, provided much of the estate's income.

The contribution of the manorial farm to the total income of the estate is difficult to estimate precisely. In fact, there is some disagreement among historians about the different sources of manorial revenues and what role they played in the economic life of the estate. Agrarian historian Dmitrii Pokhilevich insisted that the main source of estate income in 18th-century Lithuania was not the manorial farm, but rather the estate's exploitation of such economic privileges as the liquor and trade monopoly within the boundaries of the estate. According to Pokhilevich, rents from mills and land also constituted an important source of revenue.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Nikolai Ulashchik concluded that the primary source of manorial income during the first half of the 19th century, at least on the larger estates, was the money rent exacted from the peasants, followed closely by proceeds from the manorial farm and the liquor monopoly. In western Lithuania, where agriculture was more developed, the role of the money rents and the manorial farm was considerably more important than in other parts of Lithuania.<sup>2</sup> However, in the Lithuanian districts of the Kingdom the economic role of the manorial farm was somewhat less important because of the predominance of state lands on which money renting, rather than corvée labor, prevailed.

A very important, even crucial, source of income for many estates was the liquor monopoly(Pol. propinacija). This monopoly meant that the land-

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<sup>1</sup> Pokhilevich, Krest'iane vo vtoroi polovine XVIII v., p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Ulashchik, Predposylki, pp. 290-294.

owner or estate holder had the sole right to distill, brew and sell alcoholic beverages within the boundaries of his estate. If the manor allowed others to produce and/or sell alcohol on the estate, then it was entitled to collect a commission for delegating this privilege. During the 16th and 17th centuries the so-called coercive monopoly came into effect in parts of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; this monopoly forbade peasants to produce their own liquor and forced the villagers, while they were on the estate, to drink and buy alcoholic beverages only at the landowner's establishment.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the practice of coercive consumption was followed in some areas of Poland and Lithuania; this forced a peasant household to purchase certain amounts of the manor's alcoholic production regardless of need.<sup>2</sup> In 1820 the Kingdom of Poland officially abolished the coercive monopoly on state lands. The government made no effort to regulate the production and sale of liquor on private estates until 1844, when some restrictions were passed in an attempt to curb the widespread drunkenness among the village populace.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the 19th century, however, the estate distillery and the ubiquitous country(or town) inn(Pol. karczma, Lith. smuklė, karčiama) remained important centers of economic and social life in the countryside.

The distillery served as a small trading center or economic "port" for the estate; the peasants would bring their potatoes and grain here and receive liquor in return. Liquor frequently served as a kind of

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<sup>1</sup> J. Burszta, Wieś i karczma: rola karczmy w życiu wsi pańszczyźnianej (Warsaw, 1950), pp. 58 ff.

<sup>2</sup> J. Burszta, Społeczeństwo i karczma: propinacja, karczma i sprawa alkoholizmu w społeczeństwie polskim w XIX wieku(Warsaw, 1951), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Burszta, Społeczeństwo, p. 24.

currency, a medium of exchange.<sup>1</sup> However, Augustów province had the most small distilleries in the Kingdom and, conversely, the least of the large type. It seems that distilling here was more backward and less developed than in other parts of the Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> One reason for this may have been the predominance of state lands, and hence the relatively small number of private estates in Augustów province.

The country inn was the landowner's main outlet for his vodka and beer production; in addition, it served as an important economic center for both villagers and the estate. The inn, according to one historian, was an "exclusively lordly institution [which served] the purposes of economic exploitation on the one hand, and was a center of trade (and still more exploitation) on the other."<sup>3</sup> The whole problem of the manorial liquor monopoly became critical in the 1840s and, as we shall see below, led to a remarkable peasant social movement.

It has been shown that, during good distilling years, the manorial liquor monopoly provided the major source of income for some estates in the Kingdom of Poland; as, for example, on the Gościeradłów estate of Lublin province in 1844 and 1845.<sup>4</sup> Liquor production received a tremendous boost in the early 19th century both with the introduction of the

<sup>1</sup> Halina Rożenowa, Produkcja wódki i sprawa pijanistwa w Królestwie Polskim 1815-1863 (Warsaw, 1961), p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Rożenowa, Produkcja, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> Burszta, Społeczeństwo, p. 11. The inn was also important for the peasant's social life; its importance in that regard is discussed more fully below.

<sup>4</sup> Śreniowski, Uwłaszczenie, pp. 248-249; see also Rożenowa, Produkcja, pp. 245-286.

potato as a new raw material, and the appearance of improved distilling techniques from Scotland in Poland and Lithuania. As the production of liquor increased, and the cost of this production declined, alcohol prices fell sharply for the consumer; quite naturally, this encouraged the consumption of alcoholic beverages.<sup>1</sup>

The estates, then, depended on various sources of income, in addition to the money rents and the production of the manorial farm. The liquor and trade monopolies; the rental of mills and inns; the leasing of woodlands and even small manufacturies; all these supplemented and, sometimes, even exceeded the revenues that were generated directly from the villagers in money and labor obligations. Whatever the source of income, however, it was the estate's peasant who more often than not provided the labor that produced the manorial wealth, as well as supplied the market which absorbed a good deal of the manor's products. This economic relationship is especially clear in the case of the manorial liquor monopoly. The village was in almost every way a dependency of the estate and only the wealthiest peasants were able to ameliorate, if not entirely escape, this dependent relationship.

#### Towns Before 1864.

Throughout the 19th century Lithuania remained overwhelmingly rural and agrarian; it was, in contemporary terminology, an "underdeveloped" region. During this time, the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts did not have a single municipality that could rightfully be termed a "city." In

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<sup>1</sup> Rożenowa, Produkcja, pp. 18, 35 ff.

all of Lithuania only Kaunas(Kovno) and Vilnius(Vilna, Wilno) deserved this title before World War I. Most towns of southwestern Lithuania failed to develop during the 19th century, despite government efforts to reform municipal institutions and stimulate urban life.

Lithuanian towns received special privileges under German law(on the Magdeburg model) as early as the 16th century; however, most of them received their municipal charters during the 17th and 18th centuries. Feudal landowners managed to largely undermine urban self-government in many places by the end of the 18th century. The royal town charters and urban autonomy were reaffirmed by the famous Four-Year Diet(or Sejm)(1788-1792), but they were abolished by the Russians after the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the Kingdom of Poland town privileges formally survived until the middle of the 19th century when many smaller municipalities lost their legal urban status.

The most important economic privilege granted to the towns by the royal charters was the right to hold weekly markets and seasonal fairs. The revenues generated by markets and fairs were critical to a town's economic survival. The attractive prospect of income that could be derived from markets and fairs, as well as considerations of prestige, inspired some landowners to make every effort to transform their larger villages into legal "towns." As one contemporary landowner put it:

A village having a small [Catholic] church, or an Orthodox church; two or, sometimes, only a single inn; already usurps the title of a small town[Pol. miasteczko]. To be a lord of a village, calling itself a town, feeds the boastfulness and vanity of the owner.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lachnicki, Biografia, p. 198.

Thus, the term "town" was legally applicable to both the real towns, that is, the larger administrative and trading centers, as well as to what can be called "bogus" municipalities: oversized, usually impoverished villages possessing urban privileges.

The largest town in all of Augustów province was its capital, Suwałki. In 1859 Suwałki had an estimated population of over 10,000. During the first half of the 19th century, the town straddled the Polish-Lithuanian ethnographic boundary, but its environs became progressively more Polonized in later years. Suwałki was the only municipality of Augustów province that even remotely approached, in size and function, the status of a "city." Aleksander Połujański reported that in 1859 Suwałki had several hotels, three wineries, two confectionaries and a social club.<sup>1</sup> Despite its relative size, Suwałki was not of critical economic importance to Trans-Niemen Lithuania, located as it was on the southernmost fringe of ethnographically Lithuanian territory. The town's major importance lay in its role as provincial capital and its position on the Warsaw-St. Petersburg highway.

The most important towns in the Lithuanian districts of Augustów province were Marijampolė, Kalvarija, Sejny, Virbalis, Vilkaviškis, Naumiestis(Władysławów), and Šakiai.<sup>2</sup> These towns never lost their municipal status during the 19th century and most of them underwent considerable population growth between 1800 and 1864. Table 8 below gives population figures for these major towns at selected chronological points during the 1800 to 1864 period.

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<sup>1</sup> Połujański, Wędrówki, pp. 227 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The Polish spellings for these and other towns are listed in Appendix IV below.

TABLE 8

TRANS-NIEMEN LITHUANIA'S MAJOR TOWNS AND  
THEIR POPULATIONS BETWEEN 1800 AND 1862<sup>1</sup>

Towns	<u>Years</u>			
	1800	1820	1827	1856-1862
Kalvarija	2,705	3,978	5,438	8,432 (1861)
Marijampolė	1,178	1,672	1,759	3,718 (1861)
Naumiestis	2,320	3,181	3,213	5,516 (1857)
Prienai	1,224	1,665	1,972	2,688 (1862)
Sejny	516	2,261	3,514	3,274 (1856)
Šakiai	600	1,195	1,537	3,443 (1862)
Vilkaviškis	1,804	2,563	2,889	5,503 (1857)
Virbalis	1,630	1,493	1,826	

All of these major towns, except for Šakiai which was a private municipality, were former "royal" towns; after 1815, they came to be known as "national" or state towns. Of these larger towns the most important for the history of the Lithuanian peasantry were Marijampolė and Sejny.

Marijampolė became an important center of the Lithuanian national movement at the end of the 19th century. Even before this, Marijampolė was an educational and religious center in southwestern Lithuania; it was also the district seat of Lithuania's most prosperous agricultural

<sup>1</sup> The figures for the last column are taken from different years which are indicated in parentheses. Sources for the data are: Janulaitis, Užnemunė, pp. 189-195; Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich, 15 vols. (Warsaw, 1880-1904); A. G. A. D., KRSW-4761 and KRSW-4762; Mažoji lietuviškoji tarybinė enciklopedija, 3 vols. (Vilnius, 1966-1968).

region. Marijampolė was also a trading center for the area's peasants who flocked to the town's two weekly markets and seven annual fairs.

Sejny, on the other hand, owed its prominence to its choice as the seat of the Sejny-Augustów diocese. Most of the diocese's Lithuanian priests were trained here during the 19th century.

Kalvarijs, the largest of the towns in population, was actually less important than Marijampolė and Sejny as a trading and cultural center. Eventually, it was to decline as a municipality. The two other largest towns in Trans-Niemen Lithuania, Vilkaviškis and Naumiestis, like the other towns near the Prussian border, depended heavily on trade with Prussia. These towns prospered under Prussian rule, but a rise in customs duties and a decline in trade during the early years of the 19th century hurt them economically. However, Naumiestis(Władysławów) was one of southwestern Lithuania's most prosperous and well-run towns, judging from its revenues which totalled 5,000 złoty in 1806 and 11,000 złoty in 1819. Naumiestis straddled the grain export route to Prussia and was relatively viable as a town, but the 1820 Augustów province urban survey revealed that the town was losing some revenue because high tariffs discouraged Prussian merchants and artisans from doing business here.<sup>1</sup>

On the whole, southwestern Lithuania's larger towns grew steadily during the 19th century and, despite recurrent problems, their economic situation remained relatively stable. However, the smaller municipalities of this region, despite some growth in population, were without significant administrative status and lacked trade; these small towns remained in

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-4762, Report on Władysławów, 1820, k. 82-85.

a depressed economic condition throughout the 19th century. The burghers of the small municipalities were generally impoverished and their income uncertain. Table 9 below lists those towns in the Lithuanian districts of Augustów province which lost their urban status by the second half of the 19th century, but which had significant markets and fairs and grew in population. These small townships could still be considered municipalities of a kind, although to a present-day observer they would have seemed overgrown villages.

TABLE 9  
TRANS-NIEMEN LITHUANIA'S SMALL TOWNSHIPS  
AND THEIR POPULATIONS BETWEEN 1800 AND 1862<sup>1</sup>

<u>Towns</u>	<u>Years</u>			
	1800	1820	1827	1857-1862
Balbieriškis	920	1,552	----	1,234 (1859)
Filipów	795	1,861	2,326	2,551 (1861)
Lazdijai	1,537	1,664	1,988	2,394 (1860)
Liudvinavas	312	913	----	-----
Pilviškiai	350	822	888	1,889 (1862)
Przerósl	1,166	1,646	1,645	1,887 (1857)
Seirijai	1,094	1,897	1,909	-----
Simnas	700	1,123	1,020	1,505 (1859)
Vištytis	1,600	1,562	2,449	-----
Wižajni	946	1,046	1,342	-----

<sup>1</sup> The figures for the last column are taken from different years which are indicated in parentheses. Sources: Janulaitis, Užnemunė, pp. 189-195; Słownik Geograficzny(under appropriate headings); A. G. A. D., KRSW-4761 and KRSW-4762; Mažoji lietuviškoji tarybinė enciklopedija (under appropriate headings).

Table 10 below lists a somewhat different class of towns; these were municipalities in name only. Despite their occasional legal status as urban settlements, they were never real towns. Thus, the designation "bogus towns" fits them most aptly.

TABLE 10  
TRANS-NIEMEN LITHUANIA'S BOGUS TOWNS AND  
THEIR POPULATIONS BETWEEN 1800 AND 1860  
(WHERE DATA WAS AVAILABLE).<sup>1</sup>

Towns	<u>Years</u>			
	1800	1820	1827	1860
Alytus	250	263	289	626
Liubavas	425	806	812	---
Meteliai	300	446	391	---
Panemunė	500	673	898	---
Puńsk	583	597	748	---
Zapyškis	---	---	426	---

The above three tables on town populations, though admittedly spotty, clearly indicate that the urban populace increased during the first half of the 19th century. However, this does not mean that southwestern Lithuania underwent any significant urbanization and industrialization. For one thing, the municipalities of the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts were themselves very "rural" in nature; also, the total urban population, especially of the larger or "real" towns, remained very small compared

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<sup>1</sup> Sources: Janulaitis, Užnemunė, pp. 189-195; Słownik Geograficzny (under appropriate headings); A. G. A. D., KRSW-4761 and KRSW-4762; also Mažoji lietuviškoji tarybinė enciklopedija (under appropriate headings).

to the village populace.

From an ethnic and social point of view, the makeup of Trans-Niemen Lithuania's towns changed only slightly during the 19th century. The major national group among the townspeople were the Jews. The next largest nationality were the Poles, followed closely by a sizeable contingent of German artisans and merchants. Even a cursory examination of town registers reveals an extremely small number of Lithuanian surnames during the first half of the 19th century.<sup>1</sup> Thus, from an ethnic point of view, the town was, like the estate, an alien island surrounded by a countryside that was predominantly Lithuanian. If anything, the town was even more alien to the peasants than the estate; with its Jews and Protestants (mainly German) it was predominantly non-Catholic, despite the fact that most towns were centers of large Catholic parishes. The Jewish, Polish and German domination of Lithuania's towns continued throughout the 19th century, although there was a slowly increasing proportion of Lithuanian townspeople after 1864.

Table 11 below shows the approximate percentages of Jewish and Gentile townspeople in Trans-Niemen Lithuania at three chronological points in the 19th century: the 1820s, mid-century (that is, between 1856 and 1862), and at the end of the 19th century. The data are incomplete since statistics for smaller towns were not always available. Where relevant and available, the percentage of the German population has been included in parentheses. The towns of Trans-Niemen Lithuania in Table 11 below are classified according to the three divisions indicated above (Tables 8-10):

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the town register of Zapyškis contained only two Lithuanian surnames in 1817 out of a population of about 500; this was not unusual. A. G. A. D., KRSW-201, k. 382.

large towns, small townships and "bogus" towns.

TABLE 11

APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF JEWISH AND GENTILE URBAN INHABITANTS IN THE THREE LITHUANIAN DISTRICTS OF AUGUSTÓW PROVINCE BETWEEN 1820-1890  
(J=JEWISH, G=GENTILE, GR=GERMAN).<sup>1</sup>

## I. LARGE TOWNS

Towns	1820s			Mid-century			About 1890		
	J	G	GR	J	G	GR	J	G	GR
Kalvarija	61%	39%		79%	21%		81%	19%	
Marijampolė	65%	35%	(12%)	81%	19%		83%	17%	
Naumiestis	43%	57%	(17%)	80%	20%	(8%)	35%	65%	
Prienai	58%	42%	(8%)	-----			69%	31%	
Sejny	54%	46%		72%	28%		69%	31%	
Šakiai	86%	14%		88%	12%		-----		
Vilkaviškis	62%	38%		50%	50%		86%	14%	(7%)
Virbalis	16%	84%	(49%)	-----			40%	60%	

## II. SMALL TOWNSHIPS

Balbieriškis	60%	40%		43%	57%	(5%)	-----		
Filipów	37%	63%		32%	68%		-----		
Lazdijai	55%	45%		64%	36%		79%	21%	
Liudvinavas	54%	46%		72%	28%		-----		
Pilviškiai	39%	61%		-----			-----		
Przerosł	27%	73%	(9%)	60%	40%		-----		

<sup>1</sup> Sources: Słownik Geograficzny (appropriate headings); Kaczyńska, Społeczeństwo; Połujanński, Wędrówki, pp. 196 ff; A. G. A. D., KRSW-4761 and KRSW-4762. Percentages are very approximate, and some population groups, such as the Moslem Tatars and Russian Orthodox, are impossible to estimate.

## II. SMALL TOWNSHIPS(continued)

Towns	1820s			Mid-century			About 1890		
	J	G	GR	J	G	GR	J	G	GR
Seirijai	57%	43%		-----			63%	37%	
Simnas	38%	62%		50%	50%		-----		
Vištytis	47%	53%		-----			-----		
Wižajni	20%	80%		-----			-----		

## III. BOGUS TOWNS

Alytus	18%	82%		45%	55%		-----		
Liubavas	54%	46%		-----			-----		
Meteliai	15%	85%		-----			-----		
Panemunė	85%	15%		-----			-----		
Puńsk	59%	41%		-----			-----		

Table 11 shows that, as far as data is available, most of Trans-Niemen Lithuania's towns were predominantly Jewish during the first half of the 19th century, and that they became even more so during the later part of the century. The Duchy of Warsaw census of 1808 estimated that almost two-thirds of the country's Jewish inhabitants lived in towns; they were especially numerous in eastern and northeastern regions. Augustów province had the highest percentage of Jews within the Kingdom of Poland; within the province, the percentage of Jews rose from an estimated 11% in 1816 to 16.2% in 1863.<sup>1</sup> The Lithuanian districts had largest number of urban Jews: the 1808 Duchy census listed only the Polish

<sup>1</sup> Artur Eisenbach, "Mobilność terytorialna ludności żydowskiej w Królestwie Polskim," in Społeczeństwo Królestwa Polskiego, ed. Witold Kula, II(Warsaw, 1966), 189-190, 270.

district of Tykocin (in southern Łomża department) with a higher percentage of Jewish inhabitants than Trans-Niemen Lithuania.<sup>1</sup>

During the first half of the 19th century, the Jews flocked to the towns of Poland, in large part as a result of the government's policy of squeezing them out of the villages. Within Augustów province, the percentage of Jews among the townspeople rose from slightly over half in 1827 to about 60% in 1863. Marijampolė district had the highest proportion of Jews in the urban population within the entire Kingdom; taken together, the Lithuanian districts of Poland led all other areas in the country in the percentage of Jews in the urban population.<sup>2</sup> Table 12 below compares the percentage of Jews among the townspeople in the Lithuanian districts of Augustów province during the first half of the 19th century.

TABLE 12

PERCENTAGE OF JEWS IN THE URBAN POPULATION  
OF THE LITHUANIAN DISTRICTS OF AUGUSTÓW PRO-  
VINCE IN 1827, 1848 AND 1858.<sup>3</sup>

District	1827	1848	1858
Kalvarija	56.5%	68.3%	71.5%
Marijampolė	65.8%	75.8%	77.0%
Sejny	51.7%	64.3%	66.5%
Augustów province	51.5%	62.8%	64.4%

<sup>1</sup> Henryk Grossman, "Struktura społeczna i gospodarcza Księstwa Warszawskiego na podstawie spisów ludności 1808 i 1810 r.," in Kwartalnik Statystyczny, II(1925), 100-101.

<sup>2</sup> Eisenbach, "Mobilność," 270, 280 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Based on Eisenbach, "Mobilność," 281.

The Kingdom's Lithuanian districts also had a much higher percentage of Jews among the urban population than Russian Lithuania. Government figures for 1858 indicated that the Jewish share of the urban population was 43.9% in Vilnius gubernia, and 51.4% in Kaunas gubernia.<sup>1</sup>

Jewish and German burghers tended to be craftsmen and small traders, while the rest of the Gentile "urban" population, which usually lived on the outskirts of towns, consisted mainly of townspeople engaged in agriculture and related occupation such as forestry, fishing and cattle raising. This pattern changed little throughout the 19th century.<sup>2</sup> The economic condition of most Jewish townspeople was poor. Two factors contributed to the general impoverishment of the Jewish population in the Kingdom: the Polish government's policy of displacing the Jews from the villages, and the heavy taxation on Jewish distilling and liquor sales, a traditional mainstay of the Jewish family in the countryside. Between 1815 and 1830 the number of Jewish households engaged in liquor production fell tenfold.<sup>3</sup> On the whole, the Jewish (and German) townspeople clung to the crafts and trades; only rarely did they venture into other occupations. "They formed isolated societies," writes Elżbieta Kaczyńska, "forced into mingling within their own circles and, at the same time, into compliance with the customs and traditions of their own environment."<sup>4</sup> The crafts and trades remained an almost exclusively Jewish and German

<sup>1</sup> Iuchas and Muliavichius, Nekotorye voprosy, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Kaczyńska, Społeczeństwo, pp. 280-282.

<sup>3</sup> Eisenbach, "Mobilność," 202-206; see below, pp. 343 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Kaczyńska, Społeczeństwo, p. 217.

preserve in southwestern Lithuania until the middle of the 19th century, when small but growing numbers of Polish and Lithuanian artisans began establishing their own shops.<sup>1</sup>

In order to present a fuller picture of Jewish society in southwestern Lithuania, it is necessary to digress somewhat from the urban theme. Although the vast majority of the Jewish population were town dwellers, there also existed a Jewish element that was not urban. In fact, Augustów province had the highest percentage of non-urban Jews in Poland.<sup>2</sup> Most Jews that remained in the countryside were engaged in the crafts and commerce; however, there were also a number of Jews in the agrarian sector. The prosperous Jewish peasant colony of Przykalety has already been mentioned above(p. 75); this was not the only such settlement. An 1863 survey estimated that there were 118 Jewish rural settlements of five households or more in Augustów province; of these, 93 were in the Lithuanian Marijampolė and Sejny districts. Scattered Jewish rural settlements of less than five households were not exempt from the military draft and certain other obligations as were the larger colonies. According to the 1863 survey, relatively few of the Jewish peasant colonies were model, prosperous communities like the one at Przykalety. Some peasant Jewish households were forced to engage in a "mixed" economy, combining farming with the more traditional crafts and trades.<sup>3</sup>

The efforts of some Jews to obtain land for farming contradicted the contention of many 19th century observers that the Jews were, as a rule,

<sup>1</sup> Eisenbach, "Mobilność," 207 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Eisenbach, "Mobilność," 284-285.

<sup>3</sup> "Widok przyszłości ekonomicznej dla izraelitów polskich," in Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego, LII(1863), 167-168; there is more data on Jewish peasants in A. G. A. D., KRSW-6598, Augustów Governor's Office to KRSW, April 22, 1861, k. 1 and following documents.

somehow naturally "averse" to agriculture. Legal and customary barriers against Jewish land holding and ownership were certainly a far more important obstacle to their joining the peasant class. In 1843 three Jews from Suwałki petitioned the Tsar to grant them land for farming. They ran into a number of legal obstacles: Jews could not settle in villages; there were no municipal farms in the province except in Kalvarija district, but the urban land here was within three Polish miles (or about 25 kilometers) of the Prussian border--and an 1823 decree forbade Jewish rural settlement within such a distance of the Kingdom's borders.<sup>1</sup> Thus, leaving the town and acquiring land was a difficult, if not impossible, proposition for most Jews.

There was, however, a small Jewish element in Congress Poland which controlled some wealth and stood out above the generally impoverished masses of their coreligionists. A few wealthy Jews provided capital for the fledgling industrial development within the Kingdom and some owned industrial enterprises themselves. This group was, of course, non-existent in Trans-Niemen Lithuania where there was no industry to speak of; however, there were Jewish landowners here. Eleven Jews held estates in the Lithuanian districts in 1849 and 1850.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it must be remembered that the structure of Jewish society in the Kingdom, though dominated by poor urban dwellers, was by no means monolithic.

Just as the towns of Trans-Niemen Lithuania were alien to the predominantly Lithuanian countryside in their social and ethnic makeup, so they

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-97, Augustów Governor's Office to KRSW, March 13, 1843 and June 24, 1843, k. 6, 21; Eisenbach, "Mobilność," 221 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Artur Eisenbach, "Dobra ziemskie w posiadaniu Żydów," in Społeczeństwo Królestwa Polskiego, ed. Witold Kula, III (Warsaw, 1968), 243-244.

also differed from the villages in legal status. Relatively few towns were privately owned, and it was only in these private towns that the burghers could be made subject to corvée obligations. In the royal (later called state or national) towns, the inhabitants paid certain taxes and citizens' levies, but were generally free from compulsory labor.

The legal status of townspeople was often confused due to the frequent changes in the status of their municipalities. In 1775 the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth abolished self-government in towns of less than 300 households, if the population was generally engaged in agriculture. The Four-Year Diet (or Sejm) then reinstated most of the old privileges in 1791 and 1792, even establishing some new towns. The Targowica Confederation of 1793, however, reaffirmed the 1775 regulations, and this return to the former status was confirmed by the Russians after the final partition of Poland-Lithuania in 1795.<sup>1</sup>

In southwestern Lithuania, which came under Prussian rule, the urban situation was different. Governor Schrötter of the New East Prussia province sought to reform town life by abolishing the burghers' corvée obligations where they existed, but his reform projects were stalled by committee debates and the King's unwillingness to sponsor changes in the towns.<sup>2</sup> On the whole, the Prussians were more interested in the economic revival of the towns rather than in their legal status, and they allowed the privileges established by the Four Year Sejm to remain in force.

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<sup>1</sup> Jučas and Jasas, Tiazhby litovskikh krest'ian, III, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Janulaitis, Užnemunė, pp. 204-205.

Thus, in the first half of the 19th century, the Lithuanian districts within the Kingdom of Poland retained more towns with municipal privileges than Russian Lithuania. However, urban self-government did little to stimulate the economic revival of the towns, especially the smaller ones. The formal autonomy enjoyed by many so-called "towns" contrasted so sharply with their economic stagnation that the government eventually decided to drastically reduce the number of municipalities. During the second half of the 19th century, most of the smaller towns were renamed "urban settlements" (Pol. osada miejska) and denied their old municipal charters. As early as 1846, the Tsar recommended, as part of the anti-alcohol campaign of the mid-forties, that there be a "reduction in the number of towns by changing the poor small towns without revenues into urban settlements."<sup>1</sup>

While most of the towns, and their citizens as well, valued their municipal charters, some of the smallest and poorest municipalities had a rather ambiguous attitude toward their status. The private town of Panemunė, owned by the landowner Frentzel, was a poor, predominantly Jewish settlement that changed its legal status twice during the first half of the 19th century. In 1819 the townspeople of Panemunė announced that they were unable to provide the mayor with a salary as required by law. For a while, a few of the wealthier inhabitants were able to persuade the rest of the burghers to maintain a mayor by making large contributions to the official's salary themselves. Landowner Frentzel, exasperated with the town's depressed economic situation, appealed then to the Kingdom's Internal Affairs' Commission to remove Panemunė's

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6942, General Administration Division to KRSW, March 6, 1846, k. 497.

municipal charter. Frentzel described his town as consisting of "fifty Jewish and Christian cottages without any privileges, while the inhabitants are so poor that they cannot bear the cost of supporting a mayor."<sup>1</sup> For some time, the Kingdom's Commission of the Treasury advised against granting Panemunė rural status, citing the still considerable liquor consumption tax (over 4,000 złoty annually) and the fact that there was still a "considerable number of artisans and merchants." In the opinion of the commission, this provided some hope for the town's eventual economic improvement.<sup>2</sup> The provincial government, however, supported Frentzel's desire for Panemunė's "de-urbanization" and in 1825 the Kingdom withdrew town status claiming both a "lack of inhabitants and trade," and the desire of the owner. However, the situation in Panemunė was later complicated by the government's prohibition of rural Jewish settlement in the border areas. Frentzel, fearing the loss of most of his settlers, appealed for a restoration of Panemunė's municipal status which he received in 1837, despite the fact that the town's economic situation had shown no improvement. Połujański, who visited Panemunė in the late 1850s, described it as "occupying the lowliest place in the ranks of the country's towns."<sup>3</sup>

A town's legal and economic status often depended on the interests of powerful landed estates. J. Skarżyński, the holder of the Bendrės (Bendrów) estate in Sejny district, sought to clarify the legal status

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-200, Frentzel to Minister of Internal Affairs, February 13, 1822, k. 42-43, Frentzel to KRSW, August 19, 1821, k. 117-123; cf. description of Panemunė in KRSW-4761, k. 92-95. Frentzel complained that the town was so poor that it would eventually become impossible for him to collect money rents from the burghers.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-200, Treasury Commission to KRSW, May 23, 1822, k. 83.

<sup>3</sup> Połujański, Wędrówka, pp. 355-356.

of Miroslavas in 1821. Miroslavas was a settlement which had once enjoyed municipal privileges but which Skarżyński now described as being somewhere "between a village and a town." In this case, Skarżyński sought to avoid paying a burdensome liquor consumption tax of 17,000 złoty which he claimed impoverished the local population. The landowner wanted clearly defined village status for Miroslavas; this would dispense the people of the settlement from the liquor tax.<sup>1</sup> In 1821 the Internal Affairs' Commission of the Kingdom agreed that Miroslavas did not "qualify as a town both on account of its site, as well as the impoverished state of its inhabitants."<sup>2</sup>

Panemunė and Miroslavas are but two examples of how urban life, in this case the legal status of the towns themselves, was accommodated to fit the interests of the estates--the rural economic sector. Closer examination of even the larger and more prosperous towns shows the same pattern of the urban sector's domination by the countryside. The most obvious example of this domination is seen in the liquor monopoly issue. A detailed survey by the Town Supervisor of Augustów province in 1820 showed that virtually all towns in the province were engaged in litigation over liquor distilling and sale rights which had allegedly been usurped by surrounding estates. Thus, the town of Pilviškiai lost its liquor monopoly to a nearby estate which had expropriated 150 morgi of town land to build two inns for manorial use.<sup>3</sup> The relatively prosperous town of Virbalis and the municipality of Vištytis had once possessed

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-199, Skarżyński to KRSW, March 12, 1821, k. 297-307.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-199, KRSW to Skarżyński, July 13, 1821, k. 296.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-4761, Pilwiszki Report of 1820, k. 81.

exclusive distilling rights, but in 1820 they were paying together over 2,000 złoty to the Vištytis economy for the rights to alcohol production. Naumiestis (Władysławów), southwestern Lithuania's most prosperous town in the early 19th century, was itself fighting surrounding estates to regain the liquor monopoly. In 1820 the Jews of Šakiai, a private town, began litigation against their landowner over the liquor monopoly issue; in Seirijai, the Jewish townspeople were allowed to distill liquor in their homes, but they were also compelled to pay the economy of Seirijai for the privilege. According to the 1820 urban survey of Augustów province, Simnas, Meteliai, Liubavas, Liudvinavas, Kalvarija, as well as other large and small towns had had their liquor monopoly rights taken over by surrounding estates.<sup>1</sup>

The liquor issue was the most obvious and lucrative, but by no means the only, source of friction between town and estate. Since the towns of Trans-Niemen Lithuania depended in large part on agriculture for their economic survival, urban rights to pasture land, forests and arable acreage were crucial for the townspeople. The encroachment of the landed estates on town lands was also noted in the 1820 Augustów province urban survey. For example, Prienai lost its town farm, as well as its pasture and grazing lands, to the powerful Sapieha family which held vast state domains around the town until 1857. In the Prienai case, the town still held formal liquor monopoly rights, but the loss of the land on which the distilling was done practically nullified them. The Sapieha family also took over the Prienai paper mill, the town's only

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<sup>1</sup> See A. G. A. D., KRSW-4761 and KRSW-4762 for the appropriate town reports.

industry.<sup>1</sup> Other towns also lost property. The town of Liudvinavas lost its farm in 1806. One of the main obstacles to the economic development of Marijampolė was Princess Sapieha's expropriation of the town's liquor monopoly, as well as the windmill which stood on municipal land. Even Sejny, one of the towns that grew considerably during the early 19th century, had to go to court in 1819 to regain the municipal watermill, granted to the town by the government and usurped by a neighboring estate. The estate of Kadaryszki reportedly "economically hindered" the town of Wiżajni, one of the few municipalities that the urban survey of 1820 considered prosperous.<sup>2</sup>

While the landowners usurped much of the revenues of southwestern Lithuania's towns, they were usually loath to provide any assistance to the municipalities, even those private towns under their jurisdiction. In 1818 the Town Supervisor of Augustów province complained that the owners of the private towns refused to provide the 600 złoty annual salary for a mayor as required by law, even when these same owners took in considerable income from fairs and markets.<sup>3</sup>

Even without the direct interference in their economic life from the estates, Trans-Niemen Lithuania's municipalities would have remained thoroughly dependent on the countryside. The fairs and markets which provided most towns with their economic lifeblood were made possible only by the massive participation of the peasantry. As a rule, markets were held weekly in the smaller towns, twice a week in the larger ones.

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-4761, Pilwiszki Report of 1820, k. 96-99.

<sup>2</sup> This information is taken from the different town reports in the Augustów province urban survey of 1820 in A. G. A. D., KRSW-4761 and KRSW-4762.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-4764, Oleniński to KRSW, December 19, 1818, k. 23.

Fairs were held several times annually, usually between three and seven times a year. The number of markets and fairs that a town could sponsor was normally limited by the specific charter which granted municipal privileges.

Markets and fairs brought revenues to a town in several ways. For one thing, they provided an outlet for the town's goods produced by local artisans. In addition, municipalities were entitled to collect tolls from peasants entering the town to attend a market or fair. The town was also able to sell large quantities of liquor to the throngs that gathered on numerous occasions. The objects of trade at the markets and, especially, the fairs were very diverse. During the seasonal fairs, more important commodities were traded and sold: cattle, horses, other livestock, agricultural tools, clothing, home hardware items, and cloth. Weekly markets were more important for the sale of food products.<sup>1</sup> After the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and up to the mid-1840s, many towns tried to improve their economic position by petitioning the government, and receiving permission, to hold additional markets and fairs.

As a rule, fairs attracted a much higher attendance than markets. Fairs were often held on traditional holidays and saints' days; they marked a high point in the peasant's calendar. Even smaller towns attracted considerable crowds to their fairs. For example, it is estimated that at least a thousand peasants attended each of the three annual fairs held in Balbieriškis. The town of Lazdijai attracted 1,000 peasants to its January fair and over 3,500 during the summer fair; this was in 1830. That same year, Liubavas had only several hundred persons

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-160, k. 536-538; KRSW-4761, k. 14-17.

attend the winter fair, but recorded about 3,000 for August. The district capitals, naturally, held the most popular gatherings. The 1830 August fair in Marijampolė drew an estimated 7,000 peasants; the same number was reported for the 1830 winter fair in Sejny.<sup>1</sup>

The number of fairs tended to increase during the first half of the 19th century: between 1820 and 1841, Vištytis increased their number from four to nine; Šakiai from one to three; Sejny from three to six; Lazdijai from three to five; Wižajni from four to seven; and Panemunė from none to five annually.<sup>2</sup> During the same period, the majority of Lithuanian towns in Augustów province held markets twice weekly, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays being the most popular market days.

The tendency of the towns to increase their number of markets and fairs in order to improve their constantly precarious economic position created certain problems that eventually provoked an opposition to this trend. The government began to see the numerous peasant gatherings in the towns as directly responsible for the dramatic upsurge in the public disorder and drunkenness among the peasants during the 1840s. The growing number of markets and fairs also made it more difficult to properly supervise trade.

Eventually, the government acted to reduce the number of markets and fairs in the Kingdom. Responding to pressure from the Church, the Kingdom banned Sunday markets in 1844; many of these Sunday markets were then transferred to Friday. By 1849, the number of fairs held in the towns of Trans-Niemen Lithuania had declined. At the same time, only the

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. B, 528: Przeniesienia targów, Diocesan Report of August 15, 1830.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-156, Government Report of August, 1841, k. 272-279; KRSW-4761 and KRSW-4762.

larger towns(for example, Kalvarija, Sejny, Vilkaviškis, Marijampolė) were reported holding markets twice weekly.<sup>1</sup> Yet despite the government's efforts to reform the market trading system in the towns, some evasion of government regulations continued. Sunday markets, though declared illegal, were still held in some towns after 1844. In Aleksotas, a suburb of Kaunas on the west bank of the Niemen, illegal "spontaneous" Sunday markets were reported in 1851.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence, however, to indicate that illegal market trading was widespread.

The towns, then, suffered interference in their economic life not only from the surrounding estates, but also from the central government. Moreover, the economic problems of some towns were complicated by changes in international politics and economics. The town of Liudvinavas, for example, lost considerable revenue when the new Warsaw-Vilnius-St. Petersburg road was built in the early 19th century which bypassed it.<sup>3</sup> A few towns, such as Lazdijai and Seirijai, had prospered under Prussian rule when they were garrisoned with troops; the subsequent loss of the military payroll and departure of administrative personnel hurt these municipalities economically. The towns on the Prussian border depended on international commerce, and the high tariffs of the early 19th century tended to decrease trade. On the other hand, Sejny grew rapidly during the first half of the 19th century: the Prussians had chosen it as an administrative center and in 1818 it became the ecclesiastical seat of the newly formed Sejny-Augustów diocese.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-160, k. 293,319-336. <sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-162, k. 117 ff.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-4761, Ludwinów Report of 1820, k. 58-61.

<sup>4</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-4762, Sejny Report of 1820, k. 45-48.

In general, southwestern Lithuania's towns were dominated by the countryside which surrounded them. The landowners encroached on the lands and economic rights of the townspeople. The towns depended on the peasants who came to the markets and fairs for the major share of municipal income. In fact, a very large number of "townspeople" were actually urban peasants; thus, the municipalities of Trans-Niemen Lithuania can be said to have had a truly "agrarian character." One 19th century observer of town life wrote: "Generally, the townspeople of our decaying little towns, who are not engaged in trade or industry [crafts], make their living from agriculture."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, while southwestern Lithuania statistically had a higher percentage of "urban" population than the rest of Lithuania, the figures belied reality. Trans-Niemen Lithuania had no urban centers to compare with Kaunas and Vilnius (which had estimated populations of 23,500 and 60,000 respectively in 1860). In fact, no town of the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts reached a population of five figures until Marijampolė became Trans-Niemen Lithuania's economic and administrative center in the 1920s.

#### Puńsk 1818-1821: Profile of an Agrarian Town.

The truly depressed state of southwestern Lithuania's urban life can probably be best appreciated by examining a specific profile of a small town in this region. A good example of a typical "bogus" town was Puńsk, especially during the early years of the 18th century. Puńsk is located a few kilometers northwest of Sejny. Its impoverishment and

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted in Chmura, Problem siły, p. 244.

inability to function as a municipality were admittedly extreme, but the problems and socio-economic structure of Puńsk were typical of the small towns of Trans-Niemen Lithuania in the 19th century.

Puńsk is an old settlement. A church was built here as early as 1597, indicating that even then Puńsk was a settlement of some size.<sup>1</sup> The 19th-century traveler Aleksander Połujański claimed that the town had received municipal privileges from King Władysław IV in 1647, and that in 1792 King Stanisław August reaffirmed Puńsk's town status. The town was supposed to have had a coat-of-arms depicting St. Peter.<sup>2</sup> However, despite royal charters and privileges, Puńsk never really developed as a town. During the difficult Napoleonic years, especially 1809-1811, the town reported no income. No markets or fairs were held here. One of the problems afflicting Puńsk, like other small towns in the Kingdom, was simple geography: the town was too close to the district seats of Kalvarija and Sejny for the organization of successful markets and fairs. In 1817 the townspeople were unable to pay the mayor his salary; he was still reported trying to gain reimbursement for personal expenses incurred while in office. The same year it was estimated that the burghers of Puńsk were predominantly "urban farmers." There were reportedly twenty landed farmers and forty garden peasants. "Their property is in the poorest condition," reported the deputy prefect of Sejny district in 1817, "and they [the townspeople] are in no state to make any [financial] contribution [to the town]."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Połujański, Wędrówki, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Słownik Geograficzny, IX, 302.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-4994, Deputy Prefect of Sejny District to the Prefect of Łomża Department, July 17, 1817.

When the Town Supervisor of Augustów province, Oleniński, visited Puńsk in 1820, he was horrified at the outward appearance of the town. Puńsk had no public buildings, and the church was in desperate need of repair. In the town, Oleniński wrote, "we find buildings without chimneys, worse than the village huts, threatening imminent collapse . . . there is only one street and a crooked, dirty and abandoned one at that." The townspeople looked no better than their town, reported Oleniński: ". . . the inhabitants themselves are very poor, own poor land, but are required to pay high rents for them." Supervisor Oleniński attributed the unproductive state of agriculture in Puńsk to the high rents. There was little trade in the town, and the crafts were represented by "only a few clumsy [i.e. unskilled] Jews: tailors, cobblers, wooden shoe makers." Puńsk had no liquor monopoly privileges, although the townspeople were allowed to distill their own liquor. Although the town had the right to sponsor a weekly market, it was not held. Puńsk was alleged to have rights to some 60 włóki(or about 1,800 morgi) of land by previous charters, but no one seemed to know the exact boundaries of the town. In fact, Oleniński was so disgusted with the situation in Puńsk that he refused to stipulate whether the town was "growing or declining," as required by the 1820 survey questionnaire. The Town Supervisor thought such a question was irrelevant: Puńsk, he felt, had always known only one condition, that of "poverty, destitution and drunkenness." In a more business-like vein, he stated that there was "no hope . . . for the improvement of the town" and suggested that Puńsk be given a special status as a "free settlement." According to Oleniński, "even the majority of the Christian townspeople themselves desire this," although the Jews opposed a change in the town's

legal status; they feared that the abolition of municipal privileges would adversely affect their already precarious legal and economic condition.<sup>1</sup>

In any case, Puńsk did not give up its municipal status without a struggle. Back in 1812 a budget had been proposed by the town's four-member council to pay mayor Michał Planiski a salary of 300 złoty per annum. Early in 1819 sixty-nine townspeople met and voted to place on themselves a 600 złoty levy to pay the mayor's wages as required by law. The data from the mayor's salary levy give us a more detailed profile of the town's social and ethnic divisions. Of the 69 heads of households that signed the salary agreement, 41 were Jews, the rest Christians. Interestingly, judging from their ability to sign their names to the agreement, all of the Jews, but only nine of the Gentiles were at least partially literate.<sup>2</sup> The salary levy itself was, in fact, a kind of progressive income tax, and the town was divided into four classes which reflected the social and economic status of the burghers. Class One consisted of citizens owning breweries, saloons, or otherwise engaged in trade or crafts; Class Two was represented by landed urban farmers with at least one włoła(or 30 morgi) of land; Class Three took in all of the garden cultivators(termed ogrodowi in Polish); Class Four consisted of the poorest town inhabitants--the day laborers or urban peasants whose "condition was impoverished." Specifically, the citizens' levy agreed to in 1819 was collected in the following fashion:

<sup>1</sup> Oleniński's description of Puńsk is in A. G. A. D., KRSW-4761, Puńsk Report of 1820, k. 87-90.

<sup>2</sup> Not all of the households actually participated in the salary agreement. The following year Oleniński counted 82 households in Puńsk.

Class One .....	10 households paying	11 złoty each = 110 złoty
Class Two .....	19 households paying	9 złoty each = 171 złoty
Class Three ...	35 households paying	8 złoty each = 280 złoty
Class Four ....	8 households paying	5 złoty each = 39 złoty
Total .....	72 households	Total = 600 złoty <sup>1</sup>

A later redistribution of the citizens' levy the same year showed a total of 82 households in much the same type of breakdown as above.<sup>2</sup> Of the ten households listed as having a trade(Class One), eight were Jews and two had German surnames. Among the eight Jews, one was listed as a distiller(Pol. propinator), six were innkeepers, and one was reported as a religious teacher(Pol. szkolnik). Almost all the rest of the Jewish citizens of Puńsk were in Class Three and Four; in fact, all of the townspeople in the latter division were Jews. The Christian population that was engaged in serious agriculture(Class Two) were mostly Poles, with only a few German surnames. The entire Puńsk register contained not a single identifiably Lithuanian surname.<sup>3</sup>

The 1819 town budget gives us some idea of revenues and expenditures. That year Puńsk took in 1,621 złoty in revenues and spent the same amount. The town's revenues came from the following sources in 1819:

Citizens' levy for mayor .....	600 złoty
Distilling and saloon income .....	540 złoty
Bakery rental .....	132 złoty

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-4996, Salary Levy Agreement of March 18, 1819. It appears that Class Four was given a one złoty "discount."

<sup>2</sup> It would seem that some households did not pay the levy. In any case, this discrepancy does not affect the general social and economic picture.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-4994. Salary Levy Redistribution of May 30, 1819.

Herring sales ..... 19 złoty

Leasing of town pastures ..... 330 złoty

Total revenues ..... 1,621 złoty

All of this money that was raised went for taxes, the mayor's salary, official paperwork, and other municipal expenses.<sup>1</sup> The townspeople of Puńsk made some efforts to acquire a part of the income that flowed into the coffers of the nearby Maćkow estate, a large state domain, especially the revenues from the liquor monopoly and the money rents that went from the town to the estate; however, these efforts failed.<sup>2</sup>

On July 21, 1823, a group of Puńsk townspeople petitioned the government to downgrade their municipal status, complaining that the town was unable to pay for the required municipal administration. The petitioners asked that they be considered free peasants(Pol. okupnik) rather than burghers. The Kingdom's Treasury Commission, as in other cases, opposed the change as a potential loss of revenue for the state.<sup>3</sup> Eventually, the town was unable to pay even the smallest of taxes and, in later years, the government itself began to support a change in the town's legal status.<sup>4</sup> When Aleksander Połujański made his tour of Augustów province in the late 1850s, Puńsk had long given up its municipal status and was an impoverished "free settlement," little different from other such overgrown villages.

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-4761, k. 90; cf. KRSW-4994, Puńsk Budget for 1819.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-4994, Report of Town Meeting, March 18, 1819.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-200, Commission of Augustów Province to KRSW, undated, k. 157-158.

<sup>4</sup> Relevant documents are in A. G. A. D., KRSW-4996.

Puńsk was a typical example of a 19th century agrarian town: over three-fourths of its population was engaged in agriculture. To the Lithuanian peasants who lived in the countryside surrounding the towns, Puńsk and the other municipalities seemed both familiar and alien. They were familiar in their agrarian nature, and as places peasants visited often; after all, peasants went to town on market and fair days, drank in the town inn, bought supplies or had work done by a blacksmith. Yet despite their dependence on and close relationship to the countryside, Trans-Niemen Lithuania's towns were alien to the peasantry in their ethnic and social makeup (the latter particularly in large towns). The concerns of the urban cultivators differed from those of the Lithuanian villagers in some significant ways.<sup>1</sup> Dependent on the countryside and an integral part of the rural economy, the towns were, nonetheless, a world quite distinct from the village.

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<sup>1</sup> See below, Chapter XII.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE WORLD OF THE LITHUANIAN PEASANT: MATERIAL CONDITIONS, THE SPIRITUAL UNIVERSE, THE CYCLES OF WORK AND LIFE

The life of the peasantry is the basic setting for the history of the Lithuanian nation. In previous chapters, this life and its background have been presented in more general social and economic terms. Yet any study of peasant society must consider, at least in outline, the actual conditions of the villager's existence: his physical surroundings; kinship relations; the daily and seasonal work cycles; his moral and spiritual values; in short, his quality of life. This chapter is an attempt to present a comprehensive overview of the peasant's mode of existence.

#### The Physical Setting: Village and Homestead in the 19th Century.

The Lithuanian villages of southwestern Lithuania have always been small settlements. Mikalojus Akelaitis, the Lithuanian writer, recalled that his native hamlet of Čiuoderiškiai (Pol. Kazimierzpol) consisted of five homesteads and a population of sixty; this was in the early 19th century.<sup>1</sup> In the southeastern area of Trans-Niemen Lithuania along the Niemen River, it is estimated that the villages ranged in size between ten and thirty homesteads.<sup>2</sup> Most of the so-called "church villages," which were either centers of parishes or had churches of their own, were

<sup>1</sup> M[ikolaj] Akieliewicz, "Słówko z Mariampolszczyzny. Wspomnienia z lat młodcianych," in Kalendarz ilustrowany na rok 1877, ed. Jan Jaworski (Warsaw, 1877), 108.

<sup>2</sup> Izidorius Butkevičius, "Panemunių kaimai ir sodybos," in Panemunių dzūkai, ed. Angelė Vyšniauskaitė (Vilnius, 1970), 49.

somewhat larger than other villages, but, on the whole, Lithuanian villages rarely exceeded a dozen households.

In southwestern Lithuania, villages of the street pattern were most common. Village buildings were usually constructed on both sides of the street, but occasionally they were built only on one side. At the beginning of the 19th century, the form of these villages began to change: as holdings were consolidated, some of the original villages, where the narrow strips of plowland had radiated outward from the homesteads, were expanded or, as it were, "stretched out." Some of the peasant households left the village and established consolidated individual homesteads (Lith. vienkiemis, vienasėdis). Thus, the distance between the homesteads remaining in the villages increased; occasionally, poorer households were forced to move out and make way for a more spacious arrangement. In some cases, these extended villages attained lengths of several kilometers. In 1820 and 1821, sixteen villages were expanded in the Šakiai area of Marijampolė district in accordance with the government's land consolidation schemes; more such villages were reported in Trans-Niemen Lithuania between 1835 and 1838.

Beginning with the 1820s, land consolidation in southern and central Trans-Niemen Lithuania led to the establishment of many so-called linear villages. When this occurred, the old, densely populated hamlet was expanded to allow for land consolidation, and new households were established farther down the road or parallel to the old settlement. Local people called the original village site the "first" line, and the new one the "second" line.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Butkevičius, Lietuvos valstiečių, pp. 46-54.

Trans-Niemen Lithuania can be divided into two basic regions by village type. To the west and northwest of a diagonal line running approximately from Kalvarija to Kaunas, individual homesteads and street villages predominated; to the east and southeast of this line, the number of individual homesteads decreased considerably.<sup>1</sup> During the 19th century this split corresponded to the general economic division of the Lithuanian Trans-Niemen region: the west was the wealthier, more advanced region; the east the poorer, more backward one.

Between 1807 and 1864, the number of villages broken up into individualized rural homesteads increased dramatically in the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts: from a negligible proportion to over 38% of the region's roughly 3,000 villages. The individual homesteads, and those which remained in the more spacious "pruned" or "stretched" villages, came to be distinctly different from the older homesteads in the remaining condensed street-type hamlets. The individualized homestead allowed not only more productive agriculture on more or less consolidated holdings, but it also enabled the peasant to better organize the physical layout of the homestead complex.<sup>2</sup>

In the traditional street-type villages of Trans-Niemen Lithuania, the peasant homesteads were lined up along the street with the dwelling house usually facing the street frontwise. A peasant homestead of the village type normally contained two parts: the living area or yard, and the so-called "farm" part containing farm buildings. A fence usually separated the two areas; in some cases, the two yards were on opposite

<sup>1</sup> Butkevičius, Lietuvos valstiečių, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> There were very few so-called "cluster" villages in southwestern Lithuania; in a cluster village, homesteads were bunched together haphazardly.

sides of the street. In most cases, the dwelling house was the first building from the street; directly behind or next to it was the family storage bin (Lith. klėtis, svirnas), used for storing grain, clothes and tools. Hired hands and other family members slept here in the summer. Besides these two buildings, which usually made up the living area or yard of the homestead, there was the barn, another storage building known as the kluonas, and, perhaps, other farm buildings which made up the homestead's "farm" yard. Figures 2 and 3 show typical layouts for traditional street village homesteads.

The individual homesteads, which increased greatly in number during the first half of the 19th century, enabled many peasant households to develop their homestead layout more freely. While, in a few cases, this freedom led to relatively haphazard homestead arrangements, those in southwestern Lithuania developed a very distinctive layout. Here the landed peasant usually built his home and other buildings in a square pattern, enclosing one spacious central yard. It is probable that this kind of homestead arrangement came from East Prussia where it was known as early as the 18th century. The storage bin or klėtis, as well as a fence, marked the boundary between the living space around the home and the farm part of the yard. The peasant homesteads of Trans-Niemen Lithuania were also known for their fine gardens and the practice of planting numerous trees on the homestead, so that the buildings themselves were barely visible through the foliage. Figures 4 through 7 give some typical layouts common to individualized homesteads in southwestern Lithuania.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Butkevičius, Lietuvos valstiečiu, pp. 118-130, 134-136; Połujański, Wędrówki, pp. 19 ff.; cf. Vyšniauskaitė, Panemunių dzūkai, pp. 52-59.

FIG. 2

Typical Street Village Layout Showing Buildings, Trees and Orchards

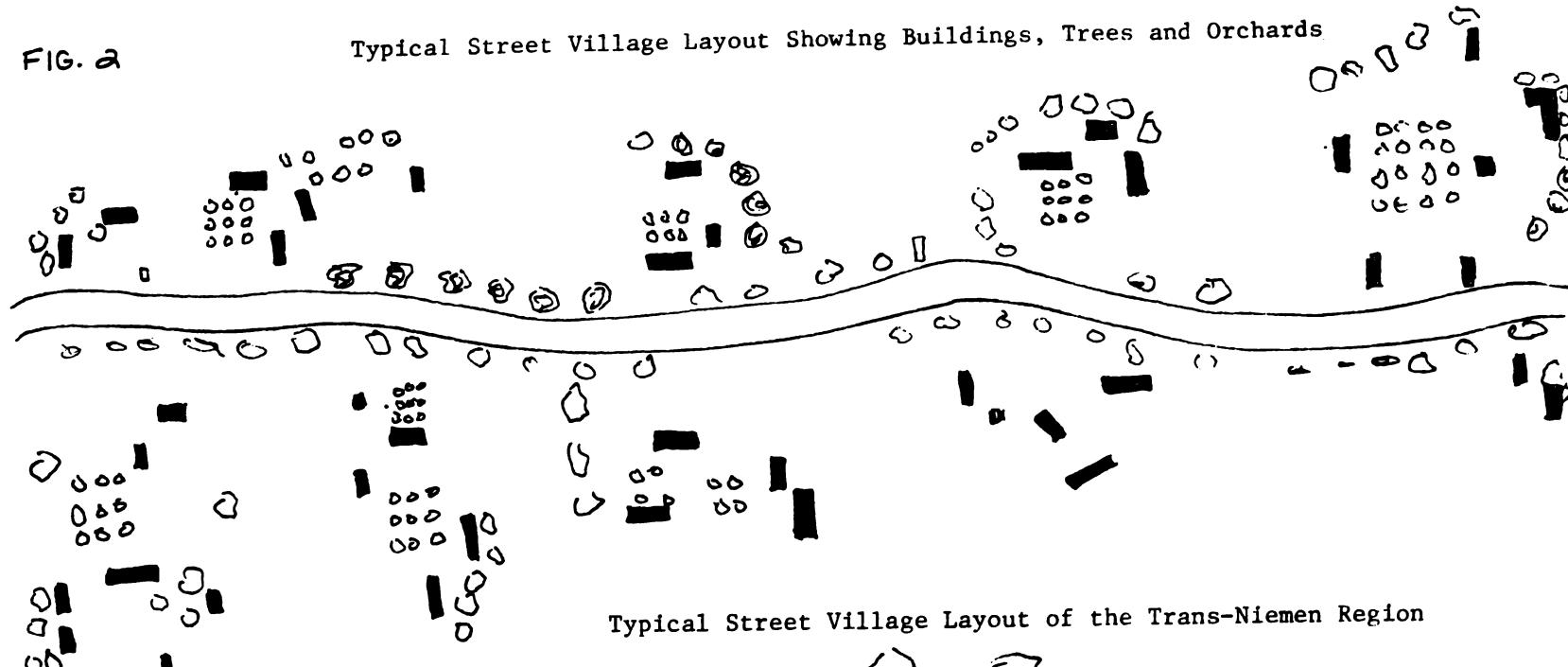
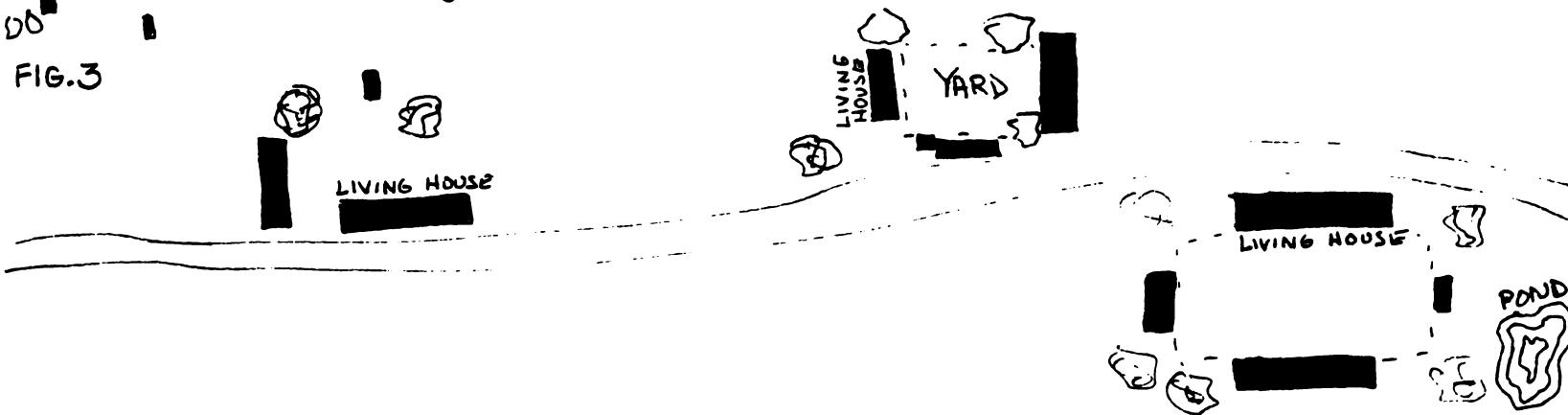
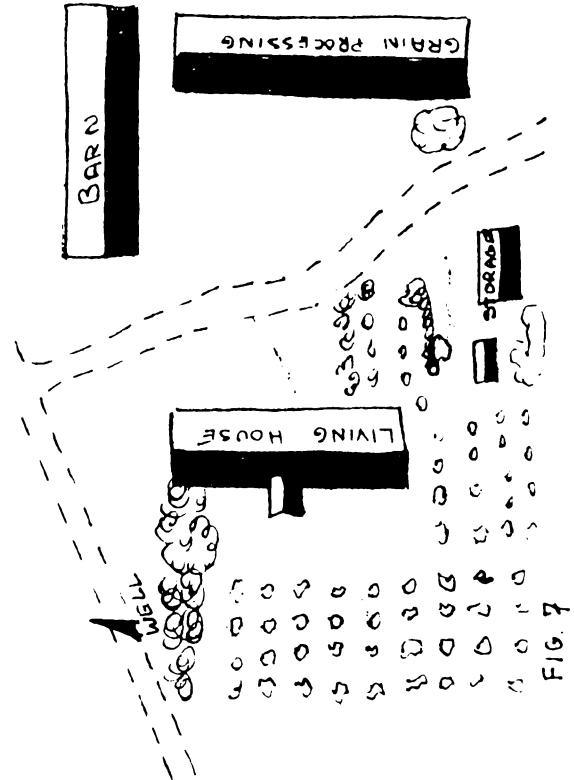
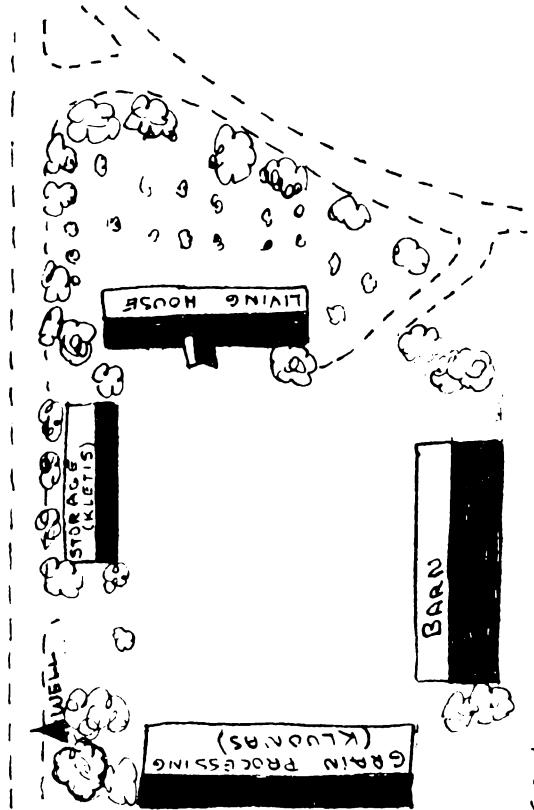
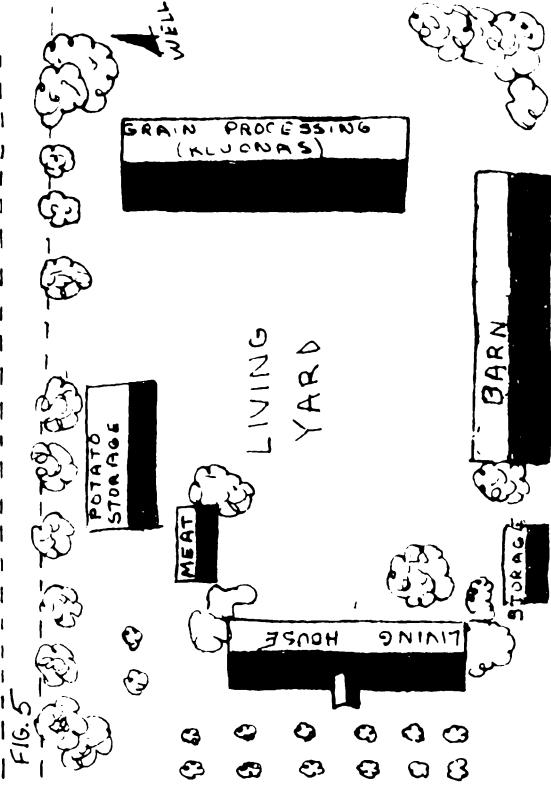
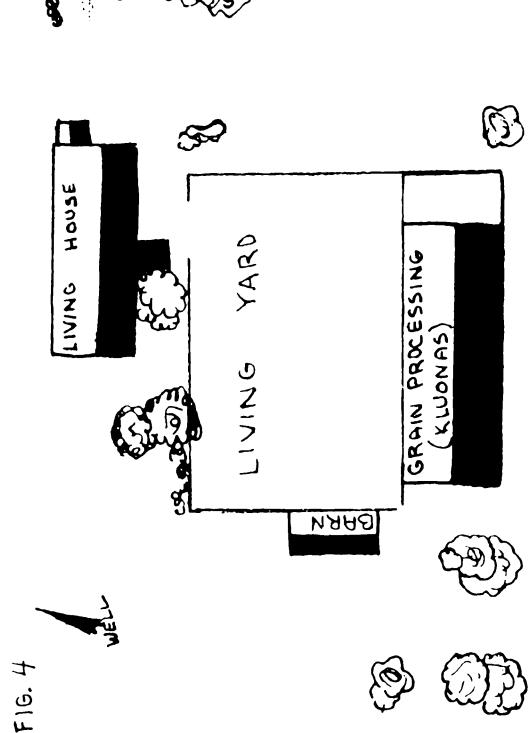


FIG. 3

Typical Street Village Layout of the Trans-Niemen Region





The number and quality of buildings on the peasant homesteads varied considerably from household to household, and were mainly determined by the wealth of the individual household. The central building on the homestead was the dwelling house. During the first half of the 19th century, the majority of peasants lived in so-called "smoke" or "chimney-less" cabins (Lith. dūminė pirkia, Pol. kurna izba, chata kurna).<sup>1</sup> Relatively little is known about such buildings since almost none have survived intact, and their descriptions in ethnographic literature lack detailed diagrams. On the whole, they must have looked somewhat like the cottage in Figure 8 below. Ethnographer Józefa Osipowska described one such cottage in southwestern Lithuania in 1838:

[I see] a low thatched roof without a chimney, and concave walls, in which [there are] several little windows, which are more like rat holes . . . and so small that you will never see an entire face through them; rarely is a fence intact, or the roof untorn. The outer layout of the landed peasant's hut is as follows: [first], the vestibule, which also serves as the main storehouse; here stand the colorfully painted chests, the tall wooden buckets and baskets, plaited with straw, and in which the peasants keep clothing, linen, sheets and such. Over there is the ladder leading up to the attic in which the younger couple of the house sleep, leaving the bed in the living room for the parents or children. From the vestibule [we enter] the living room, a dark chamber that is without [large] windows . . . there is only as much light as you can find outside an hour after sunset. In such a cottage there are usually looms which take up a fourth of the entire area. Opposite [the looms], against the other wall, is a bed on high legs where the older people sleep in the summer. On a shelf near the door are the pots, bread, bowls, wooden spoons; in a word, the necessary daily articles. In the fourth corner of the living room is a huge stove with a flat top for sleeping; from here, all the smoke pours out to the living room, blackening its rough walls and the faces of the inhabitants, and vanishing only through chinks in the door

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<sup>1</sup>

It is from the word "smoke" that we get the term for the podymny household levy described in Chapter VI.

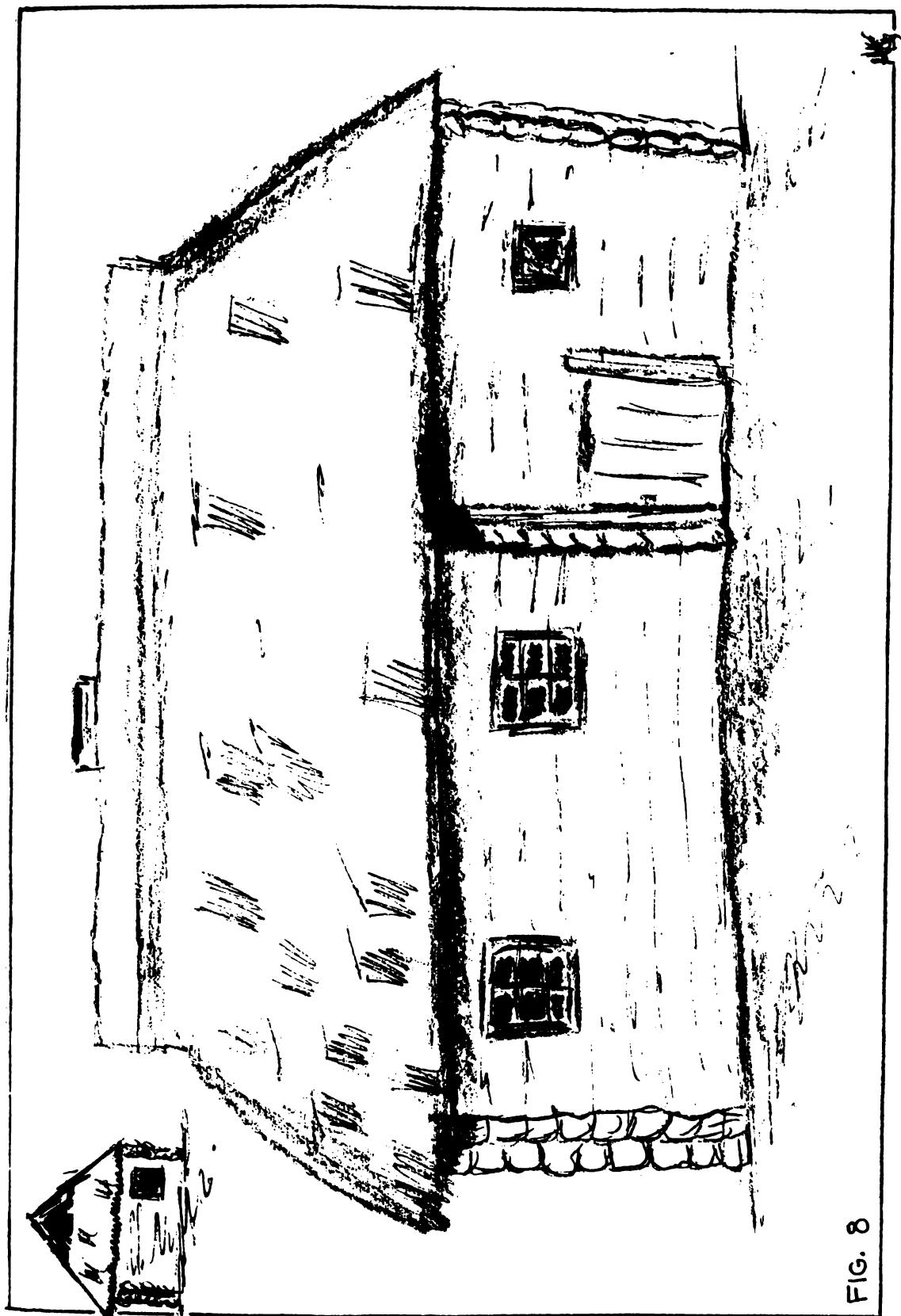


FIG. 8

and roof. Long plaits of dangling onions intended for frying are smoked while hanging from the ceiling. Pictures are hung densely all over the walls, most often daubs of saints and angels, surrounded by clouds of smoke.<sup>1</sup>

Though these huts were a depressing sight by later housing standards, it must be remembered that many wealthier peasants, especially in the western parts of Trans-Niemen Lithuania, eschewed these cottages and built better and bigger houses. More important, from about the middle of the 19th century, houses with chimneys steadily replaced the smoke-filled cabins even among the middle and some poorer peasantry.<sup>2</sup> These new peasant houses, which are today termed "traditional," were called stuba in southwestern Lithuania(a German term also used in Lithuanian East Prussia). Though similar in some ways to the contemporary peasant houses of Russian Lithuania, the Trans-Niemen stuba was of a distinctive type and was influenced by the Lithuanian peasant architecture of East Prussia.

In general, the new "traditional" homes of southwestern Lithuania had certain aspects in common: an assymetrical room layout and the central position of the kitchen and living room. At one end of the house, the well-to-do peasant family had a special clean room for receiving guests and for the family to spend holidays(Lith. séklyčia, stubelė). The other end of the house contained the every day living quarters(Lith. gryčia). The peasants along the Prussian border reportedly had the most elaborate living quarters and homesteads. In addition

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<sup>1</sup> Józefa Osipowska, "Zwyczaje i obyczaje ludu w Zapuszczańskiem," in Magazyn Powszechny, No. 24(1838), 186.

<sup>2</sup> Połujanński, Wędrówki, pp. 439 ff.; Goltz, "Kilka słów," 283.

to the regular rooms, wealthier households maintained "lesser" quarters for the hired help in the summer; during the winter, these quarters doubled as a storage place. During the middle and later 19th century, more peasants began attaching small ornate porches to the main entrance of their houses.<sup>1</sup>

The peasant's house usually contained modest furnishings. The most central of these was the stove, used for both cooking and heating. During the cold months, the stove top served as a warm bed. Basically, there were two types of peasant stoves: the closed clay or brick type, apparently borrowed from the neighboring Slavs (Russ. pech', Pol. piec), and the open oven, usually placed on a raised platform. In the Trans-Niemen region and Samogitia, the closed clay ovens were rectangular with a narrowing top. In southwestern Lithuania, the open stoves, which became more popular in the second half of the 19th century, were called mašina. When a household had both heating devices, the open one was placed next to the closed clay stove. After the middle of the 19th century, peasants began installing chimneys over their stoves and ovens.<sup>2</sup>

Aside from the house, the landed peasant homestead usually consisted of several farm buildings, the number and size of which depended on the household's economic level. The aforementioned klėtis was usually built next to the house; its main purpose was to provide storage for grain, flour, meat, old clothing and various other property. It was also used for sleeping and resting. The klėtis-type storage buildings in Trans-

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<sup>1</sup> Butkevičius, Lietuvos valstiečių, pp. 163-169; Butkiewicz, "Opis," 292; Angelė Vyšniauskaitė, ed., Lietuvių etnografijos bruožai (Vilnius, 1964), pp. 210 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Izidorius Butkevičius, "Valstiečių pirkios," in Panemunių dzūkai, 73-75; Mažoji lietuviškoji tarybinė enciklopedija, II, 273-274.

Niemen Lithuania usually had an attic for storing grain and consisted of two rooms. The klėtis is often mentioned in folklore as the place where young girls slept and where romantic trysts took place.

Peasants kept their animals in a barn which was usually built further away from the dwelling house. Next to the barn, some households built a separate structure for storing hay and animal feed(Lith. daržinė). Another major farm building was the structure for threshing and otherwise processing harvested grain crops(Lith. kluonas). It was here that flax was dried. The kluonas was normally built some distance from the house to protect against the fires which often started in the drying pit. Some peasant homesteads also had simple cellar-type structures dug into the ground for storing potatoes. More prosperous well-to-do peasant households sometimes built saunas(Lith. pirtis) for bathing, washing clothes or drying flax; however, the saunas became rare in the Trans-Niemen region during the 19th century because authorities frowned on them as fire hazards.

Most peasant buildings in Lithuania were built of hand-hewn logs and thatched with straw; however, during the 19th century straw roofs increasingly gave way to the safer wooden shingles, clay tiles or tin. As the old "smoke" cabins disappeared, the new houses became more ornate, often with elaborately carved and painted windowpanes, doors, porches and roof edges; such art work was also extended to farm buildings, particularly the klėtis.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kolberg, Litwa, pp. 96-104; Izidorius Butkevičius, "Ūkiniai trobesiai Panemunėse," in Panemunių dzūkai, 77-90; Butkevičius, Lietuvos valstiečių, pp. 178 ff.; cf. also Marian Pokropek, "Budownictwo ludowe Pojazdów Augustowsko-Suwalskiego," in Rocznik Białostocki, XII(1974), 113-176.

Like his house, the peasant's home furnishings and furniture were wooden, hand-made objects produced either by household members themselves or by local craftsmen. One of the most elaborately carved items of peasant furniture was the single girl's dowry chest. Metal pots and pans came into increasing use only during the middle and later 19th century. The traditional form of lighting a peasant home was through a burning wooden splinter(Lith. balana) hung from the ceiling; kerosene lighting was not generally used until the end of the 19th century.<sup>1</sup>

Such, briefly, were the essential physical components of the landed peasant's homestead. Naturally, the homesteads of poorer peasants consisted of fewer buildings; sometimes, this meant only the dwelling house with a small adjacent shelter for chickens and pigs. No doubt, the well-to-do homesteads with their gardens, lines of trees, many well built structures, and increasingly elaborate and ornate houses, were not unattractive places in which to live and work.

#### Food and Dress.

The basic staple of all peasant households in Lithuania was bread, mainly rye bread; in the 19th century, wheat was still considered a "high class" grain fit only for gentry and very wealthy peasants. Among the poorer peasantry, it was common practice to mix lower grade grains and even potatoes into bread dough to "stretch" the rye supply. Cabbage and potatoes were the other most important agricultural food items; the latter was extremely important during bad grain harvests. These were

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<sup>1</sup> Vyšniauskaitė, Lietuvių etnografijos, pp. 244-248; Vacys Milius, "Balda," in Panemunių dzūkai, 90 ff.

supplemented by cucumbers, carrots and onions. Other vegetables, such as tomatoes, lettuce and radishes came into use only at the end of the 19th century. From about the middle of the 19th century, peasants began to keep small orchards, especially for apples. The vegetarian diet was supplemented by forest products, particularly mushrooms and various berries.

Animal products provided the peasant household with much needed protein. In fact, meat consumption was one of the best indicators of a household's economic level. Pork was the major source of meat. Peasants usually slaughtered the pigs in the winter months, after which the pork was salted, dried and/or smoked in a small wooden hut, or in the chimney. While well-to-do households slaughtered several pigs a year, poorer ones were often lucky to kill one, thus running out of meat early in the spring. Mutton was the second most popular meat product, usually eaten in the fall. Beef was a relatively rare food item in the Lithuanian peasant's diet. On the whole, fish was not a major food in southwestern Lithuania, except for those settlements located near rivers or lakes. While most households kept a goodly supply of fowl, peasants consumed it relatively rarely saving it for holidays and illness; villagers considered chicken somewhat of a delicacy. On the whole, fowl was intended primarily for market.

Cows and, in the poorest of households, goats provided the peasant family with milk. Until the end of the 19th century, virtually all village milk production went for local consumption. Normally, villagers drank milk in what they called "sweet," or unsoured, form; sometimes, the peasants ate it after it had solidified in a soured or fermented

state. Butter and cheese were not every day items on the peasant diet in the 19th century; they were either sold or eaten on special occasions such as holidays. Honey provided the most popular sweetener because sugar, which had to be bought on the open market, was rarely used.<sup>1</sup>

As with food, the peasant household also produced its own drink, with the notable exception of hard liquor(villagers who secretly distilled their own were the exception). Peasants routinely brewed their own beer, as well as a drink from fermented bread crusts called gira (similar to the Russian kvas). Tea was not common in early 19th century Lithuania: it was drunk only during illness, or saved for guests. In southwestern Lithuania and the Klaipéda(Memel) region, the peasantry drank their own curious brand of "coffee" made of wheat, oats, and various roots, and then topped with milk. Scattered evidence indicates that the traditional mead(Lith. midus) was still drunk in some areas of Lithuania during the 19th century. Peasants also made juices from the various berries found in the forests. Liquor, in addition to serving as an escape from daily drudgery, also doubled as a popular medicine. In any case, it was considered a necessary article. Although wholesale drunkenness fell off somewhat after mid-century, there is no evidence that village drinking lessened appreciably during the whole of the 19th century, except for the years of the temperance movement(see Chapter XII for details).<sup>2</sup>

Before the middle of the 19th century, most peasants still wore

<sup>1</sup> Vyšniauskaitė, Lietuvių etnografijos, pp. 386-393.

<sup>2</sup> Kolberg, Litwa, pp. 91-95; Vyšniauskaitė, Lietuvių etnografijos, pp. 386 ff.; Połująński, Wedrówki, p. 10; see also V[acys] Milius, "Lietuvių valstiečių maistas XIX a. antrojoje pusėje," in Iš lietuvių kultūros istorijos, LTSRMA, Istorijos Institutas, II(Vilnius, 1959), 257-268.

clothing made at home. The women's clothes, especially the traditional dress worn on holidays, were more elaborate than the men's. The basic traditional Lithuanian wardrobe for women consisted of an embroidered linen blouse, a colorful vest, and a long dress with an apron. The level and extent of embroidery and color varied from region to region. In the western part of the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts, the woman's outfit, especially the apron, was known for its color. Women almost always wore headgear of some kind until the 20th century. The custom of braiding the hair of unmarried girls only was reported to have largely disappeared by the 19th century, and is known to have been practiced only in the region inhabited by speakers of the dzūkai dialect, part of which included southeastern Trans-Niemen Lithuania.

While the Lithuanian woman's dress differed by region, the wardrobe of the man was fairly uniform throughout Lithuania. White shirts and pants, the former moderately embroidered in some areas, made up the basic male outfit in the 19th century. The long tunic-like shirt was often worn over the pants and tied around with a traditional colored sash. Homemade vests were also common. Except for the relatively brief hot months, almost every Lithuanian man wore a long gray or brownish woolen coat (Lith. sermēga, rudinė); it was usually of knee length with a straight or folding collar. During warmer weather, or to protect more expensive winter coats, many peasants wore a type of overcoat (Lith. trinyčios). For really cold weather, middle and well-to-do peasants owned sheepskin coats which could be either long or short.

Peasant footwear was of three basic types. Every day wear consisted of slippers made of bark and tied with leggings (Lith. vyžos); leather slippers were known as naginės. In southwestern Lithuania, wooden



Fig. 9. The Peasants of Marijampolė Region. Drawn by V. Gerson, 1851.

shoes (Lith. klumpės) were popular. Finally, on festive occasions, peasants wore leather half-boots. Often villagers, especially the women, went around barefoot indoors and during the summer months. Just as with food consumption and housing, apparel was normally a good indicator of peasant wealth. For example, well-to-do villagers wore ornate sermégas-type coats, while the poorest peasants often had only the trinyčios overcoat even during the winter. In his travels during the middle of the 19th century, Poļujański noticed that in the northwestern region of Trans-Niemen Lithuania peasants were better dressed than in other areas; here some villagers even wore factory-made clothing.<sup>1</sup>

#### Communications.

Another important aspect of peasant material culture were the means of communication. For both travel and work, the average landed peasant household had at least one wagon. In southwestern Lithuania, it was common to harness two horses to a wagon. Originally, wagons were constructed entirely of wood but, during the early 19th century, iron came into increasing use, especially in lining the outside of the wheels. The axles, struts and other parts remained wooden until much later. As a rule, most peasants used a single wagon for work, distant travel and festive occasions. From the middle of the 19th century, however, the wealthier peasants of southwestern Lithuania began to build special wagons for purely personal travel; they were called brička's in Lithuanian, and some of them were relatively fancy. During the winter snows,

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<sup>1</sup> Poļujański, Wedrówki, pp. 427 ff.; see also Vyšniauskaitė, Lietuvių etnografijos, pp. 332-380; Marija Mastonytė, "Apranga," in Panemunių dzūkai, 120-130; Kolberg, Litwa, pp. 74-87; Stasė Bernotienė, Lietuvių liaudies moterų drabužiai XVIII a. pab.- XX a. pr. (Vilnius, 1974), xiv-xv, pp. 260-262.

the villagers rode sleighs. Water transport did not play an especially important role in the villagers' daily life, an exception being the peasants who lived along the Niemen River.<sup>1</sup>

The material conditions of peasant life defined the villager's social and economic status within the village. Villagers of the 19th century were no less concerned with "getting ahead" materially and demonstrating their wealth than people of other classes or times. On the whole, during the 19th century, the living standard and material quality of life improved significantly, at least for the middle and well-to-do peasantry.

#### Family Ties, Kinship and Traditional Institutions in the Village.

The manorial administration of the estate, the government offices on the gmina level, and the Church made up, in the eyes of the peasants, the "outer" authoritarian structure of the rural world. The peasant household, as well as the village, had authority structures of their own based on kinship, seniority and wealth. On the whole, the Lithuanians did not maintain the large, extended, multi-family households common in some parts of Russia.<sup>2</sup>

In Trans-Niemen Lithuania inherited property, in most cases, could not be legally divided. Here and in Samogitia, the usual practice was to transfer property to the eldest son with the proviso that the latter

<sup>1</sup> Vyšniauskaitė, Lietuvių etnografijos, pp. 417-436; Bernotienė, "Valstiečių," 204-205.

<sup>2</sup> See Mary K. Matossian, "The Peasant Way of Life," in The Peasant in Nineteenth Century Russia, ed. Wayne S. Vucinich (Stanford, 1968), 16-20; cf. Vyšniauskaitė, Lietuvių etnografijos, pp. 437 ff. Although the extended family has been observed in a few parts of Lithuania, it was not common.

would pay out appropriate shares of property, but not land, to the younger family members. When the parents "retired" from the active management of the peasant holding, the son would pay them a kind of pension or allotment (Lith. išimtinė), normally in kind. This latter custom became increasingly popular during the 19th century. The internal division of a peasant holding among household members was sometimes unavoidable in Trans-Niemen Lithuania, despite the law against it; yet, on the whole, this region avoided the excessive repartition and scattering of land that was prevalent, for example, in Russia.<sup>1</sup>

The father or, in rare cases, the widowed mother was the undisputed head of the Lithuanian peasant household and usually made most of the decisions affecting the family. The eldest son, as the inheritor of the lion's share of the household property, was the most envied junior member of the family. The younger brothers tended to look elsewhere, perhaps to only daughters of well-to-do peasants, as pathways of economic advancement. If the oldest son went into the priesthood or gmina service, or otherwise left the holding (or went "out into the world," as the peasants would say), then the male next in line would get his chance at inheriting the family fortune. Daughters were less desirable family members from an economic point of view: they incurred dowry expenses and contributed labor to the household only "temporarily," that is, before marriage. However, an only daughter could inherit property from the father; in southwestern Lithuania, such a woman was called a Zentinė,

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<sup>1</sup> In Russian Lithuania the government required that principles of community property be observed in the household; this conflicted with Lithuanian custom that provided for the holding's division among the heirs to be done by the head of the household. In actual practice, custom often circumvented the law.

or a "son-in-law's woman."

The peasant girl's individual wealth consisted of her dowry(Lith. kraitis) and the marriage payment(Lith. pasoga). The first consisted of the girl's clothes, linen and other cloth, pieces of furniture, and household appliances which the bride-to-be had collected or made over a longer period of time. The pasoga, or marriage payment, included things useful for the future groom's economic needs: usually, animals, agricultural implements, grain and money. The amount of the pasoga payment depended not only on the financial ability of the bride's household, but also on the needs of the family receiving the bride: this could include anything from grain to money for the recipient family's educational needs. Sometimes, the pasoga payment was also paid out for the sons who were leaving the household to marry.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the family itself, the average landed peasant household in Trans-Niemen Lithuania contained anywhere from one to a half dozen hired hands such as milkmaids, farmhands, and young shepherds. In day-to-day affairs, this help was treated as part of the household; for example, the help ate with the rest of the family at mealtimes. The hired help came not only from the families of the landless and impoverished villagers, but also from large landed families of average means which would often send off a young girl or small boy to serve in a wealthier family and so lighten their own burden.

There is evidence that, during the 19th century, peasants understood kinship very broadly. Persons, such as cousins who were removed by at

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<sup>1</sup> Vyšniauskaitė, Lietuvių etnografijos, pp. 437 ff.; also Angelė Vyšniauskaitė, "Lietuvių valstiečiu šeimos turtiniai XIX a. - XX a. pirmaisiais dešimtmečiais," in IS lietuvių kultūros istorijos, I(1958), 260-269.

least five degrees of kinship, were still considered "relatives." This is clear from the many specific Lithuanian kinship terms that are no longer in use. In general, blood relations on the mother's side were considered closer relatives than those on the father's. It was not unusual for a half or more of the peasant households in a single village to be "related" to each other in one way or other.

One interesting form of special "moral" kinship was the relationship based on honey gathering and bee-keeping (Lith. bičiulystė, from Lith. bitė, "bee"). Formerly peasants considered this a serious spiritual kinship. The gathering of honey from a common bee swarm was the basis of this relationship, and the "bee friends" were morally bound to come to each other's aid and to live in harmony with one another. Bee-keeping kinship was more prominent in eastern Lithuania and Belorussia, although there are traces of this practice in western Lithuania as well.<sup>1</sup>

Aside from the gmina office, the appointed headman, and the rural courts, the Lithuanian village had several of its own institutions that provided a degree of authority and cooperation. In cases of problems affecting the entire community, village meetings were held. Issues could include such matters as deciding whether to build a bridge, solving pasture disputes, or hiring a village blacksmith. One of the traditional functions of the village meeting was the hiring of an old man as the head shepherd (Lith. skerdžius) for the village's animals on common pasture. Village meetings were announced by passing around a bent stick (Lith. kriuvulė), the headman's traditional symbol of authority. Only men

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<sup>1</sup> Vyšniauskaitė, Lietuvių enografijos, pp. 147-148.

normally attended village meetings.

Much of peasant cooperation on the village scale was purely customary and was done without a formal meeting. Often the community aided the victims of fires by contributing labor and food to the stricken households. The same traditional spirit of mutual help was common in the case of other disasters; for example, peasants sometimes donated animals to a family whose own stock had been depleted by diseases.

Village life in Lithuania had an age-old rhythm of its own in which traditional, rather than formal "outside" authority, imposed rules of behavior. Many of the customary ways of doing things began to disappear during the 19th century with the increasing prevalence of individual homesteads and the spacing of villages. An example of this was the disappearance of the communal evening (Lith. vakarinės) tradition in which peasant households took turns hosting the village in performing indoor tasks together in autumn and winter; songs, games and folk tales made the dull evening work more bearable. This custom, like many others, vanished by the end of the 19th century. The consolidation of land around individual homesteads, and the general lessening of village isolation, made the small rural community less and less the center of the peasant's universe.

#### The Spiritual and Artistic World of the Peasant: Song, Dance and Folk Belief.

In the eyes of most "cultured" (that is, Polonized) urban and landowning society, village life must have looked bleak and gray. In fact, the world of the peasant contained within itself a whole universe of diverse and rich folk art and custom. Folk songs (Lith. dainos) were the most numerous and original peasant artistic creations in Lithuania; to date,

over 300,000 have been recorded. Virtually all aspects of Lithuanian life were permeated with song: work, family rites, war, social protest, religion, mythology and, last but not least, love. The work, wedding and love songs were the most numerous. Most of the Lithuanian folk songs are pronouncedly lyrical, almost entirely devoid of epic elements, although, in a few cases, narrative elements reflect certain historical events, such as the Napoleonic Wars and the 1863 anti-Russian insurrection. Rhythm, indispensable to work and dance, is very important in the Lithuanian songs and constitutes the most significant element in collective singing, in which choral rounds predominate.

The polyphonic, often dissonant, nature of the very old Lithuanian songs (apparently they followed a tonal system similar to Greek music), and its often monotonous and chanting sound impressed some non-Lithuanian observers as alternately strange, exotic, morose, inscrutable and oppressive. The Lithuanians, some said, did not have the "happy nature" that was supposedly "innate" to the Polish peasants.<sup>1</sup> It is not difficult to see why some contemporaries had this impression. Lithuanian wedding songs, for example, were very often melancholy and fatalistic; also, many love songs had as their theme the "fall" of peasant girls, with the accompanying shame and tragic consequences.<sup>2</sup> There were, of course, some happy and playful themes in Lithuanian folk music, but they were overshadowed in originality and depth by the lyrically more profound and older songs with "sad" themes.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> S. P., "Włościanie litewscy," in Przyjaciel ludu, No. 33(1838), 258; cf. Gazeta Codzienna, January 8, 1858 and Osipowska, "Zwyczaje," 221-222.

<sup>2</sup> See the songs of the Trans-Niemen region in Kolberg, Litwa, pp. 203, 205-211, 217 ff. and 309-310.

<sup>3</sup> See Encyclopedie Lituanica, III, 565-566 and II, 217-223.

Another musical form of peasant folklore was the dance. Unfortunately, relatively little is known about traditional Lithuanian peasant dances before the time they were recreated and arranged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Apparently, the greatest number of old folk dances were imitations of nature, for example, animals and plants, and farm work; for example, one popular dance known as the "windmill" imitates the mill's motion. Traditional peasant dances were also closely intertwined with certain games and group behavior; in one wedding dance reported in 1863, and called the "mad spin" (Lith. pasiutėlis), the participants were required to perform the moves and antics of a lead couple, no matter how ridiculous. Whenever possible, villagers enjoyed dancing outdoors. As with most other aspects of old folk culture (except song), traditional village dancing slowly dissipated before the influence of the "outside" world. By the middle of the 19th century, the older Lithuanian folk dances were steadily replaced by polkas and waltzes.<sup>1</sup>

A particularly revealing kind of folk culture was narrative folklore: the various tales, legends, beliefs, sayings, riddles and curses. There is no doubt that by the standards of 19th century educated society, the peasant's spiritual world was seen as filled with superstition and magic, some serious, some frivolous. The clergy often complained about the alleged relics of pagan belief in the Lithuanian countryside. This is not surprising, considering the relatively late Christianization of Lithuania (1386) which was followed by at least several centuries of very nominal Christian influence in the village. In fact, the older Lithuanian legends and fairy tales often lacked Christian elements. In general,

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<sup>1</sup> Kolberg, Litwa, pp. 356-361; cf. Encyclopedia Lituanica, II, 210-211.

they are often similar in content and structure to analogous folk compositions of Lithuania's Slavic neighbors. Interestingly enough, some of the Lithuanian narrative folklore reflected the peasant's longing for social and economic justice; for example, in the stories where greedy rich men came to a bad end, or in the "Three Brothers" genre: in the latter, an honest simpleton outwits two "normal," but greedy brothers. Recent investigations of peasant lore indicate that a number of folk tales were definitely anti-manorial. These tales included stories emphasizing the landowners' cruel nature; other folk tales related how peasants insulted landowners and even killed them. Still other stories dealt with stupid nobles and petty gentry, as well as the oppressive military recruiting system. Clearly then, Lithuanian peasant folklore was not only a recitation of old mythology; it was a changing art form which reflected the realities of village life in the 19th century.<sup>1</sup>

While it is true that peasant folklore contained elements of idealism, such as a belief in a better world, villagers were no less ambivalent in their attitudes toward life and human relations than the rest of society. Ethnographers have collected numerous sayings that reflect a certain realism, even ribald cynicism about life and human nature; of course, there were also village aphorisms that emphasized more positive elements: sentiment toward the native land, approval of hard work, and the like. Here are some 19th century Lithuanian folk sayings that reflect a realistic view of life:

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<sup>1</sup> Ambraziejus Jonynas, "Baudžiauninkų kovos prieš feodalus atspindžiai buitinėse lietuvių liaudies pasakose," in LTSRMA Darbai, Ser. A, IV(1958), 213 ff.

Prie barzdos reik ir lazdos("One needs a stick along with a beard," that is, seniority without force cannot evoke obedience.)

Sotus alkano nepažista("The satiated man does not recognize the hungry one.")

Visų balti dantys, o nežinai kas už danty("Everyone has white teeth, but you can't tell what's behind them.")

The following indicate the peasant's attitude toward work and the value of the horse:

Kas ars tas nepavargs("He who plows, will not become poor.")

Nuliūdės, kaip žirga pardaves("He's as sad as if he's sold his stallion.")

Here is an expression of attitude toward the gentry:

Bajoras šunų tavoras("A boyar is a dog's product[Pol. towar].")

When a son was drafted, the parents would say in despair:

Vaikeli brangiausias, svetima žemė tavo kaulus apraus("Dear child, foreign soil will cover your bones.")

Thus, folklore is not a subject of only aesthetic interest; in fact, it tells us a good deal about the peasant's daily life, his economic and social attitudes, his resentments against injustice.<sup>1</sup>

Peasant life in the 19th century was rich in pre-Christian folk beliefs and rituals widely dismissed by contemporary society as "superstitions." Lithuanian village lore posited a number of non-Christian and semi-Christian supernatural figures, for example, goblins. One of the most popular and curious of these was the household goblin(Lith. aitvaras), sometimes called kaukas in southwestern Lithuania. This spirit was an

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from an article by Mikalojus Akelaitis published in Kolberg, Litwa, pp. 437-442. The Lithuanian spelling has been modernized.

economically advantageous little fellow who, if properly treated, could bring his peasant master various stolen goods such as grain, money or milk. In flight, the household goblin was supposed to have resembled a dragon with a fiery tail; indoors, he allegedly took the form of a cat or rooster. The aitvaras or kaukas was often viewed as a malevolent and unpredictable creature. Supposedly, he could be acquired by purchase, through accident, or in exchange for one's soul.<sup>1</sup>

Another popular supernatural figure was the laumė, a nymph who was believed to inhabit forests, lakes, marshes and rivers. Originally a deity, the laumė eventually came to be thought of as a more or less earthly being. Unless a human offended them, these nymphs were good: they helped people perform farm chores and took care of infants. In some cases, the laumė was believed to be a carrier of justice who helped the poor and punished the evil rich.

One spirit that the Lithuanian villager feared and avoided was the folk version of the devil (Lith. velnias). The Lithuanian term for devil is probably derived from vélė, or ancestral spirit; in ancient times, the velnias figure may have represented something akin to the god of the dead. By the 19th century, this figure had acquired a complex, somewhat contradictory character, combining both Christian and pre-Christian elements. On occasion, the velnias was seen as a prankster; for example, the devil is claimed to have made trouble for travelers, especially drunks, while attired as a young gentleman in "German dress" (Lith. vokietukas).<sup>2</sup> At

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<sup>1</sup> Encyclopedie Lituanica, I, 45.

<sup>2</sup> See Akelaitis' account in Kolberg, Litwa, pp. 25-26.

times, the devil was supposed to have helped the poor and oppressed against the manor, but more often he was considered a powerful and evil influence to be avoided. Under Christian influence, the devil also became the anti-thesis of the Church and took on an exclusively negative character.<sup>1</sup> Aside from these more or less major figures, the peasant's spiritualistic world was inhabited by a number of lesser supernatural figures, including those which caused fever and illness generally.<sup>2</sup>

Naturally, the presence of supernatural beings required the services of persons, and the use of ritual, for protection. Peasant witches and sorceresses were still a factor in 19th century village life. Peasants often went to such people for medicine, at least judging from contemporary Church criticism of this practice. The Lithuanian writer and educator Father Antanas Tatarė scolded Trans-Niemen Lithuania's villagers for going to such "old hags stinking of whiskey" who concocted various drinks from different herbs as "medicine." Apparently, the sorceress was able to provide other services as well: "[The villager] goes to the sorceress and asks whether his son, who has gone into the army fifteen years ago, is still alive; and, if he has died, whether his soul is in heaven or hell."<sup>3</sup> For medicinal purposes, other peasants turned to the Tatars, especially to the mosque in Vinkšnupiai (Kalvarija district); the Tatars had a reputation as competent practitioners of medicine and sorcery. They would give sick villagers small papers with Arabic inscriptions; when

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<sup>1</sup> Encyclopedie Lituanica, II, 64-66; Lietuvių tarybinė enciklopedija, III, 708-709.

<sup>2</sup> See Akelaitis' account in Kolberg, Litwa, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Antanas Tatarė, Tiesiauses Kieles ing Dangaus Karaliste Deszymtis Prysakimu Wieszpaties pagal Pamokslu Bazniczios Szwentos Katalikiszko Rymiszko (Suwałki, 1853), pp. 51-56.

swallowed with tea or bread, such papers were said to cure ailments.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, peasants themselves used various little rituals, amulets and homemade magic as protection against disease, the evil eye, and other "misfortunes." Though encouraged by priests and educators to seek out doctors, peasants frequently avoided their services because of both mistrust and lack of money.<sup>2</sup> Peasants followed numerous rituals and customs during important events such as harvests, planting, weddings, funerals, and the like; some of these are mentioned below.

The above account of peasant beliefs would be grossly misleading without stressing two points: first of all, traditional beliefs and practices slowly disappeared or lost their strength during and after the 19th century. Secondly, by the 19th century at the latest, the Catholic Church represented the most important spiritual reality of peasant life. Yet, even Catholicism, as practiced by the Lithuanian villager, had certain elements that were characteristically peasant.

While denouncing what it considered superstitious practices and beliefs, the Church itself contributed to certain mystical and supernatural "events" in the countryside with its own teachings on the Blessed Virgin, saints and miracles, often presented by relatively uneducated clergy and popularized through simplified religious books. One such "event" was the reported apparition of Our Lady near Puńsk (Sejny district) in November, 1835. As a result of the alleged miracle, the people began donating money and goods into a money box placed at the scene of the apparition. Church and secular authorities both investigated the incident, concluding

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<sup>1</sup> Akielewicz, "Słówko," 111.

<sup>2</sup> Kolberg, Litwa, p. 364.

that there was no basis for believing that a supernatural event had taken place. It appears, however, that the peasants were not so easily persuaded for the Sejny district secretary was finally forced to ask the government to ban the collection of votive offerings at the site of the alleged apparition on account of the "poor state of the peasants."<sup>1</sup>

Catholicism permeated village life in other ways as well. A number of villagers depended on the Church almost entirely for their livelihood and social position. Pious beggars were widely reported throughout 19th-century Lithuania; sometimes, these beggars actually lived in, or near, the parish rectory or church. Their lives were often precarious at best, and they were not free from abuse.<sup>2</sup> In addition, older, extremely pious women, usually dressed in black or brown, were a common sight in the Lithuanian parish(Lith. davatka, Pol. dewotka). These women frequently served as the clergy's unofficial assistants in decorating churches, teaching catechism, and providing other religious services.<sup>3</sup> Occasionally, the zeal of the pious davatka proved excessive and this earned her the ridicule of some villagers. In general, the parish church served as a haven of last resort for many of peasant society's outcasts who could not find a "normal" place in the village: the unmarried, the crippled, the feeble-minded, the hopelessly indigent, and misfits in general.

Finally, the peasant's seasonal calendar was basically Christian.

<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 418: Puńsk, Sejny District Secretary Report of December 20, 1835 and following documents.

<sup>2</sup> Kolberg, Litwa, pp. 58-62; Katkus, Raštai, p. 53; A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 380: Pokoynie, Tamoszunas to Bishop Straszynski, July 27, 1837.

<sup>3</sup> Kolberg, Litwa, p. 362, fn. 2; Lietuvių tarybinė enciklopedija, I, 379.

Christmas, Easter and the various holidays of the Church were high points of the year in the village; sometimes, they signalled a new phase of the agricultural cycle. Devotions, as well as the travel to church and other holy spots, were favorite pastimes of the Lithuanian peasant household; not only were these ways of saving one's soul, but they also provided an opportunity to travel outside the village, to see relatives and acquaintances, and thus escape, at least for a time, the closed world of the native hamlet.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the most important events of the villager's life cycle, such as birth, marriage and death were never observed without the participation of the Church.

The Peasant's World of Activity: the Daily Round, the Seasonal Cycle, and the Stages of Life.

Literature and contemporary society of the 19th century viewed village life as alternately oppressive and idyllic, brutal and serene, violent and gentle. In fact, village life reflected all of these adjectives. Presented below, as best as possible in a limited space, is the life of a landed peasant family, neither unusually rich or exceptionally poor, beginning with a description of daily activity, and continuing with an account of the yearly and life cycles. Finally, there is a brief discussion of some of the perennial disasters and tragedies that interrupted the ordered cadence of village life.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Butkiewicz, "Opis," 304.

<sup>2</sup> The account below is based on Vyšniauskaitė, Lietuvių etnografijos, pp. 448-551; Osipowska, "Zwyczaje," 178 ff.; Kolberg, Litwa, pp. 138-214; Franciszek Marciński, Gramatyka litewso-polska. Gramatika arba spasabas iszsimokinimo lenkiszkos kalbos (Warsaw, 1861), pp. 114-116; Katkus, Raštai, pp. 20 ff.

Except for Sundays and holidays, virtually every day on the peasant homestead was a work day which usually began before daybreak, as early as four or five in the morning. The women arose first, perhaps it was the mother with the milkmaid or daughter-in-law, and lit the wood splinter in the dark. Then they began preparing food for the day as the rest of the household slowly began to stir at dawn when the cold light started to seep through the cottage's tiny windows and cracks in the door. When the father, his sons, and/or hired hands got up, they went out to feed the animals. Later, the youngest son or hired shepherd boy would drive the animals out to pasture; if it was summer, the animals would stay there for the day. In the house, meanwhile, the men of the household were engaged in other tasks: they might be grinding the rye that was dried in the stove, or simply discussing the day's work. Eventually, the household sat down to breakfast; by this time, even the smallest children were awake and, if it was a chilly morning, everyone sat down to breakfast consisting of bread, perhaps with mashed potatoes mixed with and boiled in milk and sometimes combined with bacon or herring. Often sour milk was also eaten. During prosperous times, meaty borshch and sauerkraut soups with hot potatoes were eaten; in fact, breakfast was frequently the most ample meal of the day. During the busy and most exhausting periods of the year, for example, the harvest, household members would get a "pre-breakfast" snack consisting of bread with pancakes. For the most part, the entire household, including both the actual family and the hired help, all ate together.

After breakfast, the peasant's major work of the day began, either on his own holding, if the household was a money renting one, or on the

manorial farm if it was a corvée family. In the spring and early fall, this work consisted of backbreaking plowing; in the summer, the household worked long hours in harvesting the rye and barley crops or cutting hay. Whatever the task, the men and women of the peasant household would be hard at work until about noon. In southwestern Lithuania, lunch often consisted of heated leftovers from breakfast which were brought out to the fields by the women. On particularly hot days, a cold borshch with sour cream was provided. After the noon break, work would continue until supper time which was around sunset; during the summer months, a mid-afternoon and pre-evening break was taken, and an additional snack provided.

The household returned home before supper; the fieldworkers from their fields, the shepherds from the pastures. Relieved that a day's work was at an end, men and women sang; on some occasions, certain festive customs were observed. If it was the first day of plowing, for example, the plowmen and their horses or oxen were splashed with water on their return from the fields, a remnant of the pagan belief that this practice assured moisture for the crops.

Supper was normally a relatively quiet time. The meal itself was frequently the most modest of the day. Popular evening dishes were milky soups with dumplings. As a rule, the peasant household bedded down early, usually soon after supper. Before retiring, the household might have read or recited some prayers, especially if it was Advent or Lent; sometimes, the women did some spinning or other minor chores around the house. In some cases, for example, if the household had heavy corvée obligations, the men were forced to work on their own holdings in the evenings. It was also common practice to drive horses and bulls out to pasture for the night, particularly during summer and early autumn; this was a job

normally reserved for hired hands and adolescents.

The work day for the peasant family, naturally, changed a good deal depending on the season of the year. Spring was probably the hardest time: aside from the necessary planting and plowing, the household had to fix the many damaged or neglected fences and farm buildings. In addition, food was scarce and of poorer quality. The shortage of animal feed during spring sometimes led to quarrels between neighboring peasants as hungry cattle trampled plowed fields in search of pasture. On the other hand, summer harvest work, though difficult, was also rewarding if the yield was good. Hay cutting(usually in June) and the threshing of grain crops, such as rye or wheat, was considered easier work. From the peasant's point of view, the coldest months were ones of relative leisure; in southwestern Lithuania, spinning flax was a major winter occupation. Winter also provided an opportunity to repair the farm tools. However, the procurement of fuel was not an easy task, especially if the woodlands were far from the village. During the winter months, some peasants also engaged in limited hunting and trapping.

Whatever the season, Sundays and, to a lesser degree, market days and holidays, provided the peasants with a short respite, a time of recreation and rest. However, a few peasant households, pressed by poverty or excessive corvée, are known to have occasionally worked on the Sabbath, despite strict prohibitions against this. It is probable that during the 19th century a majority of the peasants attended church on Sundays, though it is also clear that many villagers did not go to Mass with absolute regularity. Sunday Mass and, especially, the different religious holidays and devotions, gave the peasant an excellent opportunity

to meet his relatives and friends and come into town, while the villager's sons and daughters, perhaps, scouted possible marital prospects. After Mass, a visit to the local village or town inn provided the best occasion for socializing; at this peasant "social center" everyone, including the women, drank. Important news, whether true accounts or the most outlandish rumors, could be exchanged at the inn. If an important job had been finished, the peasant would treat his household to rounds of drinks.<sup>1</sup> In fact, drinking was an important outlet for the peasant's worrisome and often insecure existence.

While the Lithuanian villager's life was regulated by the imperatives of daily and seasonal work, he also had another "clock" or calendar: the yearly cycle of holidays and feasts that often coincided with changes in his work schedule. The Christmas season was probably the villager's most carefree time. In fact, the whole season between Christmas Eve and the beginning of Lent was usually called the "meat eating time"(Lith. mésèdis): this was a period of good food, visiting relatives, and weddings. This was also the time when the hired help went home, having finished their year's contract.

Christmas Eve(Lith. Kūčios), the very first day of the Christmas season, was a solemn occasion. The peasant cottage was thoroughly cleaned and an ample dinner(however, without milk or meat products) was put on the table, including symbolic portions for departed family members. The folklore of Kūčios was very rich in tradition: for example, animals were said

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<sup>1</sup> Basanavičius, "Gudelių parapijos," 426-427.

to talk on Christmas Eve, and girls would run outside to listen for dogs barking; it was from the direction of the barking, it was rumored, that the future suitors would arrive. The period between the fourth day of the Christmas season and Epiphany(The Feast of the Three Kings) on January 6th was, in most villages, a particularly fun-filled time for young people who organized dances and parties in the evenings.

The relatively leisurely winter season ended with the pre-Lenten feast(Lith. Užgavėnės), the Lithuanian version of the Mardi Gras. At this time, young men and boys would dress up in ghoulish costumes and comical masks; then, they would perform impromptu comic scenes. In fact, this was a kind of folk theater of the 19th century. While this feast signified the formal end of the winter season on the peasant calendar, St. Matthias'(February 24th) ushered in the spring season in the village. Other spring highlights were St. Casimir's(March 4th) and the Incarnation (March 25th); at this latter time, the storks were supposed to return north bringing warmer weather with them. St. George's(April 23rd) was an important feast; after all, he was the patron saint of fertility. Of course, the most important spring holiday was Easter. During Holy Week, each peasant household carried out a thorough cleaning up for the upcoming holiday. The Easter celebration lasted several days and was a very happy time for children who engaged in egg coloring and egg rolling contests. In fact, the egg, as a symbol of fertility, had been important in peasant culture since pre-Christian times.

After Easter, the peasant's field work steadily intensified and included both planting and the care of the budding winter crops. Pentecost Sunday(Lith. Sekminės), the seventh Sunday after Easter, marked the first great summer holiday. During this time, peasant households collectively

visited the fields and shepherds were "rewarded" with extra food. The major summer event was St. John's (June 24th) which marked the beginning of the hay cutting. During this feast day, the young men and girls lit bonfires, played various games and generally celebrated. Traditionally the rye harvest began on the feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (Lith. Škaplierna) on July 16th, although in later years it started with St. Anne's (July 26th). The Feast of the Assumption (Lith. Žolinės) on August 15th and St. Bartholomew's (August 24th) signaled the beginning of the wheat and flax harvests respectively. In the villager's mind, the latter feast day marked the start of the autumn season. The end of the harvest, especially that of rye and flax, was accompanied by colorful folk celebrations which included much singing.

The fall work cycle began with the rye planting, usually around the feast of the Nativity (September 8th), and continued until St. Michael's (September 28th) when the harvesting of potatoes began. From the weather on St. Michael's day, the peasants believed that they could divine the coming winter: a north wind on that day meant a cold winter, while a south wind indicated a mild one. On All Souls' Day (November 2nd) the people gathered in the village graveyard. The women brought food wrapped in tablecloths and put it on the graves of relatives; after this, everyone prayed, sang hymns, and then ate. St. Martin's Day (November 11th) was the last major saint's day of the fall season.

The time period around the end of November and the beginning of December ushered in the winter season. The Advent season before Christmas was probably one of the most depressing for the peasant household: the long nights, short days, the work still to be done (for example, threshing)

as well as the fast, combined for a singularly uneventful time. During this pre-Christmas period, the shepherd boys usually went home. On Christmas Eve the yearly cycle began again.

Such was, in barest outline, the seasonal cycle of Lithuanian peasant life. Aside from this, every peasant man and woman went through his or her own life cycle that also had, or at least was supposed to have, a definite and ordered rhythm that led from birth through childhood, then adulthood and old age, and, finally, death. The birth of a child in a peasant family was an important event. Peasants usually desired a boy for a first child, primarily for economic reasons. A child's birth was almost exclusively a feminine affair and it was normally overseen by the grandmother or an old midwife in a warm and remote corner of the house, sauna building, or even the barn. Men were not present at birth. In the 19th century, the child was tightly swaddled until he was seven or eight months old. The baby was christened a week or so after birth, and this also was a major event in the family's life. Godparents were carefully selected, and they usually took the infant to the church to be baptized. Upon the baby's and godparents' return, there was much merriment, eating and drinking.

Until the age of two, boys and girls dressed the same; up to the age of ten a person was considered a true "child." Frequently, the grandparents played a leading role in disciplining and raising small children. The peasants' ideal child was a shy and obedient one who avoided strangers. Children were expected to obey all adults; as a rule, they kissed older people's hands and addressed all of them as "aunt" or "uncle."

If a child did not attend school and came from a poor family, his or

her "economic" contribution to the household began as early as seven or eight years of age when shepherding work was assigned. On the whole, however, the epithet "shepherd"(Lith. piemuo) was condescendingly applied to the ten to fifteen age group. From fifteen to about seventeen or eighteen, adolescents were called "half-girls" or "half-boys"(Lith. pusmerge, pusbernis). At this stage, a boy would begin learning how to handle a plow; a girl would start serious work such as baking bread. At about eighteen, an adolescent became a full-fledged young adult and gained entrance to the youth parties. It was only then that a person was ready to seriously prepare for the final anointing of adulthood: marriage.

Unlike some other peasant societies, the Lithuanians of the 19th century knew no special rituals of strict age gradation. Marriage provided perhaps the most definite entrance into the adult world: village society, with very few exceptions, considered adult single status abnormal. It is now estimated that the optimum age for marriage in 19th-century Lithuanian village society was somewhere between twenty and twenty-five for women, and twenty-five to thirty for men. The importance and permanence of marriage in the peasant's life is attested to by the numerous ceremonies and festivities that surrounded weddings.

It must also be remembered that economic obligations and pressures surrounded marriage. During the 19th century and even later, the matchmaker(Lith. piršlys), who was in every sense an agent of the suitor, played a critical role in virtually every marriage. The matchmaking process was frequently long and difficult, involving four or five visits to the prospective bride's homestead. Many, if not most, traditional peasant marriages were motivated by economic considerations(ironically, it

is possible that poorer peasants, who usually married among themselves, were freer to marry for "love"). On the positive side, however, a peasant household paid considerable attention to the bride's or groom's personal qualities, especially industriousness, thrift, honesty and skill at work.

If marital negotiations proved successful, and a provisional agreement was made, the matchmaker received gifts, while the bride's household would travel to inspect the prospective son-in-law's holding. This was the last chance for either side to turn back; if everything was perceived to be in order, an exchange of rings took place. This engagement was considered binding and, in older times, the engaged couple were allowed to sleep together even before the actual church wedding. It is probable that this custom had disappeared by the early 19th century. After the engagement, a crier was sent out to relatives and neighbors to invite them to the wedding. Wedding customs are too numerous to list here: basically, the wedding itself consisted of the church ceremony, and then drinking and festivities in the local inn afterwards until evening. On the wedding night the couple were led to the granary(Lith. klétis) where they were locked up until morning. It was customary to wake up the newlyweds, after their blissful first night, with much noise and ado; afterwards, the festivities, with much drinking and dancing, would continue for two more days.

In most cases, the peasants understood marriage as the entrance to a relatively independent life as an adult, even though a newly married couple was often forced to live with in-laws. After marriage, the life of an adult villager was a cycle of work and child-raising until he was

able to "retire," normally by turning over the management of the holding to the eldest son or son-in-law. If family relations were not unduly strained, the retired grandparents could count on a steady share of the holding's income and a comfortable corner in the house, as well as the respect that was supposed to go with old age. An old, senile and feeble parent who was unable to work was known as a karšinčius; it was a widely recognized obligation to take care of aged relatives who reached this stage.

When a peasant died, his final send-off was accompanied by a number of old traditions. The deceased was washed, dressed in clean clothing and placed on a board. The body was kept in the house for several days; it was considered unseemly to hasten burial as this implied dislike of the deceased. During the vigil over the body (Lith. šermenys), relatives and friends were invited to visit, and the family prepared ample food and drink. Ritual lamenting and wailing (Lith. rauda) was disappearing in Lithuania during the first half of the 19th century and was eventually replaced by religious Christian hymns. Finally, with the vigil ended, the deceased was placed in a brown or black coffin (except for children who had white ones). Traditionally, the entire village escorted the coffin to the cemetery.

Such, in simplified outline, was the basic progression of the peasant's individual existence. Yet this picture would be woefully incomplete without the mention of two kinds of factors that interrupted, sometimes violently, the harmony and stability inherent in the villager's cyclical and seasonal nature of life and work. The first was the gradual

disappearance of many traditional customs and ways. As already mentioned, the breaking up of villages into consolidated individual homesteads was an important catalyst in the decline of certain village traditions. The influence of the Church and secular education also contributed to the breakdown of some of the traditional ways. On the whole, however, this type of change was gradual and did not affect the hardest core of folk belief and custom in Lithuania until the 20th century.

The second kind of interruption that affected the peasant's life were the major disasters, for example, wars, natural catastrophes, as well as the social ills of the time.<sup>1</sup> There were also the day-to-day, less spectacular and sometimes forgotten misfortunes that often befell the peasants.

Aside from climate, the natural element most feared by villagers was fire. Fires were frequently caused by human negligence or intent. The peasant's wooden cottage with its thatched roof was a veritable fire trap in dry weather. In traditional villages, where peasant homesteads were close together, large scale conflagrations occurred often. A good example of how devastating fires could be was the blaze that swept the village of Gielce near Balbieriškis (Marijampolė district) in the spring of 1852: it left sixteen households homeless and completely destroyed fourteen dwelling houses, as well as forty-three other structures. The fire reportedly began when an intoxicated peasant "returned home and walked around in his cabin with a torch, failing to properly douse his fire through carelessness." A strong wind quickly fanned the flames. The gmina mayor of Balbieriškis reported that the fire not only destroyed the peasants' underinsured buildings, but also their spring

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed discussion of these factors, see below pp. 143-144.

grain, agricultural implements, household wares and clothing: the peasants, wrote the gmina mayor, were unable to secure "the basic needs of life." Some examples of property losses: Maciej Bienulis lost his cottage insured for thirty rubles, a cowshed valued at twenty rubles, and fifteen rubles of movable property; Józef Stangniunas' widow lost her cabin for thirty rubles, a cowshed for thirty, a barn valued at twenty rubles, and 200 rubles' worth of grain and other valuables; Mateusz Staniulis, a well-to-do peasant, lost five buildings insured for a total of 150 rubles, as well as "movables" valued at 450 rubles.<sup>1</sup> The total insurance for the burned out villagers of Gielce amounted to 1,590 rubles, certainly less than the real value of their losses. In this case, the district government ordered the Balbieriškis estate, despite the gmina mayor's protests, to pay almost a hundred rubles in immediate assistance to the "neediest of the sixteen [burned out] families."<sup>2</sup>

Such fire disasters, though not always as extensive, were frequent. Sometimes, they were the result of arson: a good way for a villager to destroy a hated enemy, or for a disinherited and aggrieved younger son to express his jealousy of a successful older brother. A fire disaster was unlike a bad harvest or animal disease; it was the worst and most disheartening interruption of the peasant's economic life. To protect villages and towns, fire insurance was compulsory (though often inadequate), and mutual aid among the peasants during fires traditional.

Still another event that interrupted a peasant household's normal life

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7609, Gmina Mayor of Balwierzyszki to KRSW, May 1, 1852, k. 107-110.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7609, KRSW to Governor of Augustów Province, June 3, 1852, k. 111; Governor to KRSW, August 28, 1852, k. 114-115; Gmina Mayor of Balwierzyszki to Governor, October 11, 1852, k. 116-117.

cycle was unexpected or violent death. By today's American urban standards, homicide in the peacetime Lithuanian countryside of the 19th century was rare, but it did occur. One Józef Adamowicz, the holder of the Czebieliszki estate in Marijampolė district, was charged with killing the peasant Marcin Szakiński in 1841.<sup>1</sup> Nor was the village entirely free of the occasional familial or neighborly quarrel that ended in death; in 1841 Maciej Sklandaytis was charged with the gruesome killing of his wife Maryanna in a crowded cottage.<sup>2</sup> Peasants were not always on the receiving end. Peasant smugglers sometimes fought border-guards rather than submit, as when one Franciszek Wilkas reportedly killed the guard Gerasim in Kalvarija district in 1846.<sup>3</sup> The presence of Russian soldiers in the countryside caused friction between Catholic peasants and Orthodox conscripts; it seems that, in a few cases, confrontations between the two ended tragically. In 1840 Ivan Suslov was allegedly killed at a wedding by Dominik Zhelianis and the hired hand Mateusz Kulak; in this case, the peasants claimed that they thought soldiers were breaking into their home.<sup>4</sup>

Taverns were frequently violent places and, occasionally, served as scenes of murders. One document records the appeal of a widow in the town of Lazdijai, one Szmułkowa Lewczyńska, who asked the government to

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7416, Gmina Mayor of Freda to KRSW, February 3, 1841.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7416, Gmina Office of Kidule to KRSW, May 18, 1841.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7416, The Police Court of Kalwaria to Governor of Augustów Province, April 24, 1846.

<sup>4</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7416, Governor of Augustów Province to KRSW, December 4, 1840.

lessen her tax obligations. The widow was in great financial distress as her husband, an innkeeper, "was killed by the soldier Wasilew of the Nevskii marine regiment." The culprit, who had reportedly murdered the innkeeper because the latter refused him credit, was sent to the Siberian mines for ten years.<sup>1</sup>

More common than such sensational violence were the many pitfalls and personal tragedies which threatened the individual villager's pursuit of happiness within the seasonal and life cycle that he treasured. Disease was a constant threat. Infant and child mortality was high: smallpox figured prominently as a cause of infant death; sometimes, simply the "cough" or just "fever" appeared as causes of death in the parish registers of the 19th century.<sup>2</sup> Child abuse was not entirely uncommon, judging from the charges of the Lithuanian educator Antanas Tatarė who complained that "some fathers and mothers are real bears . . . and beat their little infants with fists" sometimes causing bodily harm, and even death. In the latter case, alleged Tatarė, the same "bears" would weep bitterly at the child's funeral.<sup>3</sup>

A number of misfortunes could occur to a peasant youth. Judging from contemporary accounts, illegitimacy, abortion, infant murder and abandonment were persistent phenomena in the 19th-century village.<sup>4</sup> For both mother and child(if they survived), illegitimate birth was almost always

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6716, Secretary of State to KRSW, May 12, 1842; KRSW to Secretary of State, September 14, 1842; also KRSW-7416, Augustów Governor's Office to KRSW, February 19, 1841.

<sup>2</sup> Lachnicki, Biografia, p. 15. These causes of death appeared frequently in the parish registers of Puńsk that were shown me by the local pastor.

<sup>3</sup> Antanas Tatarė, Pamoksłaj iszminties ir tejsibes iszguldineti priliginimajs gałwocziu wisu amžiu del Lietuwos wajkielu(Suwałki, 1851), p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Tatarė, Pamoksłaj, p. 154 and Pakarklis, Prūsų, pp. 423-427.

a tragedy that precluded any hope of pursuing a normal social life within the community. Compounding the problem, the manor was known to abuse its power and prestige to trap young and comely peasant women into situations from which they could no longer honorably return to the village. In addition, Russian troops, especially the Cossacks whom the peasants feared like the plague, committed their share of rape and pillage whenever "pacifying" the countryside. For the young man, the military draft represented a threat to his life; in fact, the family mourned a draftee as one already "dead." Reports of self-mutilation to avoid conscription indicate how strongly peasants felt about military service.<sup>1</sup>

Such were some of the more traumatic interruptions that could derail a peasant's life from its normal pursuits. Other social problems (such as alcoholism and wife-beating) were not necessarily "interruptions" of the traditional life cycle. They were not always considered abnormal, and often evoked no great social condemnation within the village community. In other words, alcoholism did not preclude participation in the social life of the village. There are no reliable statistics which would enable a quantitative analysis of the deviations in peasant life mentioned above. Even if there were, it would be impossible to answer the question 19th-century observers of village life often asked themselves: was peasant life the ideal cycle of communal belonging, meaningful work, and security; or rather the quagmire of social rejection, violence, ignorance and fear? Of course, the answer is that both of these existed side by side. In any case, the villager's ideal of an uninterrupted and harmonious life cycle survived well into the 20th century.

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<sup>1</sup> Kolberg, Litwa, pp. 54 ff.; Tatare, Tiesibes kieles, p. 154.

**PART II**

**THE PEASANTS OF TRANS-NIEMEN LITHUANIA: THE STRUGGLE FOR  
SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND NATIONAL RIGHTS, 1807-1864**

## CHAPTER X

### THE RISE OF THE PEASANT QUESTION AND "NOBLE" AGITATORS IN THE VILLAGE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The first part of this study presented a general survey of Trans-Niemen Lithuania's "agrarian world" during the half century before the Great Reform of 1864. This was a period of change in the legal status of the peasant and in his relationship to the estate. This was also a time when new and improved methods of agriculture came into use on a limited scale. Most important, there was a significant change in the nature of the villager's agrarian obligations. Many of these above changes have been outlined in Part I.

A general survey of such problems, however, runs the risk of presenting a deceptive picture of how southwestern Lithuania's rural world transformed itself during the first half of the 19th century: it may give the impression that agrarian relations changed in a more or less gradual and orderly fashion. In fact, this period was one of almost uninterrupted, and occasionally violent, struggle by the peasantry against the powers that it viewed as oppressive: primarily the landowners, but also the towns, government, army and the Church.

#### The Forms of Peasant Resistance.

Part II of this study deals with the peasantry's struggle for what it perceived as social, economic and national justice. Both the forms and intensity of this struggle varied considerably during the 19th century. Basically, Trans-Niemen Lithuania's villagers conducted their campaigns against authority in four ways. The most widely used method

during this period was the non-violent appeal to higher authorities in the government and Church. This pacific approach manifested itself in numerous peasant complaints and petitions against alleged wrongs and wrongdoers. These written documents form a valuable source not only for highlighting the issues that divided the peasants and landowners, but also for illuminating the villagers' own perceptions of their rights and social justice. Peasant petitions ranged from rather mild requests for more pasture rights to years-long litigation over the basic issue of village resettlement. Besides petition writing, another form of non-violent peasant protest was passive resistance, most often expressed in the agrarian strike. During the first half of the 19th century, agrarian strikes were usually "spontaneous," that is, they were primarily of a local character and frequently lacked sustained purpose and organization. Passive resistance was also expressed by the peasants' refusal to comply with government directives that they viewed as detrimental. A third form of peasant resistance were the isolated acts of violence often involving the attack and even murder of landowners, their agents and rural government officials. The fourth way in which the peasantry sought to redress their grievances was through participation in more massive and organized violence; in Polish history, the 1846 jacquerie in Galicia is, perhaps, the most notorious instance of massive peasant rebellion. In both the Kingdom and Lithuania, the peasants participated, in more or less organized fashion, in the uprisings against Russian rule during 1830-1831 and 1863-1864.

Although peasant opposition to the landowners was a constant phenomenon (not a year passed in Lithuania or Poland without reports of peasant

litigation or resistance in some form), it varied in intensity during the first half of the 19th century. It was only natural that the peasantry of Trans-Niemen Lithuania were influenced by the major political events and upheavals of the time, such as the anti-Russian insurrections and the Galician revolt of 1846. The villagers also responded to the government's attempts at agrarian reform. The most important piece of legislation that served as a backdrop to the villagers' struggle over such issues as land ownership and right of resettlement was the emancipation of 1807, defined as it was by the decree of 1810. The peasants were also keenly aware of the importance of the 1835 decree concerning the donated estates, and the ukaz of 1846 which limited the private landowners' powers of expulsion. Peasant unrest tended to increase during times when political upheaval or peasant legislation promised changes in the agrarian structure of the Kingdom. Thus, the whole "agrarian question" was closely related to the general history of politics and society in Poland and Lithuania.

The Rise of the Peasant Question Among the Nobility of Lithuania at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century.

General concern with peasant reform was already evident in Lithuania during the second half of the 18th century. This concern, however, was expressed only in isolated acts of emancipation and philanthropy: the cases of Ignacy Karp and Paweł Brzostowski being the two most notable examples in Lithuania.<sup>1</sup> The revolutionary events that affected Lithuania between 1788 and 1796 opened a new phase in the history of the "peasant question" among the landed nobility. For the first time, the agrarian

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<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 20 and Rostworowski, "Reforma Pawłowska," pp. 101 ff.

problem became a widely debated issue. The collapse of the Kościuszko rebellion(1794) and the final partition of Poland and Lithuania in 1795 temporarily ended consideration of the peasant problem in these countries.

It was Napoleon's defeat of Prussia in 1806, and the subsequent emancipation of the peasantry in the newly created Duchy of Warsaw the following year, that once again raised the agrarian question in Russian Lithuania. The example of the 1807 reform in the Duchy of Warsaw was a significant factor in stimulating discussion of agrarian reform among the Lithuanian nobility. In 1808 a prominent landowner, Waleryan Stroynowski, published a tract in which he advocated the abolition of serfdom in Lithuania and its replacement with a contractual system whereby the landowners would make agreements with the peasants "just as with free people."<sup>1</sup> The debate over serfdom became particularly relevant during the Franco-Russian War of 1812 when Michał Ogiński proposed a constitution for a new Lithuanian Grand Duchy that provided for a gradual emancipation of the serfs over a ten-year period.<sup>2</sup>

During the war, the nobility of Russian Lithuania came into closer contact with the landowners in the Duchy of Warsaw(including those of southwestern Lithuania) and thus became more familiar with the Polish emancipation without land.<sup>3</sup> The Lithuanian nobility also realized that the events of 1812 had greatly aroused the peasantry, despite the fact that Napoleon himself, anxious to retain the support of the landowners in

<sup>1</sup> Waleryan Stroynowski, O ugodach dziedziców z włościanami(Wilno, 1808), p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Bronius Dundulis, "Valstiečių klausimas Lietuvoje 1812 metais," in Lietuvos valstiečiai, 41.

<sup>3</sup> K[onstantinas] Jablonskis, "Valstiečių judėjimas Lietuvoje XIX a. pirmojoje pusėje ir valstiečių siekimų reiškėjas Jonas Goštaitas," in Lietuvos valstiečiai, 48.

Russian Lithuania, considered the peasant question only superficially.<sup>1</sup> Rural unrest in Lithuania became widespread in 1812 and 1813. In July, 1812, Juozapas Giedraitis (Pol. Giedroyć), the bishop of Samogitia, issued two episcopal letters to the Lithuanian populace of his diocese, warning them against their resistance to authority and expressing amazement that some of the Samogitian clergy actually encouraged peasant dissatisfaction.<sup>2</sup> There is little doubt that the Lithuanian landowners were aware of the peasants' explosive mood during the Napoleonic occupation, and that the villagers "longed for freedom, even the partial [liberty] of their brothers beyond the Niemen." Consequently, at least in Belorussia, the provisional Lithuanian government announced to the peasants that, with the end of hostilities, the serfs would be freed on the basis of the Polish emancipation of 1807.<sup>3</sup>

Napoleon's defeat erased the nobility's hope for the reestablishment of a Lithuanian state federated with Poland<sup>4</sup> and the war itself caused extensive destruction to the agrarian economy. The problem of serfdom, however, did not disappear from public view; in fact, the question of emancipation became an object of intense debate in the decade that followed Napoleon's Russian campaign. Lithuania's liberal nobility, which favored peasant reform, was greatly encouraged by Alexander I's intimations of an emancipation of the serfs in all of Russia, but the debate

<sup>1</sup> Dundulis, "Valstiečių," 43-45.

<sup>2</sup> Augustinas Janulaitis, "Aktai ir dokumentai," in Praeitis, I(1930), 363-365.

<sup>3</sup> Henryk Mościcki, Sprawa włościańska na Litwie w pierwszej czwierci XIX stulecia (Warsaw, 1908), p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Bronius Dundulis, Napoleon et la Lithuanie en 1812 (Paris, 1940), pp. 119 ff.

about serfdom was also stimulated by the liberal propaganda of the early 19th century.<sup>1</sup> This propaganda was carried out by such prominent progressive landowners as Michael Oczapowski who wrote widely in the liberal Dziennik Wileński (The Wilno Daily) until 1819, when the Tsarist censorship forbade any more public discussion of the serfdom issue.<sup>2</sup>

The debate on serfdom was lively and often bitter; as early as 1816, the Samogitian gentry and nobility split into so-called "Red" and "White" factions over the peasant issue.<sup>3</sup> A series of emancipation projects for Russian Lithuania was presented to the government by the diets of the nobility and gentry in 1817.<sup>4</sup> The landowners looked to Lithuania's neighbors for examples of reform. Many favored emancipation on the Polish example, while others looked to the slightly different reform in the Baltic provinces of Livonia, Courland and Estonia.<sup>5</sup>

The "pro-peasant" propaganda of the liberal nobility served to convince a good number of Lithuania's landowners to accept the idea of an emancipation.<sup>6</sup> One of the more interesting groups of pro-emancipation liberals in Lithuania was a secret society of young noblemen known as the "Rogues" (Pol. szubrawcy) who published a widely read satirical journal called Gutter News (Pol. Wiadomości Brukowe). Historically, the Rogues were part

<sup>1</sup> Mościcki, Sprawa włościaniska, pp. 14 ff., 25.

<sup>2</sup> Jucas, Baudžiavos irimas, pp. 229-246.

<sup>3</sup> Jucas, Baudžiavos irimas, pp. 217-222.

<sup>4</sup> For the important December 12, 1817 diet in Wilno see Mościcki, Sprawa włościaniska, pp. 24-31.

<sup>5</sup> Augustinas Janulaitis, Baudžiavų panaikinimo sumanymai Lietuvoje 1817-1819 (Kaunas, 1929), pp. 19 ff. and p. 49.

<sup>6</sup> M. Janik, "Sprawa ludowa na Litwie w XIX wieku," in Pamiętnik VI Pow-szechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Wilnie 1935 r., Vol. I (Lwów, 1935), 254-255.

of the liberal, romantic Polish movement that was centered in the University of Vilnius during the first quarter of the 19th century, and which included such notables of Polish history and literature as Joachim Lelewel and Adam Mickiewicz. The leaders of the Rogues' satirical society took their pseudonyms from Lithuanian mythology, reflecting the current fascination with Lithuania's ancient history: Leon Borowski, one of the leaders of this society, took the name Perkūnas(god of thunder).<sup>1</sup> The Rogues were clearly sympathetic to the peasants: in one issue of their Gutter News they satirized the landowners' physical abuse of the villagers by inventing and publishing a detailed diagram of a "Peasant-Beating Machine."<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it is clear that these young satirists had no comprehensive plans for an orderly peasant emancipation.<sup>3</sup> Their greatest contribution, like that of other liberal societies in Lithuania, was in keeping the peasant question alive and in the public view.

Two major agrarian problems confronted the nobility of the early 19th century: the problem of land, and the question of compulsory labor. A majority of the nobility, especially after Alexander I's approval of peasant reform in the Baltic provinces, favored a personal emancipation, but they were opposed to any reform that would give the villagers rights to the land. It was clear, however, that the peasants would never be satisfied with any agrarian reform that denied them eventual rights to the land. On the other hand, the pre-1820 liberals did consider the problem of corvée. Their press of this time shows this: in 1818 the

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<sup>1</sup> Józef Bieliński, Szubrawcy w Wilnie 1817-1822(Wilno, 1910), pp. 72-73.

<sup>2</sup> Bieliński, Szubrawcy, pp. 110-116.

<sup>3</sup> Jablonskis, "Valstiečių judėjimas," 50-51.

well-known agronomist Michał Oczapowski described in the Dziennik Wileński the advantages of hired, as against compulsory, labor. The following year, the same newspaper published a favorable commentary on the Baltic reforms.<sup>1</sup> In the press, the arguments against serfdom were essentially of two kinds: economic and moral. Oczapowski, for example, liked to contrast the waste of corvée with the relative efficiency of hired labor. Other commentators preferred to point out the more "emotional" side of the issue: the moral degradation involved in the sale and exploitation of peasants.

The liberal voices in the peasant debate were at their strongest in 1818-1819. The latter year was a turning point and has been described as the beginning of "strict reaction" on the peasant issue in Lithuania.<sup>2</sup> No doubt, Tsar Alexander's change of heart on the problem of serfdom, and the inauguration of the conservative phase of his reign, were the most important factors in putting a damper on the peasant debate in Lithuania, Poland and Russia. For practical purposes, serious debate on the peasant issue, especially in Russian Lithuania, ended in 1819. Thereafter, there was more stress on the less controversial educational and material improvement of the village populace. By the early 1820s, the peasant problem had been driven underground, together with the secret societies of Polish-Lithuanian noblemen who concerned themselves with it.<sup>3</sup>

The intense, though brief, flowering of the liberal and romantic movement in Lithuania was important for the future development of the peasant

<sup>1</sup> Piotr Chmielowski, Liberalizm i obskurantyzm na Litwie i Rusi; 1815-1823(Warsaw, 1898), pp. 113-114 and Janulaitis, Baudžiavų, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Chmielowski, Liberalizm, p. 116

<sup>3</sup> Chmielowski, Liberalizm, pp. 117-128, 160-162.

question in the Kingdom of Poland. Joachim Lelewel, a leader of the Polish movement in Vilnius and the founder of the Polish Democratic Society in 1832, personified the link between the Polish-Lithuanian romantic movement of the early 19th century and the emergence of the peasant issue in later years as a central theme within the various political groupings of the Polish national and revolutionary movements. When the peasant issue came to the fore again after 1831, the problem of land became the most divisive question between liberals and conservatives.

The peasant debate within the Duchy of Warsaw and the Kingdom of Poland was less intense in the pre-1820 period than it had been in Lithuania. Serfdom had already been abolished in the Duchy in 1807, so that the peasant question primarily involved discussions on limited reform, especially for the state peasants; however, few of the reform projects in the Kingdom were ever carried out. The legislation on the state peasants that was passed, says historian Zofia Kirkor-Kiedroniowa, "did not escape the range of the general trusteeship of the peasants on state lands that had already long been in practice, and did not aim at a basic reform of [the peasants'] condition."<sup>1</sup> Aside from the agrarian questionnaires of 1814 inspired by Czartoryski, there was no strong, comprehensive liberal reform program in the Kingdom until 1831.<sup>2</sup>

#### Peasant Resistance Before 1831 and the Case of Franciszek Rupiński.

While the early 19th century was a period of turmoil among the Lithuanian nobility in Russian Lithuania, and of changes in the peasants' legal

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<sup>1</sup> Kirkor-Kiedroniowa, Włościanie, p. 331.

<sup>2</sup> Kirkor-Kiedroniowa, Włościanie, p. 399. For the peasant debate in Poland before 1831 see Grynwaser, Kwestia agrarna, pp. 51-76 and Kirkor-Kiedroniowa, Włościanie, pp. 323 ff.

status in Poland, it was not (with the singular exception of the Napoleonic interlude in Lithuania) a time of violent peasant unrest. However, both in Russian Lithuania and the Trans-Niemen region, the peasants did engage in continuous litigation with the estates over what they perceived as their economic rights.

Peasant resistance in early 19th century Lithuania took two main forms: escape and litigation. The Lithuanian districts of Poland, both during the Duchy and Kingdom periods, served as one of the havens for escaped peasants from Russian Lithuania. Prussia, with a sizeable Lithuanian population in the eastern borderlands, was another popular sanctuary for runaway villagers. A great many of the peasant escapees of the early 19th century were draft evaders; in Lithuania, massive resistance to the draft began in 1795 when the Russians initiated army recruitment among the village population.<sup>1</sup> Some of the nobility estimated that at least six or seven peasants "emigrated" for every recruit levied.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the policy of recruitment served to populate Prussia and Trans-Niemen Lithuania with thousands of runaway Lithuanian peasants during the early years of the 19th century. The Russian army, however, was not the only one the villagers were loath to serve in: the Łomża department of the Duchy of Warsaw reported that on June 27, 1812, eight Lithuanian draftees escaped while on their way "from Łomża to the Eleventh Infantry Regiment."<sup>3</sup> As far as service in the military was concerned, peasants fought willingly only when they felt their cause would be directly served.

<sup>1</sup> On how recruitment was conducted see Katkus, Raštai, pp. 101-103.

<sup>2</sup> Janulaitis, Lietuvos bajorai, pp. 210-211.

<sup>3</sup> Dziennik Departamentowy Łomżyński, August 18, 1812 (No. 30).

Besides the draft, there were other reasons for the exodus of many Lithuanian villagers to Prussia and the Kingdom following the war of 1812. Wartime devastation made the economic situation of some peasants intolerable, and they fled across the Niemen to start their lives anew. The taxes of the "free people" in Russian Lithuania were raised, so some of them moved west as well. On the whole, Samogitian peasants fled to Prussia, while those from the Trakai district to the south went to the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts. For a while, escape to the Kingdom's Trans-Niemen region seems to have been a fairly safe proposition; the government here began returning runaway peasants to Russia only after 1818. Even then, a Lithuanian serf from Russia, having gotten across the Niemen River, stood a good chance of being left alone. In fact, landowners in Russian Lithuania often complained that the peasants in the Kingdom were reluctant to help in the search for runaways and sometimes actively helped them, especially if the escapees were draft evaders. Runaways were also helped by the local landowners' practice of settling them on their estates with few questions asked. In 1821 the nobility of Trakai complained that they were unable to effect the return of their peasants who had fled to the Kingdom; extradition was difficult since the landowners on the Polish side of the Niemen were reluctant to give up their newly acquired settlers. Thus, the Niemen River formed an international boundary which the peasants used to escape the jurisdiction of the Empire and Kingdom whenever necessary.<sup>1</sup>

Emigration was, of course, a more or less individual and disorganized form of peasant protest. A more important method of peasant action in the

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<sup>1</sup> Janulaitis, Lietuvos bajorai, pp. 219, 270-271, 344-349; Jablonskis, "Valstiečių," 53.

early 19th century was passive resistance and legal struggle: these were more significant because they represented, usually, a more or less organized effort, and outlined more clearly those issues which the peasants thought important.

Collective action by the peasants required leadership. Who were the peasant leaders and organizers? Hipolit Grynwasier, who wrote several studies on peasant movements in 19th century Poland, classified the villagers' leaders and agitators into three basic categories. The first group were insubordinate peasants who emerged "spontaneously" during times of unrest and formulated the demands and grievances of the villagers vis-a-vis the landowners and government. Secondly, there were the peasant advisors and legal counselors who helped dissatisfied villagers compose their petitions and depositions, while counseling them on the subtleties of litigation. This second group consisted mainly of lesser gentry, former government officials and teachers. The third category of peasant leaders was relatively rare: it was composed of agents and sympathizers of the Polish Democratic Society established in 1832. The second type, the gentry advisors, predominated in the peasant movement before about 1846; afterwards, the number of peasant leaders(first type) increased markedly.<sup>1</sup>

Historians have uncovered a number of instances in which peasant counselors from the lesser gentry tenaciously championed the cause of the villagers. In Russian Lithuania, A. Mackevičius(Pol. Mackiewicz) led the villagers of Vabalninkas in a 25-year(1822-1847) legal battle against what the peasants regarded as illegal compulsory labor. In this case, the peasants were successful, even though Mackevičius and others were harassed

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<sup>1</sup> Grynwasier, Kwestia agrarna, pp. 213-214.

and imprisoned by the authorities during the legal process.<sup>1</sup> In Trans-Niemen Lithuania, peasant unrest on crown(or state) lands was rampant during 1816 and 1817 when the villagers' hopes were aroused by the agrarian questionnaires(see above, pp. 52-53) and the constitutional debates within the Kingdom. Everywhere in the Kingdom, peasants began to petition the government to abolish corvée and replace it with money rents. Often they petitioned for a reduction of obligations generally. It was against this background of protest that the peasantry on a number of crown estates in the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts began to agitate for their economic rights. Jan Mackiewicz, a counsel for the defense with the Sejny district court, helped the peasants of the royal Maćkowo-Sejwy estate near Puńsk formulate their complaints of excessive obligations against the local leaseholder. Mackiewicz was accused of intrigues and "agitating" the peasantry, but he escaped prosecution. The state domains at Joniškis, Alytus and other villages in Kalvarija district, as well as the Zypliai estate in Marijampolė district, were some of the more important centers of peasant unrest in southwestern Lithuania. It was at the Zypliai estate that Franciszek Rupiński, one of the more prominent local peasant leaders, took on powerful landowning interests in defense of the villagers. The Rupiński case gives us a detailed view of how some peasants resisted the estate during the early 19th century.

The Zypliai estate was a huge, rich tract of land in the northwest corner of Marijampolė district; in the early 19th century, it consisted of at least 170 villages and well over a thousand peasant households.

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<sup>1</sup> Jablonskis, "Valstiečių," 54-55.

During the second half of the 18th century, the Zypliai estate, formerly a crown domain, became the property of Prince Józef Poniatowski. In 1777 the prince abolished labor duties on the estate and divided the lands of the manorial farms among the villagers in return for an annual money rent of some thirty Prussian thalers. The Prussians confiscated Zypliai during their occupation of southwestern Lithuania, but Napoleon returned it to Poniatowski in 1807.<sup>1</sup> In 1813 Poniatowski was killed at the battle of Leipzig and the estate passed into the hands of his sister, Countess Maria Teresa Tyszkiewiczowa.

The Countess reputedly spent most of her time in Paris engaged in the expensive pastimes of gambling and cavorting with her aging lover, the famous French Foreign Minister Talleyrand. She was in constant need of funds. The Countess' legal representative in the Kingdom, the senator Aleksander Linowski, hoped to get the necessary money from the lucrative Zypliai estate by increasing the peasants' obligations.<sup>2</sup> However, the villagers were prepared to resist the estate's demand for more obligations and on November 8, 1815, over 1,100 Zypliai peasants empowered Franciszek Rupiński, a Polish lawyer who had already distinguished himself in peasant causes, to represent them against the Countess and senator Linowski.

Rupiński came from poor gentry stock. He was born in Chełm district in 1778; it had become part of Prussia during the first partition of Poland in 1772. In 1799 Rupiński was appointed mayor of Prienai in Marijampolė

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<sup>1</sup> Słownik Geograficzny, XIV, 706-707.

<sup>2</sup> Szymon Askenazy, "Trybun gminu," in the same author's collection, Dwa stulecia XVIII i XIX: badania i przyczynki, II(Warsaw, 1910), 393-394.

Since the archival material concerning Rupiński and the Zypliai case was destroyed during the war, this account is based on Askenazy's study which utilized the original documents.

district; he served here in the Prussian bureaucracy until 1807 when, like many other Prussian officials, he was arrested by the French-Polish authorities. The following year, Rupiński was sentenced to prison for alleged abuses while in office and remained in jail until 1811, when he was acquitted on appeal. Rupiński then returned to Prienai and practiced law until 1814 when he moved to Marijampolé; it was here that he became seriously interested in peasant causes. In 1815 Rupiński took on his first big case involving peasant-landowner litigation: he won a case for the state peasants of the Kiduliai economy against one Walerian Wereszczynski, the leaseholder. Wereszczynski was subsequently deprived of his lease on the state land. Rupiński's success in defending the peasants aroused intense hostility toward him among the local landowning nobility, but it also made him popular with the local Lithuanian peasantry. In fact, throughout his difficult career, Rupiński enjoyed unwavering support and trust from his village clients. He is reported to have had a way with the common folk and, although a Pole, had acquired a command of Lithuanian, a prerequisite for anyone who wanted to gain the confidence of the peasantry in the Lithuanian districts.

Rupiński was keenly aware of the risks in taking on the Zypliai case: landowners had brought government pressure on him in previous cases. He was also aware that Countess Tyszkiewiczowa's attorney, Linowski, was an influential reactionary who was a bitter enemy of anything that remotely smacked of "Jacobinism." Nonetheless, on August 17, 1816, Rupiński presented to senator Linowski the peasants' list of complaints, detailing the means

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<sup>1</sup> Askenazy, "Trybun gminu," 386-393. Rupiński's knowledge of Lithuanian is attested to by his correspondence with peasant leader Woyczaytis which was found in the archives by Askenazy.

by which the Zypliai estate was squeezing the peasants to pay for Countess Tyszkiewiczowa's extravagant Parisian life style. The peasants of Zypliai basically accused the manor of violating the privileges which, they felt, had been permanently granted them by the Countess' brother, Prince Poniatowski.

Most of the issues that the peasants brought up were typical economic points of conflict between manor and village during the 19th century. There was, for example, the question of servitudes: the Zypliai peasants had formerly been allowed free access to the estate's forest resources, but now, the villagers complained, they were forced to buy their construction material and fuel from the manor. In fact, not only did the estate deny the peasants their traditional servitude rights, it also forced them to transport the manor's lumber. Pasture rights were also a problem; as it turned out, the estate was forcing the peasants to pay for their pastures which had previously belonged to the peasant holdings.

The manor allegedly violated the integrity of peasant holdings in still another way: it settled garden peasants on the holdings of the landed villagers. The estate was further accused of raising the money rents of the peasants in contravention of earlier practice. It also raised the customary liquor distilling tax; furthermore, the manor then increased the number of inns on the estate. Finally, Rupiński's clients charged that the Zypliai manor had illegally retained government remuneration intended for the peasants for their deliveries to the state; the villagers claimed receipts for such deliveries totalling 7,677 Prussian thalers and demanded an accounting for all money collected by the estate since 1807. The final item in the August 17 letter to Linowski

was an unusual one: the peasants asked that, if the Zypliai estate was to be put up for sale, they be given priority in purchasing the land for three million złoty.<sup>1</sup>

The conservative Linowski was outraged by the audacity of Rupiński and his peasant clients. Within a few weeks, he penned a violent response to the villagers' counsel. The estate would not deal with someone who was "agitating the peasants," Linowski wrote, and brutally threatened Rupiński, demanding that the lawyer "cease all communication if he wanted to remain whole." Linowski was determined to discredit or eliminate Rupiński and thus deprive the peasants of leadership. Even before the lawyer's formal presentation of the peasants' demands on August 17, Linowski had convinced General Józef Zajaczek, the Kingdom's regent and a well-known conservative, that the Zypliai villagers were a happy and satisfied lot who had been misled in taking part in unfortunate intrigues against their landowner by a small group of troublemakers. Zajaczek quickly ordered the Kingdom's Justice Commission to initiate charges against Rupiński as an agitator and disturber of public order. Local authorities in Marijampolė district were instructed to help put an end to Rupiński's activities, and in late September of 1816 the subprefect of Marijampolė district called Rupiński and some of the Zypliai villagers to the district office and ordered the lawyer, in the name of the central government, to have no more to do with peasant affairs.

The government then decided to undermine Rupiński's authority among the villagers by obtaining a written deposition from the village headmen

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<sup>1</sup> Askenazy, "Trybun gminu," 377-378 and Grynwaser, Kwestia agrarna, p. 232. The estate was subsequently sold to one J. Bartkowski.

of the Zypliai estate withdrawing their names from the original complaint of the peasants and implicating peasant Andrzej Woyczaytis, a leader of the villagers and a friend of Rupiński, as well as other more "prominent" peasants, in the "forcible collection" of money from all landed households. Furthermore, the headmen's deposition charged, Woyczaytis and his friends had borrowed 3,000 złoty from the Jew, Lewin; from this loan and the forced contributions, it was said, they had paid Rupiński a total of 6,000 złoty in the summer of 1816.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the truth of the matter, the headmen implied that Rupiński and those peasants who supported him were interested more in financial gain than in the welfare of the villagers.

Despite the government's pressure, the Zypliai peasants and their leaders showed considerable persistence. It turned out that the government's action against Rupiński was only the beginning of a remarkable and tenacious legal battle. Rupiński was undaunted by the accusations against him. In January, 1817, the lawyer arrived in Warsaw together with a delegation of loyal peasants to refute the charges. Senator Linowski, claiming that his group was a threat to public order, promptly arranged Rupiński's arrest by the Warsaw municipal police, but the Kingdom's Justice Commission released the lawyer a few days later. Linowski then turned again to Regent Zajączek who ordered the rearrest of the unfortunate advocate of peasant rights; however, on February 3rd the Justice Commission ruled that there was no basis for Rupinski's detention and the lawyer was released a second time.

The attempt to intimidate Rupiński and disrupt the relationship between the peasants and their counsel failed. On March 3, 1817, a

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<sup>1</sup> Askenazy, "Trybun gminu," 381-383.

court messenger came to the Zypliai manor and handed the estate's manager, Mikołaj Wiszniewski, a judicial summons "on behalf of the entire peasant community [włość], or all the peasants of Zyle[Zypliai] estate, from the landed villagers 1,300 in number, not counting the village headmen."<sup>1</sup> As their legal representatives, the peasants named Rupiński, their own leader Andrzej Woyczaytis, and three other villagers. As their legal patron, the peasants named Jakób Szreder, a prominent liberal friend of Rupiński from Łomża.

The March 3 peasants' court summons has some historical interest. This document clearly revealed the villagers' strong awareness of precedent and history. Time and again, the peasants pointed to the old inventories and privileges as a defense against what they saw as arbitrary excesses in their obligations. The Zypliai villagers stressed their history as part of the old Veliuona(Pol. Wielon) state domain, emphasizing that the last leaseholder had introduced money renting and had distributed the manorial land among the peasants in 1777. Furthermore, the peasants pointed out that the Prussian government, "having regard for the privileges given to the peasants by the [past] sovereigns and leaseholders," had essentially retained their traditional rights. When Napoleon donated the Zypliai estate to Poniatowski in 1807, the peasants interpreted this simply as a restoration of the prince's "rights of holding the Wielon [Veliuona] state domain." The villagers knew that it was to their advantage to have the Zypliai estate regarded as a state, and not private, domain. On a more psychological note, the peasants claimed that it was

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Askenazy, "Trybun gminu," 396. The włość, or volost' in Russian, was the equivalent of the gmina in the old Grand Duchy of Lithuania; the peasants here are using the traditional, pre-partition administrative term.

"impossible to imagine that the Emperor Napoleon, in doing justice to Prince Poniatowski and rewarding him for his services, wanted to accomplish this to the detriment of the Wielum[Veliuona] peasants who had acquired their rights over many centuries, beginning with 1580 and King Stephen [Batory]."<sup>1</sup> With some naiveté, the peasants added that it was inconceivable that Prince Poniatowski would have accepted any reward that entailed "harm to the people, numbering 15,000, and as devoted to their lord as are the landed peasants [ziemianie] of Zypliai."<sup>1</sup> In the conclusion to their March 3 summons, the Zypliai peasants demanded that their obligations be defined solely in terms of the old Prussian system in force before 1807, and that all other obligations be immediately dismissed. Those obligations which had been illegally exacted were to be reimbursed.

The Zypliai court summons of March 3, 1817, contained some factual, historical and legal inaccuracies. However, a good part of the villagers' complaints and demands was certainly justified. But, perhaps, the peasants' and their defender's knowledge of the law and historical precedent was less significant than their view of the law and the past as weapons in the struggle against the landowners. It is significant that, in the summons, the villagers termed themselves ziemianie,<sup>2</sup> the highest peasant class in the old Grand Duchy of Lithuania, who had traditionally carried the lowest obligatory burdens. It was always the peasant view that "privileges" granted them in the past were permanent and irrevocable; in fact, few things aroused villagers more than attempts to "downgrade" their status by burdening them with new obligations. The peasants viewed

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted in Askenazy, "Trybun gminu," 397-398.

<sup>2</sup> For the ziemianie see above, p. 8.

historical and customary precedent as binding; hence, a violation of existing norms, even when based on sound judicial argument, was, in their view, invariably "illegal."

Realizing that the peasants were determined to follow through with their litigation, Senator Linowski made one final attempt to undermine Rupiński and those peasants who had emerged as the villagers' leaders. Soon after learning of the March 3 court summons, Linowski sent an agent to Zypliai to effect a compromise with the peasants directly. The peasants' response to this move was typical of their mistrust of the manor: they took the senator's compromise offer to Rupiński who advised the villagers to insist on their original demands.<sup>1</sup>

The peasants' mistrust of the manor and total confidence in their lawyer finally convinced Linowski that only force could suppress the villagers of Zypliai. He turned again to Zajączek, the Kingdom's regent, to silence Rupiński. Zajączek advised the peasants' defender, for the last time, to drop the case against the Zypliai estate. At the same time, the estate itself began putting together a comprehensive case against Rupiński, accusing him of agitating the peasantry and using forcible tactics in collecting money from the villagers for his own use. In August, 1817, documents against Rupiński were presented to the Mariampolę court by Józef Jakubowski, the gmina mayor of Zypliai. A number of peasants made depositions against the lawyer as well. It is certainly possible that some of the peasant "ringleaders" may have twisted a few arms to raise money for the legal process against the manor; nevertheless, the accusations against Rupiński were made under extremely suspicious, if

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<sup>1</sup> Askenazy, "Trybun gminu," 400-401.

not outrightly fraudulent, circumstances.<sup>1</sup> As if his problems at Zypliai were not enough, Rupiński made further bitter enemies among the landowners when he became involved with the peasants of the large Prienai economy in their own litigation against manorial administration.<sup>2</sup>

In any case, Regent Zajączek and Linowski had had enough of Rupiński and his peasants. When the counselor arrived in Warsaw to pursue the Zypliai case further in May, 1817, he was promptly arrested. Despite Rupiński's protest that he was being denied his constitutional rights as a citizen of Congress Poland, Zajączek persuaded Poland's reactionary attorney general, J. K. Szaniawski, to begin criminal proceedings against the peasants' lawyer. In this way, the Regent hoped to bypass the Justice and Internal Affairs Commissions which were both opposed to Zajączek's extraconstitutional methods. Szaniawski obliged Zajączek and issued his opinion on May 16, 1817. The attorney general described Rupiński as one of many unscrupulous lawyers in Marijampolė district who profited from instigating the state peasants. Szaniawski admitted Rupiński's dangerous popularity, and recommended his prosecution under a law forbidding the assembly of townspeople or villagers for the purpose of violently overthrowing the government. Zajączek, fully satisfied with Szaniawski's

<sup>1</sup> For example, Woyczaytis, the chief peasant leader, supposedly gave a deposition which implicated Rupiński. And yet, the document was marked by three "x's" next to Woyczaytis' name, and was witnessed by the gmina mayor and others, the usual procedure for depositions from illiterate persons. However, Askenazy uncovered documents written by Woyczaytis which prove that the peasant was literate in both Polish and Lithuanian, and which were clearly signed by an "Andrzejus Woyczaytis." Another anti-Rupiński deposition by a second peasant leader, Franciszek Petkunas, is reported to have been interrupted by a band of peasants. The validity of the anti-Rupiński documents is made further suspect by subsequent events when Woyczaytis and other peasant leaders were imprisoned.

<sup>2</sup> Askenazy, "Trybun gminu," 401-404.

report, ordered a special commission to investigate Rupiński and prepare for the latter's prosecution. To the Regent's dismay, this commission exonerated Rupiński on June 17, 1817, dismissed the Zypliai gmina mayor's depositions as worthless evidence, and concluded that Rupiński's activities were perfectly legal. Adding insult to injury, the special commission reminded Zajączek that peasants were free under the constitution and were supposed to enjoy all the civil rights. The commission recommended that "Rupiński should be free from any further detention and liability."<sup>1</sup>

It was now clear, and became even more evident as the Rupiński case dragged on, that liberals in the Justice Commission would oppose the Regent's high-handed and extralegal methods of dealing with the recalcitrant dissidents of Zypliai. Zajączek could no longer pretend that he was acting against his enemies within a legal framework. On June 21, 1817, he admitted before the Kingdom's Administrative Council that the special commission's investigation "did not reveal anything for which Rupiński could be prosecuted under the law."<sup>2</sup> Despite this, Zajączek decided to keep the Zypliai peasants' lawyer under detention, while he appealed to the Tsar, the lawful King of Poland. He wrote his sovereign:

Sire, I have long delayed informing your Royal Highness that there are several [of your] subjects in the Kingdom of Poland who strive to deceive the peasants, explaining to them that they are not required to perform compulsory labor, that they are entitled to freely use the forests, that they should be released from work on the roads; in a word, who seek to disturb the public peace.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Askenazy, "Trybun gminu," 405-410.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., ARA-Vol. 4, Protocol CLI, June 21, 1817, k. 384.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the French original in Grynwasz, Kwestia agrarna, pp. 234-235.

Zajaczek expressed to Alexander I his disappointment with the Kingdom's "soft" judicial system, and requested permission to imprison the peasants' "agitators." Even though such measures were "unconstitutional," the Regent explained to the Tsar, they were "necessary for the maintenance of peace." Zajaczek also argued that the reforms then being proposed for the state lands would be imperiled by the "agitators."<sup>1</sup>

The Tsar, on the advice of the Kingdom's official representative in St. Petersburg, Ignacy Sobolewski, disregarded Zajaczek's alarmist warnings and ordered the Regent to use only the regular "police and administrative means which would be the most efficient to obstruct such people [i. e. Rupiński and company] in their involvement with peasant interests . . . and to compel the peasants to fulfill the obligations attached to the lands they hold." The Tsar also emphasized his desire to see that the "peasants received impartial, quick, easy and inexpensive justice."<sup>2</sup> The Tsar's reply clearly instructed the Regent to cease his illegal methods in combating the peasants' gentry "agitators," and so Rupiński was released from detention on August 6, 1817.<sup>3</sup> On the very next day, however, Zajaczek ignored both the spirit of the Imperial rescript and the constitutional arguments of his own Justice Commission: he ordered Ignacy Zieliński, the chairman of the Augustów province governing commission, to keep Rupiński under observation and to make certain that the lawyer did not "meddle" in peasant affairs.

<sup>1</sup> Quotes are from Grynwasz, Kwestia agrarna, pp. 234-235.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., ARA-Vol. 5, Protocol CLXII, August 2, 1817, k. 68-69.

<sup>3</sup> Askenazy, "Trybun gminu," 412-415.

Upon his return to Marijampolé, Rupiński sought to call a meeting of the Zypliai peasants to receive confirmation of his right to represent them in court. Here again, executive and judicial authority collided: on the one hand, local police banned the peasants' planned assembly, and the provincial authorities forbade the local notary to acknowledge any document empowering Rupiński to act on the villagers' behalf; on the other hand, the provincial tribunal ordered the notary to accept Rupiński's authorization by the peasants. Throughout the remainder of 1817, Rupiński remained the object of an administrative-legal game. On November 7, he was arrested on Zajączek's orders, only to be promptly released by the courts. A month later, an exasperated commissioner of justice had to explain to the Regent for the third time that he should not deny the peasants their right to counsel. Zajączek, in his turn, accused the judicial system of indifference to public safety.<sup>1</sup>

In the end, the constitutional and judicial forces proved insufficient to protect Rupiński. In late November of 1817, provincial authorities bypassed the courts and placed Rupiński under special "police" arrest. This time the civilian courts could do nothing. The following March, the provincial government began the prosecution of Rupiński and his chief peasant collaborators in a police court. This court convicted Rupiński, Woyczaytis and others of agitating the peasants, of making fraudulent plenipotentiary documents, extortion, and false accusations against manorial officials. Rupiński was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and exile to Płock; Woyczaytis received one year in prison. In all, 27

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<sup>1</sup> Grynwaser, Kwestia agrarna, p. 236.

other Zypliai villagers received short prison sentences of between two and four months.<sup>1</sup>

During successive appeals, higher courts dismissed many of the charges against Rupiński and the chief peasant ringleaders. All of the sentences were reduced. Despite this, Rupiński was not allowed to resume his role as the peasants' counsel; in fact, he was exiled from Augustów province. In addition, Ignacy Zieliński, the chairman of the provincial governing commission who later built a political career under Zajączek as a hard-liner on the peasant question, forbade the villagers to collect money to alleviate Rupiński's plight.

Rupiński's removal from the scene did not pacify the peasants of Zypliai; although he was effectively prevented from advising the peasants as of November, 1817, the villagers continued to keep in touch with their lawyer. The peasants also tried to go on by themselves. In the autumn of 1817 the Zypliai estate tried to force the peasants to accept new money rent contracts, and to perform compulsory labor, something which had not been practiced on the estate for forty years. The villagers protested and in February, 1818, a three-man commission, including the reactionary Zieliński, was appointed by Warsaw to "investigate" the whole Zypliai matter. Without Rupiński on the scene, the commission was unable to function: the peasants refused to cooperate and held back all the necessary documents.

The estate went on trying to force the peasants to accept new obligations. This led to new excesses against the villagers. In May of 1819, several officials of the Kingdom's judiciary informed Zajączek that "the peasants of Zypliai may have a just cause" for launching their

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<sup>1</sup> Grynwaser, Kwestia agrarna, p. 237.

litigation against the estate. One official complained that the actions of local authorities in Augustów province served only to create mistrust of the government among the local populace. It was pointed out that the peasants, in the absence of good legal counsel, were forced to turn to the gmina mayor who could hardly be expected to sincerely defend the interests of the villagers, as he was the estate's de facto administrator. Reformers in the judiciary suggested that the government give its own protection to the people so that the latter "wouldn't be forced to seek counsel from pettifoggers." As a result of an initiative by the Kingdom's Justice Commission, the government appointed a new lawyer for the peasants to continue the legal process begun by Rupiński.<sup>1</sup>

However, it soon became clear that the peasants trusted only Rupiński as their legal representative. This confidence in their "gentry" leader became apparent when, despite the provincial government's ban on communications with the imprisoned lawyer, the peasants continued to collect money and goods for the relief of Rupiński and his family. On March 11, 1820, the district commissioner, Jan Kozubski, called together several hundred peasants in Marijampolė to repeat the government ban on communicating with Rupiński. Contemporary documents record the peasants' answer:

As long as Rupiński is alive, we will continue collecting [money for him], because we have placed all our confidence in him; he was hired by us to help us; it was we who asked him to do this. We consider this contribution [to Rupiński] as charity; in the end, when he dies, if we recognize his bones, we will collect [alms] and donate them to prayers for his soul. If Rupiński is unable . . . to direct our legal process, we will not believe this

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<sup>1</sup> Grynwaser, Kwestia agrarna, pp. 240-241.

unless we hear it from Rupiński's own lips . . . We elected no one as the collector [of the alms], because we were not ordered to do so . . . but if someone had ordered us, we would want to choose no other than Woyczaytis, who has our power of attorney enacted before the Kalvarija district notary Ejdziałowicz. Even though Woyczaytis is under arrest, we do not consider him an evildoer, because he is no criminal; he hasn't stolen from anyone, nor taken anything by force. If Woyczaytis is under arrest for collecting [our contributions], if this is just, then put us all in jail, since we wanted Woyczaytis to collect money and give it to [Rupiński]. The government has no right to our property, as long as we are not indebted, and we can dispose of it as we wish.<sup>1</sup>

As the peasants' meeting with Kozubski progressed, the villagers became increasingly loud and disorderly, despite threats to bring in the police. The assembly was finally broken up, and thirteen of the more violent and active villagers were brought in for interrogation. These men reaffirmed their faith in Rupiński. Jakób Kaunas, one of the more prominent peasants of Zypliai, declared that he "loved" Rupiński from the heart as his "greatest friend," adding that if he himself didn't contribute to the Rupiński fund, then "my wife, stealing a few thalers from me, will take it to Rupiński."<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, the peasants' devotion to their lawyer was of little practical help to Rupiński. When he persisted in trying to help his old clients after his release in 1820, he was rearrested. In 1824 the criminal court of Augustów province exiled Rupiński permanently from Trans-Niemen Lithuania. Rupiński never returned to this region; in July, 1828, the Kingdom's Administrative Council, and later the Tsar himself, rejected his appeals to reverse the deportation order. Yet Rupiński's example remained: during the 19th century, the peasants of the Zypliai region continued to be known for their aggressive assertion of peasant rights.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Grynwasz, Kwestia agrarna, p. 239.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Grynwasz, Kwestia agrarna, p. 240.

Peasant Protest on Church Lands: The Gražiškiai Case of 1817.

The state(or crown) peasantry were the most prominent in the struggle against exploitation during the early 19th century, and, in fact, throughout the pre-1864 period. Villagers on private and Church domains took a cue from the state peasants in agitating for their own economic rights.

A case in point were the Church peasants of Gražiškiai, a village about 25 kilometers to the south of the Zyliai estate. In April, 1817, the Gražiškiai villagers wrote several petitions to Jan Gołaszewski, the bishop of the Wigry(later Sejny-Augustów) diocese, who, as a member of the senate, lived in Warsaw. The villagers complained of excessive compulsory labor and singled out Tomasz Radlowski, the administrator of the Church estate at Gražiškiai, as their main oppressor. Two of the peasants actually undertook the long journey to Warsaw to see the bishop, asking him either to "change their present situation, or free them from the Gražiškiai [estate]." In May, Bishop Gołaszewski ordered the head of the Alvitas deaconate, one Father Antoni Baykowski, to investigate the matter and see if the "people are being treated in such a terrible and merciless manner" as they claimed.<sup>1</sup> Baykowski went to Gražiškiai and called the peasants together to hear their complaints; afterwards, he reported that the villagers were in a "rebellious" mood. The peasants claimed that they should not be required to perform compulsory labor three times a week, but only for two days; nor, they said, should they be forced to do the seasonal harvest duties or other additional labor, such as day and night guard duty. The villagers claimed that the Gražiškiai inventory of 1782 which detailed their present obligations was

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 129: Gražyszki, Jerzy Snabaytis to Bishop Gołaszewski, April 27, 1817; Bishop Gołaszewski to Father Baykowski, May 9, 1817.

not genuine and that the real one could be found in the episcopal chancellery. Father Baykowski hoped to placate the peasants by ameliorating the minor, but irksome obligations (for example, guard duty) which were, in fact, in excess of the inventory. However, he dismissed charges that the estate manager Radlowski oppressed the peasants, citing them as examples of typical "impudence of the Lithuanian peasant."

The Gražiškiai peasants were dissatisfied with Baykowski's compromise; when the priest asked them to sign his statement about the revised system of obligations, the villagers refused. As the peasants explained, their fear was that "we may enter serfdom, while His Excellency the Bishop has promised us freedom." In addition, the peasants claimed that excessive labor obligations exhausted their animals, and added that the estate should use hired labor if it wanted extra work that was not listed in the inventory. In his letter to the bishop, Father Baykowski mentioned that several of the peasants were willing to disassociate themselves from the more rebellious villagers or "troublemakers," but feared retaliation from the others. Baykowski suggested that the bishop allow the two chief troublemakers to resettle, believing that this would have a calming effect on the remaining villagers.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear, however, that while the Gražiškiai peasants were petitioning their bishop for a reform of their obligations, they really hoped to gain their complete freedom from corvée duties. The estate manager Radlowski put his finger on the peasants' real aspirations in his statement to the investigating deacon, Baykowski. Radlowski admitted that some of the work he exacted for the estate went beyond the 1782

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 129: Gražyszki, Baykowski to Gołaszewski, May 24, 1817; Peasants' Deposition of May 21, 1817.

inventory, and was based on nothing more than precedent, but he dismissed charges of brutality and excesses ("I don't accept girls or shepherd boys for corvée labor"). "The peasants are not so much concerned with personal injustice," Radlowski said, "but rather their whole purpose is to be completely free [from corvée]."<sup>1</sup>

The example of the state peasants was an important stimulus to the hopes of the Gražiskiai villagers. The villagers believed that since "now [the government] promises freedom to all the royal peasants, we will also obtain it."<sup>2</sup> Baykowski, the bishop's investigator, maintained that the villagers' attempts to liberate themselves from compulsory labor were encouraged by example: "they see by their side the Extraordinary Commission which facilitates relations between the national[state] peasants and the leaseholders; then [the Gražiskiai peasants], not realizing the nature of [the Church] estate, suppose that they also can free themselves."<sup>3</sup> Baykowski himself opposed any reforms that would enable the peasants to leave the Gražiskiai estate, because, according to him, "having heard about the government arrangements on the national estates, [the peasants] would go to the boyars[i.e. state peasants], and our estate would remain without people."<sup>4</sup>

The peasants of Gražiskiai were unsuccessful in obtaining significant

<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 129: Gražyszki, Radlowski Statement of May 22, 1817.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 129: Gražyszki, Peasants' Deposition of May 21, 1817.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 129: Gražyszki, Baykowski to Gołaszewski, May 24, 1817.

<sup>4</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 129: Gražyszki, Baykowski to Gołaszewski, May 24, 1817. The references to government action in the above quotes concern the limited reform on state lands, and the work of government commissions which studied reform on crown lands(see above, p. 54).

concessions from the Church. On May 25, 1817, the landed villagers (calling themselves "boyars") and the garden peasants of Gražiškiai wrote separate petitions to the bishop. Both groups complained of not being allowed to speak out during the Baykowski investigation. The garden peasants added that their rents and obligations were too high. In June, Bishop Gołaszewski promised the peasants that he would further lighten some of their obligations.<sup>1</sup> Dissatisfied, the villagers pursued the matter further in a letter dated September 15, 1817 in which they profusely thanked the bishop for his limited concessions, but requested further alleviation of their corvée duties, apparently hoping to nibble away at compulsory labor in stages. Eventually, however, the exasperated bishop refused to make any more exceptions to his "ungrateful" charges.<sup>2</sup> For the time being at least, the Gražiškiai matter was laid to rest.

There are some obvious similarities in the Zypliai and Gražiškiai cases, despite the vast difference in the size and economic situation of the two estates and their peasants. In both cases, the peasants were especially adamant about compulsory labor; in fact, in their petitions, the Gražiškiai peasants defined "freedom" as the absence of corvée. The landed and wealthier peasantry seem to have been the more active ring-leaders in both Zypliai and Gražiškiai. In both cases, the peasants based their demands on past precedent and documents. The Zypliai villagers pointed to the privileges granted them in 1777; the Gražiškiai peasants

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 129: Gražyszki, The Petitions of the Landed Peasants and Garden Peasants to Bishop Gołaszewski, May 25, 1817; cf. the bishop's answer on the back of the petitions dated June 14, 1817.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 129: Gražyszki, Peasants to Gołaszewski, September 15, 1817 and the bishop's undated answer on the back of the document.

emphasized the "genuine" Church inventory of 1782.

Yet there were also important differences in the way the Zypliai and Gražiskiai peasants conducted their campaigns. The timidity and more limited nature of the Gražiskiai peasants' petitions is especially noticeable. They appealed only to their landowner, the bishop. On the other hand, the villagers of Zypliai had an awareness of law; that is, of a level of appeal that went beyond the landowner. Clearly, the state peasants, who contained among themselves such a significant number of well-to-do money renters, were the elite of the village population in southwestern Lithuania.<sup>1</sup> They set an example which emanated to the surrounding peasantry on private and Church estates.

When compared to later years, especially after 1846, the peasant resistance of the early 19th century seems relatively mild in both form and frequency. Between 1815 and 1830, peasant resistance manifested itself mainly in the various law suits and petitions the villagers brought against the nobility, especially the leaseholders of the state domains. The Zypliai case was unusual only in the persistence of the peasants, the remarkable personality of their leader Rupiński, and the relative importance the case achieved on the national level. According to the well-known agrarian historian Stefan Kieniewicz, the legal struggles of the Kingdom's peasantry during the early 19th century were "neither important nor general; nevertheless, they were symptomatic."<sup>2</sup> Peasant protest was symptomatic of the malaise that afflicted agrarian relations in

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<sup>1</sup> From a strictly legal point of view, the Zypliai peasants were on a private domain since at least 1807. However, their estate was historically a crown domain, and the peasants considered themselves "royal" villagers. In fact, from a social and economic standpoint, the Zypliai villagers were more typically state rather than private peasants.

<sup>2</sup> Kieniewicz, Emancipation, p. 79.

Poland and Lithuania, but which had not yet come to the fore in the early years of the 19th century.

This early period of peasant unrest had several significant features. First of all, it was mainly evident on the state domains. The state peasants were better prepared for litigation in the courts. They had a long tradition of privileges and royal charters; they were economically better off; and, finally, they were encouraged in their protest by the limited reforms on state domains in the early 19th century. "Only on these [state] estates," wrote Grynwaser, "did the peasants have a sense of law, an awareness of a power, and of norms and authorities that were higher than their master."<sup>1</sup> Above all, the peasants were aware that the leaseholder on a state domain received his right to the land from the crown.

A second feature of this early peasant protest was the emergence of local peasant leaders. Rupiński was the "gentry" peasant leader par excellence. The impoverished gentry formed the basis of the new Polish radical intelligentsia which formulated a more "radical" position on the social question after 1831.<sup>2</sup> Yet even at this early stage, the peasants found leaders in their own midst. In his study of the Zypliai case, Szymon Askenazy mentioned the names of many of these peasant leaders; the most interesting was Andrzej, or Andrzeius, Woyczaytis, an energetic peasant with a talent for organization, who commanded intense loyalty among his peers.

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<sup>1</sup> Grynwaser, Kwestia agrarna, p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 381 ff.

A third feature of the 1815-1830 period in the history of the peasant movement was the actual possibility of legal action. Before 1830, the Kingdom of Poland was, to a considerable degree, a genuinely constitutional state. Certain judicial checks on the executive power did operate: the Rupiński case shows many instances where the law restrained the executive branch of the government, if only temporarily. No such checks on the executive power operated in Russian Lithuania. In the long run, however, the executive power proved far stronger and more determined than the judicial forces which worked to preserve the constitutional rights of Rupiński and his peasant clients, especially after the accession of Tsar Nicholas I in 1825.

In the end, the legal system could not protect Rupiński and the Zypliai peasants--even at a time of "legality" within the Kingdom. The conservative landowners held too much power; more often than not, the law served as a weapon against the peasants rather than as protection for their rights. Like the villagers of Gražiškiai, most peasants knew only the value of practical freedom. The emancipation of 1807 and the Constitution of the Kingdom meant little as long as the system of compulsory labor, the essence of serfdom, existed.

## CHAPTER XI

### VILLAGE VS. MANOR: SOME CASES OF PEASANT PROTEST, 1827-1855

Peasant resistance to the system of obligations and land tenure, in fact, the opposition to everything that made up the exploitative manorial system, became more pronounced and militant after about 1830, and finally came to a head during the late fifties and early sixties. Naturally, agrarian unrest increased during the major political and social crises of the time: the anti-Russian uprising of 1830-1831; the Tsar's ukaz of 1846; the Galician massacres of the same year; the Russian emancipation of 1861; and, finally, the Polish-Lithuanian insurrection of 1863. Throughout this period, the peasants continued their legal and passive forms of protest typical of the early 19th century. The number of peasant court actions, petitions, and other legal documents increased markedly during the years after 1830. These documents are historically significant: they single out, and focus on, the points of conflict between landowner and peasant. The peasant petitions were often written by agitators like Rupiński; sometimes, they were penned by literate villagers. Even village schoolboys are known to have composed them.<sup>1</sup> In these petitions, and other legal documents, the peasants, as well as their opponents, spoke out. This chapter presents some cases of landowner-peasant conflict based on such documents.

#### The Peasants and the Issue of Labor Obligations.

The system of compulsory labor that still prevailed in the Kingdom of

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<sup>1</sup> Akielewicz, "Słówko," 114.

Poland after 1807, especially on the private estates, was the chief target of peasant resistance. Yet in many instances, especially before the forties, the peasants did not demand an abolition of corvée as such; rather, like the Gražiškiai peasants in the previous chapter, they tended to strike out at compulsory labor piecemeal. One way in which villagers battled the system was in opposing the secondary, or gratuitous obligations (for example, guard duty, transport work, etc.) which they felt were in excess of the inventories.

One of the most odious secondary obligations was guard duty in which the villagers were required to watch over estate properties. Guard duty at night was especially detested. A petition of June, 1827, written by the peasants of the Kalesninkai (Pol. Koleśniki) estate and signed by one Jakób Szmaydziun, typified the villagers' attitude towards secondary labor obligations. In this document, the Kalesninkai peasants complained to the Kalvarija district commissioner that the local gmina mayor was trying to force the villagers to perform guard duty on the manorial farm. To show that this type of duty was an extra-legal obligation, the peasants attached documents in which the said night duty was not mentioned. The peasants argued that they policed their own village as required by law, and insisted that the manor hire its own help for guard duty on the manorial farm. The petitioners cited a December 16, 1818 rescript of the Kingdom's Treasury Commission in which only peasants on state lands were obliged to do nocturnal guard duty on manorial land; since the Kalesninkai estate was a private one, the villagers claimed, they were not affected. The governing commission of Augustów province asked the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs for a decision in the matter;

the latter agency seemed to think that the guard duty in question applied to private estates as well, although no further documents are available to indicate how the Kalesninkai matter was finally disposed of.<sup>1</sup> At any rate, the petition of the Kalesninkai peasants emphasized a common peasant suspicion of the time: that many of the minor compulsory labor duties were actually illegal devices employed by the manor to avoid obligations that were really its own.

The litigation of the Balbieriškis Church peasants with their pastor, Józef Giecewicz, illustrates other kinds of additional irksome obligations that were in excess of the regular weekly corvée. According to the villagers here, the pastor had arbitrarily changed the former corvée of two "pedestrian" days weekly to labor involving draft animals. Another alleged "innovation" was the introduction of seasonal harvest work(Pol. gwałty). Perhaps, even more irritating for the villagers were the various personal services that Giecewicz demanded from his peasant parishioners. These included washing clothes for the entire rectory staff, delivering letters, chopping wood, and the like. Peasant Tomasz Makionis, who wrote the villagers' petition, also claimed that the pastor "used us for municipal services" and other work, "so that we have no rest on holidays."<sup>2</sup> In the petition, Makionis made clear his attitude to these allegedly new and irritating work requirements:

. . . As far as corvée labor is concerned, I am not overburdened, since I perform as many days as I am required to do; however,

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7303, Szmaydziun and Kolešniki [Kalesninkai] Peasants to Kalwaria District Commissioner, June 26, 1827; Augustów Provincial Commission to KRSW, July 27, 1827; KRSW Reply of August 8, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 16: Balwierzyszki, Makionis to Bishop Straszyński, September 6, 1843.

when the present administrator of the Balwierzyszki [Balbieriškis] Church exacts from us two days of seasonal obligations[gwałty] during [our] work time, and since this was not previously required of us, so I consider this an entirely new thing.<sup>1</sup>

Other peasants echoed Makionis regarding the personal services the pastor exacted from them.<sup>2</sup> In the Balbieriškis case, the peasants were less concerned with the "legality" of the obligations, that is, whether they were based on previous estate inventories, than with actual precedent: the disputed labor was "new" and, thus, broke the rhythm of the villagers' customary work routine. As always, peasants relied on past legal documents only if the latter supported their position.

The whole compulsory labor system was set up in such a way that the peasants were often forced to become shrewd diviners of which corvée was "genuine," or the traditional payment for the use of the holding, and which was "gratuitous." The villagers of Šventežeris parish in Sejny district, for example, petitioned against the labor exacted in addition to the normal corvée requirements, even the work involving the women. The peasants of Šventežeris demanded that they not be used for "jobs in excess of the corvée without remuneration."<sup>3</sup> This was the issue that inspired the peasants of Kunigiškiai village in Pajevonys parish to write their complaints to ecclesiastical authorities in 1844. These villagers asked that they be relieved of the travel obligation of 18 złoty which, they claimed, had not been practiced "since the oldest times,"

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 16: Balwierzyszki, Makionis Statement of January 3, 1844.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 16: Balwierzyszki, Peasant Depositions of January 3, 1844.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 525: Święto-Jeziory, J. Kościński to Bishop Straszynski, May 9, 1840.

as well as women's garden work, and the cleaning and shearing of sheep. According to the villagers, all this work was not credited "to anyone's account," and was exploited by the pastor as a "gratuity."<sup>1</sup>

Just as the peasants viewed the various minor, additional and gratuitous obligations as unjustified, so the landowners and leaseholders were equally convinced of their right to exact such obligations from their villagers. The pastor of Pajevonys parish, who doubled as the landowner of the Kunigiškiai villagers, explained that he exacted the extra work from the peasants in return for helping them pay their taxes, as well as for the traditional aid that the estate provided in the spring, the leanest time of year in the village. As for the travel obligation, the pastor cited the Pajevonys parish inventory of 1788 which, in fact, had listed the transport duty as a required obligation.<sup>2</sup> That the landowners considered the various minor gratuities as their absolute right is clear from an immodest 1824 document drawn up by landowner Fergliss of Panemunė (Marijampolė district), in which he boasted of giving away some of his prerogatives. Fergliss had, in his own words, "abandoned forever the annual trip to Königsberg [required] of every landed peasant, had relinquished the annual donation of twelve pounds of wool from each hut [i.e. household], had cancelled the donation of geese, chickens and eggs . . ." The landowner then proudly asked a rhetorical question: who had made so "many sacrifices for the welfare of his peasants?"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 379: Pojewon, Peasants' Petition of March 13, 1844.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 379: Pojewon, Pastor to Bishop Straszynski, April 12, 1844.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7047, Fergliss to KRSW, May 24, 1824.

During the first half of the 19th century, the issue of minor obligations, especially those known as "gratuitous," was mainly restricted to the private and Church estates. Gratuitous obligations were officially abolished on state domains in 1818. The Tsar's ukaz of 1846 abolished the gratuitous work requirements on private domains as well; however, some landowners simply redrafted their inventories and reincluded the gratuitous obligations under different titles. Yet it also seems that the ban was enforced to some degree; for example, in the case of the same Kunigiškiai peasants described above. In the summer of 1846, the pastor (and landowner) complained to the bishop that his villagers, "having heard about the introduction of money rents on other estates, are performing the seasonal obligations [gwałty] in a most inefficient manner."<sup>1</sup> The local government intervened in the dispute of the Kunigiškiai peasants with their pastor, announcing that the villagers were required to perform the regular corvée, but adding that all the "so-called unpaid labor [darmochy] and compulsory obligations not based on any legal title are completely abolished" by the will of the Tsar. Specifically, the villagers were relieved from spreading fertilizer on the parish farm, garden work for the rectory, and the shearing of manorial sheep. These obligations, the government explained, were "extraordinary," and had been included in the seasonal work requirement erroneously. The peasants, who had hoped for more concessions in the light of the 1846 decree, were dissatisfied and "despite persuasions, and the most understandable translation [of the government decree], they refused their signatures." Only the pastor signed the government's announcement, while registering his

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 379: Pojewoń, Pastor to Bishop Straszyński, August 9, 1846.

protest against the abolition of the three obligations the government had listed as "gratuitous."<sup>1</sup>

The concern of many peasants with the minor, additional labor obligations does not mean that they accepted the regular compulsory labor as a permanent feature of the agrarian scene. It is simply that during the relatively "quiet" years before the late fifties, a gradual, piecemeal approach against compulsory labor seemed safer to many villagers. This "gradualist" mode of peasant resistance has, perhaps, received less attention from historians than the more spectacular cases of peasant unrest.

In any case, the peasant petitions of the 1831-1855 period indicate that, on the whole, the villagers protested the form of their rents rather than the rents themselves. During the forties, peasant petitions became noticeably more universal in their demands: there were now calls for the commutation of all labor duties to money payments. These petitions revealed the villagers' true feelings toward corvée; as one landowner from Trans-Niemen Lithuania observed: "[the peasant] is willing and well-disposed toward money rents, [but] he hates corvée and performs it only in the most sluggish manner."<sup>2</sup>

Although the opposition to compulsory labor grew noticeably during the thirties and forties, many cases of peasant resistance to corvée originated years before. For example, the peasants of the Beržniki Church estate in Sejny district carried on a bitter quarrel with their landlord,

<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 379: Pojewon, Statement of Mayor Szodke, August 1, 1846.

<sup>2</sup> Goltz, "Kilka słów," 284.

the pastor of the local church, ever since the twenties. A local Church official complained then that the villagers had been "unruly and disobedient towards the pastor of Berżniki for a long time." In 1828 the Augustów provincial committee had found it necessary to "order them[i.e. the peasants] to be obedient and to perform their obligations . . . otherwise, they would be handed over to the criminal courts." This warning does not seem to have helped, for in the following years, the pastor was forced to begin court proceedings against the villagers on account of their "insubordination and irregular performance of obligations." In 1838, according to Church records, "this resistance of theirs[i.e. the peasants] brought upon them serious punishment[egzekucja]."<sup>1</sup>

Naturally, the Berżniki peasants' view of things was quite different. In 1828 they accused the pastor, one Father Wasilewski, of striking villagers who had allegedly wasted some grain and had not carried out assigned work.<sup>2</sup> In 1838, the year of the reported egzekucja, the peasant Szymon Gierwiet, writing in the name of all the villagers of Berżniki, complained to the bishop that in the pastor "we have not a father, but a merciless landowner[pan]." The peasants charged that they were required to perform excessive labor obligations; also, they maintained that the pastor was taking away land assigned to the peasant holdings. In their 1838 petition, the villagers assumed a somewhat unusually militant attitude toward the Church authorities:

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 28: Berżniki, Dean Choiński to Bishop Straszyński, November 19, 1838, k. 81-82. An egzekucja was a physical or financial punishment meted out to an entire community, usually by armed force. It is unclear what kind of egzekucja, whether fines or beatings, occurred at Berżniki in 1838.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 28: Berżniki, Consistory of Augustów Diocese to Bishop, November 6, 1828, k. 56.

. . . Since we are tormented like this, it will, perhaps, become necessary to leave our houses which were built by us and our ancestors at their own expense; especially, since [the landowner] himself expels us from our holdings, so that we don't know whether we are supposed to farm or not. If we leave the land, who will compensate us for our buildings?

From available documents, it seems that the Church peasants of Berżniki were temporarily beaten into submission by the official reprisals (or egzekucja) of 1838. In a later statement of that year, they informed the authorities that they wished to perform all of their obligations "completely" and begged that "further investigation be discontinued," adding that they had begun their "mutiny" as a result of agitation by "ignorant" people.<sup>2</sup>

Such obviously insincere recantations were not unusual in contemporary documents; in many cases, the issues which drove the villagers to their various "mutinies" would reappear after a time of quiescence. So it was in the Berżniki case. Less than two years after their apparent submission, the peasants renewed their resistance. In April of 1840, Wincent Gierwał from Zaruby village led the peasants in a protest against the alleged beating of two villagers by the estate manager.<sup>3</sup> In December of the same year, the villagers protested, for the first time, against compulsory labor in general, saying it was a "new" form of exploitation and complaining that the distance of the parish farm's fields from the village made the work very difficult. In their December petition, the peasants

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 28: Berżniki, Szymon Gierwiet and Peasants to Bishop Straszyński, August 19, 1838, k. 79-80.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 28: Berżniki, Chojński Deposition, November 18, 1838, k. 83-84.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 28: Berżniki, Gierwał, Jakubowski and Milewski to Bishop Straszyński, April 7, 1840, k. 103 ff.

declared their preference for a change of all obligations to a money rent for their holdings.<sup>1</sup> Only two days after this petition, the villagers "spiced up" their complaints when they accused the pastor of drunken behavior, during which he and his assistants allegedly inflicted physical abuse on the peasants "behind closed doors."<sup>2</sup>

Encouraged by the introduction of money rents on state lands and intimations of agrarian reform during the early 1840s, the private and Church peasants became more militant. They began agitating openly for the abolition of corvée. The Berżniki peasants, for example, now maintained that the Church's corvée was arbitrary and should be done away with "because such [labor] is not allowed by the government." When the pastor of Berżniki refused to allow a changeover to money rents, the villagers informed their bishop that "they were forced . . . to present a request for the change of these [corvée] obligations to a money payment directly to the government." Furthermore, the peasants added that the changeover to money rents would be "on the basis of conditions outlined [by the government]."<sup>3</sup>

The Church (like many other landowners), fearing an immediate loss of income, resisted rent reform on its estates. The peasants, on the other hand, remained adamant on the subject of rent reform, especially after 1846, because as one Church official noted, "they see a betterment of

<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 28: Berżniki, Gierwał and Villagers to Bishop Straszyński, December 7, 1840, k. 93-94.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 28: Berżniki, The Villagers of Świack and Zaruby to Bishop Straszyński, December 9, 1840, k. 89-90.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 28: Berżniki, Peasants to Bishop Straszyński, March 5, 1843, k. 153 and ff.

their situation [as possible] only through this means." During the fifties, a kind of standoff prevailed in Beržniki that was typical of many areas in southwestern Lithuania. Peasants refused the required labor obligations, but the landowners avoided using force to exact the full measure of corvée (especially during bad harvests), fearing the kinds of agrarian disturbances that were reportedly becoming increasingly widespread.<sup>1</sup> This was the situation on many estates until the agrarian revolts and reforms of the early sixties.

One interesting phenomenon that is reflected in the archives of the Church estates is the peasants' hope that the government would help them in the struggle against the landowners. The peasants of the August Pusch estate in Marijampolė district, while eager for the abolition of corvée, looked to the government to execute reform--the peasants stubbornly refused to accept rent reform directly from the private owner.<sup>2</sup> In 1851, a government official was finally called in to help regulate the change-over to money rents and draw up rules protecting the peasants. For example, there were two conditions which stipulated that "the peasants' obligations should be in just proportion to the value of the property assigned to them and. . . that no obligations should have the title of gratuitous or forced hire [which were] abolished by the Administrative Council on November 14, 1846."<sup>3</sup>

Sometimes, the peasants' faith in the government was not entirely

<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 28: Beržniki, Pastor of Olwita[Alvitās] to Consistory of Augustów Diocese, March 11, 1851, k. 193-194.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 380: Pokoynie, Pastor Bartoszewicz to Consistory of Augustów Diocese, November 15, 1851.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 380: Pokoynie, Rescript of the Provincial Government of Augustów(copy), August 20, 1851.

misplaced. The peasants of Straigiai (Pol. Dębowka) village, for example, clashed over the obligations issue with the pastor of Kalvarijskij parish. In 1847 the peasants turned directly to the provincial government, complaining of excessive money and labor duties and requesting that their obligations be commuted to a single money rent. The pastor had consistently refused the villagers' requests for rent reform. In this case, the government stepped in to try to alleviate the peasants' plight. Provincial authorities suggested to the Church that the introduction of money rents "under suitable conditions . . . would be the surest means of bettering the situation [of the peasants]" and would actually be to the advantage of the local church. Since the Church lands were intermingled with state domains, the government urged a speedy reform; at the very least, the authorities demanded that the peasant holdings be reorganized and consolidated.<sup>1</sup>

The government interfered most willingly in those cases where truly excessive obligations had placed the peasants in a rebellious mood. The obligations of the Straigiai villagers were, according to the parish inventory, excessive by any contemporary standard: the ten landed peasants each performed two days of draft corvée weekly and paid an annual money rent of 36 złoty--all this for a mere fourth of a włoka (about seven morgi) of land.<sup>2</sup> It was small wonder that the local pastor complained how his peasants were "impudent, disobedient and practically rebellious,"

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 184: Kalwaria, Government of Augustów Province to Administrator of Augustów Diocese, February 12, 1849.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 184: Kalwaria, Kalwaria [Kalvarijskij] Parish Inventory of April 1, 1848.

and that he could not deal with such "demoralized" people!<sup>1</sup>

The fear on the part of the Church that further land consolidation and rent reform would lead to an encroachment on Church property was the main reason for opposing any reform; a stubborn attachment to corvée was symptomatic of the poorer landowners and smaller estates which did not have the capital to invest in hired labor. This condition contributed to making compulsory labor the most bitter economic issue dividing the village and manor during the first half of the 19th century. Many landowners felt they could not afford the changeover to a money renting system of tenure; the villagers, on the other hand, saw money rents as the only way leading toward a degree of economic independence. Landowners tended to view corvée and money renting as two forms of the same thing: the feudal rent for the right to hold land. However, peasants saw the two forms of tenure as qualitatively different: they considered cash rent a privilege, an achievement of status that should not be changed, an attainment of "freedom." When the pastor of Balbieriškis parish tried to reintroduce corvée on the local parish farm, peasant Jakób Czebulowicz replied that he considered this "as the greatest wrong to me;" his family had come from a long line of money renters, or as he put it, "since the time of my great-grandfather, grandfather and father."<sup>2</sup>

As far as the peasants were concerned, the example of rent reform on the state domains was proof that money renting would be introduced as a general practice for all classes of villagers. In 1849 the peasants of

<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 184: Kalwaria, Father Miszkiel to Administrator of Augustów Diocese, April 19, 1850.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 16: Balwierzyszki, Czebulowicz to Bishop Straszyński, November 26, 1844.

Raudonikiai village on the Udrija parish estate demanded the introduction of money rents "because such is the will of the exalted government."<sup>1</sup> The influence of the state peasants' example, and the villagers' belief in an imminent reform are both reflected in the Raudonikiai villagers' petition to their bishop written on July 12, 1843:

**Petition for the Introduction of Money Rents by the Peasants of the Endowed Village of Raudoniki[Raudonikiai] Belonging to the Udria[Udrija] Rectory.**

**To the Honorable Bishop of Augustów Diocese:**

The undersigned are people gifted with sight, hearing and speech who see, hear and speak with other persons; from that, [they] are convinced that the kindness of the Most Gracious Monarch has turned its gaze upon us, humble villagers. We wish to better our situation and extricate ourselves from this miserable slavery which oppresses us completely through the introduction of money rents; of [such reform] there are already clear examples in many gmina's, so that some [peasants] are already money renters, while others are in the process of changing over to money rents. Now although we are not called state peasants, we are already equal to the state peasants in the eyes of God and Sovereign. We live in the endowed Church village called Raudoniki, which belongs to the parish of Udrija, and have as our lord the Honorable Father Stanisław Pietrzeniakowski against whom, from our side, we can say nothing bad. He lives off the land without any money allowance; he is unable to commute the corvée required of us since, if we don't work the fields, what would he live on, and how would he pay the treasury taxes?

The labor that we perform for him is detrimental to us in many ways. For the corvée, we must go a whole mila[about eight kilometers] and, in addition, during the fall and spring, by the worst road. It is difficult for us to get farmhands for such distant corvée, and if we do get them, they are no good for us or our lord. We have asked our lord to introduce money rents, but he told us that this [matter] does not depend on him. For this reason, we are turning to the Honorable Bishop with a most humble request: that he would deign to order our lord to make us money renters . . . We most eagerly promise to meticulously pay the appointed money rent, taking responsibility [in this] for each other [collectively].

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 563: Udrija, Raudoniki Peasants to the Administrator of Augustów Diocese, September 27, 1849.

We are waiting at our Shepherd's threshold for [your] kindest resolution [of this matter].

In the name of Wincenty Kowalewski, Franciszek Szywak, Jerzy Kowalewski, Roman Piotrowski, Andrzej Pauka, Jakub Kowalewski, Jerzy Makowski, Maciej Kowalewski, Piotr Panganis, and by his own [signature], Adam Marciulinas.<sup>1</sup>

The Raudonikiai petition reflected most of the basic elements of peasant petition writing: the hatred of corvée; the somewhat insincerely submissive tone toward authority; the belief in the "higher government" and the Tsar as friends of the peasant, as well as emulation of the state peasants and the striving for their status. The only unusual note in the Raudonikiai letter is the absence of hostility to the lord. On the whole, despite the peasants' persistence and patience, such petitions were only partially effective. Seven years after the above appeal, the villagers of Raudonikiai were still corresponding with their bishop over the corvée problem. In 1850 they wrote that they "had not received to this time any resolution stemming from our first petition," and complained that such inaction caused them needless expense on account of continuous petition writing.<sup>2</sup> In the early 1850s, the pastor of Udrija parish tried to alleviate matters by consolidating the scattered parish farm lands, which were so far from the village and rectory. However, the situation of the parish estate deteriorated and in 1854, after a poor harvest, the pastor requested permission to lease the Church lands,<sup>3</sup> exemplifying the

<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 563: Udria, Peasants to Bishop Straszynski, July 12, 1843.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 563: Udria, Peasants to the Administrator of Augustów Diocese, June 15, 1850.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 563: Udria, Pastor of Udria to Administrator of Augustów Diocese, May 2, 1854.

problems that faced smaller estates in those difficult years.

By the early forties, many landowners became aware that a major government initiative on the peasant problem was in process. This awareness sometimes affected the landowners' attitudes toward the peasant petitions. Thus, when the peasants of the Pajevonys parish estate pointed out the reforms on the state and donated lands to support their own demands for rent reform, the local clergy recommended that it "would be better, if they[the peasants] would leave the endowed land completely,"<sup>1</sup> or, in other words, be evicted, a practice some private landowners engaged in on the eve of the Tsar's 1846 ukaz forbidding the alienation of peasant holdings. However, the bishop disagreed with the idea of expelling the peasants and replacing them with hired labor, explaining: "I hear that there will be some kind of decree, so that even the landowners will be unable to expel the peasants from the land." Instead, the bishop suggested to the pastor of Pajevonys that the latter draw up plans for regulating the peasants' obligations.<sup>2</sup>

It is generally assumed that, in anticipation of the 1846 decree forbidding peasant evictions, many landed villagers were forcibly driven off the land. While this was true in many areas of the Kingdom, it was less so in Augustów province which, in fact, had the lowest number of peasant evictions in Poland both before and after 1846;<sup>3</sup> no doubt, this

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 379: Pojewoń, Father Sakowicz to Bishop Straszyński, April 12, 1844.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 379: Pojewoń, Bishop Straszyński to Father Sakowicz, May 8, 1844.

<sup>3</sup> V. N. Kondrat'eva, "K voprosu o polozhenii pol'skikh krest'ian nakanune i vo vremia vosstaniia 1863 g.," in Uchenye zapiski Instituta Slaviano-vedenia, III(1951), 410.

was due in large part to the predominance of state domains in this region. Also, some landowners may have been restrained because of uncertainty about the approaching reform, perhaps assuming (correctly, as it turned out) that its provisions would be retroactive. In any case, the problem of corvée and the other agrarian obligations was not an isolated one. It was closely related to the question of land tenure, the problem of whether the villager had a right to leave his holding, and the persistence of certain abuses, such as physical punishment, that were all part of the compulsory labor system.

#### Peasants, Landowners and the Problem of Land Tenure.

The extreme comminution and confusion prevalent in 19th century land tenure hindered rent reform on many estates, especially the private ones. In 1844 the pastor of Pajevonys wrote his bishop that the peasants of Kunigiškiai village had "land, pasture and meadows in common with the pastor, and one section [of land] on the territory of the Pajevonys manorial farm." If the villagers were to become money renters, the pastor argued, their lands would have to be separated from those of the parish farm. In such an eventuality, the peasants' strips of farmland would become so narrow, that they would be unable to drive their animals into the fields; at least such was the opinion of the pastor. Furthermore, in Kunigiškiai, taxes were paid in common, so that these would also have to be reapportioned individually, a long and complex process. Given these problems, the local pastor did not believe that his parishioners were ready for the responsibilities that money renting entailed, especially since the peasants' "property and wealth are very insignificant, primarily

because of remissness and drunkenness."<sup>1</sup>

Theoretically, of course, neither land consolidation, tax redistribution, nor economic prosperity, were required for the introduction of money rents into a village. Practically, however, these things were related: after all, money renting implied a good deal of economic independence for the landed peasants who had to organize their holdings for production. Consolidated holdings, good access to pasture, and a degree of industriousness were required to produce a prosperous money renting village household.

Some peasants were aware of the advantages of land consolidation. For example, the villagers of August Pusch's private estate in Pakuony parish held their lands scattered among Church and manorial farm plots (see p. 96 above). During the forties, landowner Pusch proposed rent reform and land consolidation for this comminuted area. At least three peasants of the estate supported consolidation, maintaining that "it has been our desire to escape comminution[Pol. szachownica] of the manorial and endowed Church lands for a long time." Yet the peasants' desire for land consolidation was qualified by caution and fear lest the process be turned to their disadvantage. The same three villagers were quick to add that land consolidation would "help our situation only if the present strips of manorial and endowed [Church] land . . . which have the greatest number of meadows," as well as the manorial gardens in the village itself, were exchanged for the land that had been worked by the peasants: the villagers were determined not to be left with inferior farmland after

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. L., Ser. A, 379: Pojewoń, Father Sakowicz to Bishop Straszyński, April 12, 1844.

the consolidation.<sup>1</sup> The fears of the peasants were not unfounded; in fact, landowners sometimes tried to exchange estate lands for peasant holdings to the benefit of the manor and the detriment of the villagers.

This peasant mistrust of reform and change in the tenure patterns was not only a result of the sporadic evictions of landed peasants, as well as the encroachments of the manor on village holdings during the first half of the 19th century; it was also part of the historical suspicion with which the villager viewed the manor and its intentions. As early as the mid-twenties, we find cases where peasants tried to protect their holdings against disadvantageous land consolidation reform. In 1825 the Church peasants of Lepiškiai village in Liškiava parish wrote their bishop, concerned that a proposed consolidation scheme on the Church estate here would result in their receiving land of inferior quality vis-a-vis the estate. The pastor had assured the government that the change in land holding patterns was for the peasants' own benefit,<sup>2</sup> but the landed villagers complained to the bishop that the impatient priest "has sown our fertilized fields for himself, has taken away the meadows, and ordered us: 'go wherever you wish!'" The peasants asked the bishop: "Where shall we go from our time-honored farmsteads, and our houses built by our parents at their own expense?" The villagers begged the bishop to intercede for them and save their holdings.<sup>3</sup> How the peasants of Lepiškiai

<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 380: Pokoynie, Depositions of August Pusch, Piotr Laurynaytis, Karol Brzostowski and Michal Podziunas, August 3, 1847.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 241A: Liszkiów, Pastor Zienkowski to Provincial Commission of Augustów Province, November 15, 1825.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 241A: Liszkiów, Ewa Sawelianisowa and Others to Bishop, April 23, 1826.

fared is unknown to us, but their case illustrates the insecurity of many village holdings, especially those on private and Church domains.

Some peasants lived on holdings where the basis of tenure was particularly confused. This was the case with peasants who chose to settle on neglected, unused, or so-called "empty" lands. Antoni Wilkianis was one peasant from Balbieriškis parish who held land that had once been vacant, but which had been built up by his predecessors. For some time, it seems that Wilkianis lived on this land holding in peace, since as he himself explained: "There appeared not a single escapee on these fields, no priest has held them for many years; and [no one] even thought about taking away [my] włóka." In 1837, however, a priest from Gudeliai allegedly tried to take away Wilkianis' holding and use it himself. The peasant felt that the land was his. "This włóka," he wrote the bishop, "isn't my property, but neither can it be allotted to the priest; it is barely enough [to provide] a miserable hunk of bread through the bloody sweat of a farmer."<sup>1</sup> Wilkianis demanded, and eventually received, cash compensation for the buildings and improvements on the land, but he was forced to quit the holding.<sup>2</sup> Wilkianis' attitude toward the land he tilled was typical of many peasants before the middle of the 19th century: although the villagers didn't always regard their holdings as "property" in the strict sense, they believed that they had an inherent right to the use of the land, as well as a fair share of its fruits.

Sometimes, peasants were caught up in land disputes between neighboring

<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 16: Balwierzyszki, Antoni Wilkianis to Bishop Straszyński, December 14, 1837.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 16: Balwierzyszki, Wilkianis and Świętochowski Agreement, December 30, 1840.

estates. A dispute between the Pajevonys parish and the neighboring donated estate in 1849 is illustrative. The lands of the two estates were thoroughly intermixed with each other; this made it easy for the peasants of the donated estate to encroach on the Church domain. The separation and consolidation of the holdings of both estates seemed the logical solution to prevent land disputes; however, the local parish pastor opposed consolidation of the donated estate because the exclusion of the scattered land strips taken over by the donated peasants would further diminish the already small Church domain.<sup>1</sup> As with rent reform, land consolidation was often most difficult for the small estates.

In other cases, however, the Church favored quick land consolidation, fearing that prolonged litigation over land tenure would endanger parish property. For example, the holdings of Pakuonis parish were scattered in narrow strips between peasant holdings of the August Pusch estate (see p. 96 above); during the forties, the pastor of Pakuonis and landowner Pusch negotiated an agreement consolidating the parish property into a single allotment near the rectory. The Pusch peasants, in their turn, were to take over the former Church strips and consolidate their own holdings. Landowner Pusch then convinced some of his villagers of the advantages of land consolidation and crop rotation (that was possible on unified holdings). Even now, however, some villagers remained suspicious. The pastor of Pakuonis warned the bishop that the changes in land tenure would have to be done quickly or the peasants would change their minds, "and not allow themselves to be persuaded to exchange lands," as provided

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 379: Pojewon, Father Sakowicz to Kingdom's Treasury Commission, August 13, 1849; also Father Sakowicz to Bishop, August 21, 1849. A similar case is in A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 314: Łozdzieje, Depositions of Pilwelis and Kamiński, November 2, 1851 and November 10, 1851.

for in the agreement with Pusch.<sup>1</sup> In this case, however, the peasants succeeded in forestalling an overly quick consolidation effort and in protecting their interests. The rent and consolidation agreement concluded between Pusch and his peasants in 1851, and supervised by the government, stipulated that "during the separation of peasant lands, their holdings were not to be worse than those hitherto existing in regard to area and quality . . . that the peasants be assured of the use of pasture in proportion to their holdings' needs, as existed at the moment of the pronouncement of the highest ukaz of May 26, 1846." Finally, it was also agreed that the villagers could not be evicted from their holdings.<sup>2</sup>

The problem of servitudes, that is, the rights of the peasant household to forests and pasture, was still another issue which complicated the whole question of peasant obligations and land tenure. Peasants considered the economically important servitude rights almost as crucial as the right to the holding itself. For example, the peasants of Šilgaliai village in Marijampolė district held traditional rights to the use of a nearby woodland; when the government took the woods away from the villagers in 1840 and turned them over to a local landowner, the peasants retaliated by cutting down the landowner's grassland, rendering it useless. As a result of such "mutiny," soldiers were called out to the village but, in the end, the authorities returned the woodland to the peasants. However, the villagers were suitably punished: their holdings were forcibly consolidated into individual farms.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 380: Pokoynie, Father Bartoszewicz to Bishop Straszynski, February 20, 1847.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 380: Pokoynie, Rescript of the Provincial Government of Augustów, August 20, 1851 (copy).

<sup>3</sup> Totoraitis, Sūduvos-Suvalkijos, pp. 686-687.

The whole issue of rent reform and land consolidation was an extremely complex and stubborn problem, and one that threatened the security of some estates, as well as the peasants. The situation of the Church lands in the first half of the 19th century was an extreme example of what many years of comminution and confusion in land tenure had brought about, but the problems of the Church lands were shared by other estates, especially the smaller ones. As peasant holdings, and even individual strips of land, became thoroughly intermingled with Church property (and, in effect, encroached upon it), Church estates realized that rent reform and land consolidation would mean accepting the de facto loss of such comminuted lands.<sup>1</sup> The confusion over the status of some ecclesiastical lands became so great by the mid-fifties that, despite attempts to inventorize Church land holdings, the Sejny-Augustów diocese had to admit that "from the reports that have been filed, it is impossible to determine whether such [Church] villages make up separate property, or are connected to other estates."<sup>2</sup> When the Church refused rent reform to protect its property, it was the peasant who paid the price in continuing corvée duties, a price he was less and less willing to pay as time went on.

Many peasants, especially those not on state domains, were caught in a vise: they wanted rent reform and a way out of land comminution, yet they saw that sham reforms could leave them worse off than before. Almost invariably, the peasants mistrusted the manor when it undertook to carry out reforms. There is also evidence that tenure reform, such as land con-

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., CWW-213, Diocesan Administrator Butkiewicz to KRSW, February 22, 1856, k. 43-44.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., CWW-213, Diocesan Administrator Butkiewicz to KRSW, October 11, 1856, k. 81.

solidation, caused considerable friction among the peasantry itself. During the mid-sixties, and after the 1864 reform, the smallholders of Marijampolė district protested bitterly over "colonization," a kind of extreme land consolidation in which villages were broken up, and new, individual homesteads established(somewhat in the American style); in such cases, the smallholders and garden peasants feared that they would be left without land. In fact, they were sometimes forced to accept disadvantageous consolidation terms from the more powerful and wealthier landed peasantry.<sup>1</sup> There is little evidence of this "class struggle" during the pre-1864 period, although a similar situation may well have existed then. Land consolidation and separation obviously ran the risk of concentrating land of differing quality, thus creating a source of conflict among the landholders. Some peasants preferred land fragmentation, despite its obvious economic disadvantages, as more equitable, because, in some villages, the households shared both fertile and poorer lands relatively equally.

Before 1864, the process of land consolidation was more rapid in the Lithuanian districts of the Kingdom than in any other part of Poland, particularly among the wealthier peasantry, for example, in the western region of Marijampolė district; but it was precisely here that the smallholders protested loudly at unfair consolidation practices practiced by the richer villagers.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the introduction of money rents and land tenure "reform," while theoretically providing conditions for the betterment of the peasants' economic situation, in fact, often presented them

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<sup>1</sup> Groniowski, "Przymusowe scalanie," 230-231.

<sup>2</sup> Groniowski, "Przymusowe scalanie," 214-215, 219.

with unattractive alternatives, such as the loss of good land. This partly explains a paradox in the peasants' behavior: while the peasants were anxious for rent and land reform, they often opposed and mistrusted what they considered sham attempts at reform.

While many peasants, especially those on the private estates, fought tenaciously for the integrity of their holdings, other peasants struggled for the freedom of resettlement and transfer. In fact, these latter villagers sought to be free of the land they held. One of the oldest and most common forms of peasant resistance to the excessive demands of the corvée system, and such intolerable burdens as the military draft, was escape abroad(see pp. 260-261 above). However, peasant escapes did not always involve an exodus across international borders, or to more distant areas in the hope of "disappearing." In the first half of the 19th century, there were cases of villagers who simply picked up their households, moved, and then resettled in nearby areas, clearly realizing that their exit would be discovered and attempts made for their return.

Although peasants were legally free since 1807, the decree of January 8, 1810, required a transfer permit from the gmina mayor if any villager wished to leave his holding and resettle elsewhere. Since 1818, when landowners were officially made gmina mayors, this permission for resettlement depended, in practice, on the whim of the landowner or leaseholder of an estate. Yet despite the regulation requiring transfer permits, many peasants left their holdings during the late thirties and early forties. Some of these villagers, especially the smallholders and garden peasants, lost their meager holdings and failed to find new ones. This

phenomenon caused considerable concern among contemporaries about the increasing percentage of landless villagers, as well as the resulting "rootlessness" and "vagrancy" that characterized much of rural life at this time.

However, more interesting from the point of view of the landed peasants, was the unauthorized transfer and resettlement of peasant households which sought to escape excessive obligations and/or a deteriorating economic situation. Such cases reflected not only the issue of "freedom from the land," and "freedom of movement," but also illuminated other aspects of contemporary rural life: the system of peasant obligations; the issue of servitudes; physical punishment; the shortage of agrarian labor on some estates; and the competition between landowners and leaseholders for sources of labor.

It was not unusual for landowners to employ the labor not only of the "legitimate" landless rural populace, but to utilize as well what can be termed the "illegal population:" that is, persons unregistered in a gmina and without proper identification. Although such employment was illegal, the desperation of the indigent and rootless, as well as the light penalties for their use on the estates, made the proposition attractive.

While the reservoir of rootless villagers was a tempting source of labor for the manorial farm, the unauthorized settling of runaway landed peasants was quite a different matter; usually, such peasants could be traced with relative ease, especially if they stayed within the same province. The receiving landowner then stood to lose his "investment" in his new settler if the latter were returned. From the peasant's point of view, the risks were even greater: should he be returned, a vengeful

landowner was in a position to harass and punish him. Yet peasants did, on many occasions, leave their holdings and resettle on nearby estates, taking the obvious risks. What were their motives, and how did they hope to avoid the retribution their defiant act entailed?

The case of one Jan Waboł, a peasant from Sejny district, throws some light on the motivations of runaway landed villagers. During the 1830s, Waboł lived and worked on the estate of a certain Kruszewski, to whom he was bound by a renewable three-year corvée contract in return for his holding. In an 1838 petition drawn up by his lawyer, Waboł testified that he escaped from his village because Kruszewski's labor obligations were so burdensome as to make it impossible for the peasant to find time to work on his own holding. It was to save his family "from ruin," Waboł explained, that he transferred to the nearby Avižieniai(Pol. Awizańce) estate of Jan Bienkiewicz, another landowner from whom he received a włoka (30 morgi) of land. Waboł was aware that he lacked the necessary transfer permit that was required from the gmina mayor, that is, Kruszewski himself. Despite this, the peasant argued that his transfer was not illegal. First of all, Waboł claimed that not only had he fulfilled all the required labor obligations in his contract to Kruszewski, but that the landowner actually owed him compensation "for contributions [daniny] and other obligations exacted in excess of those required."

Of course, the protest against excessive corvée was a common feature of the villagers' litigation against the landowners. Waboł's petition, however, contained some new elements. In his letter to the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs, he referred to the "natural rights" of each man to defend his household, pointed out that Kruszewski's economic

oppression was, in effect, making him a slave, and maintained that Kruszewski's refusal to grant him a transfer permit was inconsistent with the law of December 21, 1807.<sup>1</sup> This last piece of legislation did, in fact, state that, although a peasant leaving his holding must give an accounting to the landlord, the latter had no right to restrain the villager from leaving the estate if such an accounting was complete.<sup>2</sup> In yet another appeal to the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs, Waboł complained that his proceedings against Kruszewski would not receive a fair hearing since a relative of the landowner was in charge of reviewing the case.<sup>3</sup>

Peasant Waboł's extraordinary legal and moral perceptions were probably inspired by his new landowner Bienkiewicz. This bizarre "alliance" of landowner and peasant was, naturally, based on the desire of both to obstruct the return of the Waboł household to the Kruszewski estate. Bienkiewicz's petitions and efforts on behalf of Waboł highlighted the complexities and conflicts surrounding the unauthorized transfer issue. First of all, Bienkiewicz outlined the legal reasons why his new settler should be allowed to stay on the estate. He emphasized that Waboł now had a contract with him and was, therefore, bound to his new lord. Furthermore, Bienkiewicz maintained that the peasant owed nothing to his former master so that there was no point in forcing Waboł's return to Kruszewski. Previous law, Bienkiewicz pointed out, forbade gmina mayors to hinder

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Jan Waboł to KRSW, August 21, 1838, k. 10-15.

<sup>2</sup> Kieniewicz, Emancipation, Appendix B, p. 248. Of course, this was superseded by the 1810 decree mentioned above.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6665, Jan Waboł to KRSW, June 30, 1838.

a villager's transfer if the latter "left during the customary time in April . . . abandoned the buildings and area in good condition, [had] the fields sown . . . [and] did not owe taxes to the state . . . or obligations to the manor."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to pointing out Kruszewski's legal transgressions, Bienkiewicz insinuated that the rival landowner was unfair and unreasonable in the local competition for peasant labor; Kruszewski, he claimed, had received Bienkiewicz's own runaway peasants who had not fulfilled their obligations. Why should some landowners be permitted to retain such new settlers, he asked, while others were not? In fact, it turned out that previously Kruszewski had used much the same legal arguments as Bienkiewicz in retaining new settlers on his own land!<sup>2</sup>

The encroachment of feuding estates on each other's peasant "labor pool" actually provided the runaway villager with some help in avoiding a forcible return to his old landlord. Unfortunately for Waboł, this help wasn't enough. In July, 1838, Bienkiewicz and Waboł managed to obtain a hearing before the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs. The Commission's legal department felt that Waboł should remain on his new holding on Bienkiewicz's estate, especially, since this peasant was not, as they put it, a "simple vagrant." However, the department also recommended that Waboł be punished for his unauthorized transfer, and landowner Bienkiewicz be made to pay all the administrative costs incurred during the affair. In addition, Bienkiewicz was to be rebuked, and then

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Bienkiewicz Deposition of May 3, 1838, k. 28; Bienkiewicz to KRSW, September 21, 1838, k. 21-23.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Bienkiewicz to Sejny District Commissioner, May 9, 1838, k. 29-30; Kruszewski to Bienkiewicz(copy), January 6, 1835, k. 31.

fined for retaining an illegal settler. Most important from Waboł's point of view, the Commission's legal department recommended that Kruszewski, the peasant's former landlord, now issue him a transfer permit. The provincial authorities, however, pressured the Commission for Internal Affairs not to make a decision that would hurt the economic interests of the landowners and justify the peasants' illegal transfers.<sup>1</sup> When the final say in the Waboł case was left up to the government of Augustów province, the authorities sided with Kruszewski, citing a desire that the province's estates not face economic ruin on account of runaway peasants. The provincial government decreed that Waboł "had abandoned his holding in a secretive manner" and had left "the property of the landowner in a bad state." As far as Bienkiewicz was concerned, the local authorities rebuked him for "threatening the social order" by his retention of a runaway villager. When Bienkiewicz failed to relinquish Waboł voluntarily, the district commissioner ordered the villager's forcible return to Kruszewski's estate. Bienkiewicz was punished with a fine and eventually relieved of his duties as gmina mayor.<sup>2</sup> As in the Rupiński case(see Chapter X above), the provincial government proved more conservative than the Kingdom's judicial authorities, reflecting more closely the interests of local landowners.

Unauthorized peasant transfers sometimes came in "waves" from estates where village-manor relations had seriously deteriorated. Jan Waboł's

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6665, Government of Augustów Province to KRSW(with Legal Department Opinion attached), August 1, 1838.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Sejny District Commissioner to Bienkiewicz, July 11, 1838, k. 24; Government of Augustów Province to KRSW, October 31, 1838, k. 19-20.

problems with the Kruszewski manor at Łosewicze (Sejny district) were typical of this estate. In fact, Kruszewski experienced so many difficulties with his villagers that in 1837 the Sejny district commissioner appointed a local official from a nearby gmina, one Wincent Gałdziewicz, to investigate the situation on the estate. The commissioner described the situation as intolerable ever since "the violent escape of [peasant] Mizer and other villagers, with the help of peasants from the Wiesieje [Lith. Veisiejai] estate."<sup>1</sup> Gałdziewicz began investigating the matter in 1838, and after interrogating numerous villagers and Kruszewski himself, amassed a considerable amount of material on the case. The materials Gałdziewicz collected were rather grandiosely entitled Documents in the Case Against the Honorable Kruszewski, Landowner of Łosewicze Estate, Accused of Oppressing the Peasants. The plaintiffs in this investigation were the peasants themselves.

The Case Against the Honorable Kruszewski provides some evidence of unauthorized mass peasant transfers during the thirties, and gives us some indication of how villagers allegedly aided each other in such illegal migrations. During the Gałdziewicz investigation, Kruszewski blamed much of his misfortune on the landowner and peasants of the nearby Veisiejai (Pol. Wiesieje) estate who, he claimed, had urged his own villagers to leave the Łosewicze estate and come over to them. Kruszewski's peasants began leaving his estate in the mid-thirties; according to manorial records, these peasants were heavily indebted to the estate: one Stanisław Szymonis, the first to leave, allegedly owed 365 złoty, while another peasant, Franciszek Płylnik, owed 416 złoty. In 1836 several

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Sejny District Commissioner to Gałdziewicz, May 30, 1837.

more peasants allegedly disappeared "during the night." The next year, they were followed by still others including Henryk Arnold, the inn-keeper. Kruszewski claimed that the "bad example" and agitation of the rival Veisiejai estate, as well as the "protection of the [runaways] by the landowner and mayor of that gmina," Prince Ogiński, seriously endangered order in the countryside. Kruszewski alleged that, in the spring of 1837, a band of fifty peasants, armed with clubs, stormed into one of his villages and helped one of his own peasants, Jan Szkarulis, to escape together with his household and belongings to the Ogiński domain. Szkarulis was a typical "vagrant," Kruszewski said, since he himself was already the peasant's third landlord. In desperation, Kruszewski appealed to local authorities to halt the "behavior of arrogant peasants from other gmina's . . . which disturbs the public peace," warning that if the government failed to stop peasant violence, the consequences would be "extremely grave."<sup>1</sup>

In this case, as in many others, the provincial government sided with the aggrieved landowner. "Similar abandonment of holdings, and resettlement without permission of the landowner," the province told the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs, "could lead to the collapse of the [Kruszewski] estate from which taxes must be collected." Provincial authorities pressed for a quick decision on the return of peasant Szkarulis, so that Kruszewski would not be exposed to "ever greater losses."<sup>2</sup>

Yet while the provincial government and landowner Kruszewski desired

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Kruszewski to Sejny District Commissioner, May 14, 1837, k. 82-87.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Government of Augustów Province to KRSW, February 25, 1838, k. 59.

more repressive measures to save the Łosewicze manorial economy, the district authorities were more concerned with preserving order, even if this meant occasionally overlooking the landowner's right to refuse peasants the required transfer permit. Thus, in September, 1838, Kruszewski charged the local district commissioner with illegally issuing his peasant Szkarnulis a transfer permit, despite what the landowner himself termed as his "wild protests."<sup>1</sup> It seemed that the controversial investigation of Szkarnulis had aroused the peasants and, therefore, the district commissioner "ordered the issuance of the transfer permit to Szkarnulis to avoid disorder, despite the protests of the landowner from Łosewicze estate [Kruszewski]."<sup>2</sup> However, the district commissioner also added that "such circumstances should not hinder, in the least, his [i.e. Szkarnulis'] return to his previous gmina."<sup>2</sup>

It would seem that, with the provincial government solidly behind landowner Kruszewski, Szkarnulis' fate was sealed; yet, like many other villagers, he proved unusually persistent and ingenious. As a veteran "migrator," he knew more than one way of wriggling out of undesirable situations: in 1835 Szkarnulis had managed to obtain the district commissioner's agreement to a transfer by leaving his son behind to take care of any residual obligations that he had owed.<sup>3</sup> Against Kruszewski (already his third landowner), Szkarnulis concentrated his attack on the

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Kruszewski to Sejny District Commissioner, September 25, 1838, k. 68-70.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Government of Augustów Province to KRSW, February 13, 1839, k. 59.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Sejny District Commissioner to Jan Bienkiewicz (copy), February 8, 1835, k. 32-33.

contract that he had made with the landowner. The contract itself turned out to be a rather unusual one; it stated that Szkarnulis would live on the Kruszewski estate as a rent payer for his first three years(1834-1837), but would do regular corvée work together with the other villagers for the next nine years(until 1846). Regardless of its legality, such a contract could hardly be accepted by a peasant; a change from rent to compulsory labor was considered a serious deterioration in status by any villager. As could be expected, Szkarnulis claimed that the compulsory labor part of the contract was an infringement on his rights as a money renter. In his view, the contract was binding only for the first three years which corresponded to his true status. In addition to questioning the validity of his agreement with Kruszewski, Szkarnulis accused his landlord of arbitrarily confiscating his property, including grain, other foods, a wagon, and agricultural implements.<sup>1</sup>

In successive appeals to the provincial governor, Szkarnulis protested that his contract had been arbitrarily altered by Kruszewski, pointing out that, as an illiterate, he could not have been expected to detect any fraudulent changes in the document.<sup>2</sup> In trying to justify leaving Kruszewski's estate, Szkarnulis also based himself on custom, arguing that he had left his landlord during the traditional "leaving time" of April, when most contracts expired. Szkarnulis also clung to the fact that the district commissioner had already issued him a transfer permit. Finally, as a last tactic in case all else failed, Szkarnulis argued that his case should be taken to court and not decided through administrative channels.

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Szkarnulis' Appeal of May 7, 1837, k. 159-160.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Szkarnulis to Governor of Augustów Province, June 20, 1838, k. 38.

Szkarnulis reminded the authorities who were concerned about peasant unrest that: "I am not the only one who had to leave the estate [to escape] from under the destructive yoke, as I am the twentieth of Kruszewski's hundred landed peasants [to have left]."<sup>1</sup> The peasant apparently hoped that this little bit of psychology would persuade the authorities to go easy on his case.

Despite the fact that in 1839 the provincial government decreed that Szkarnulis return to Kruszewski's estate, the runaway peasant continued his appeals over the next three years and finally managed to obtain a reversal of the decision. In 1842, the legal department of the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs recognized the validity of Szkarnulis' appeal on the grounds that his contract with Kruszewski had been invalid. There was only one copy of the document, the legal department said, and more were required by law. The department also claimed that irregular changes had indeed been made in the original held by the landowner. It stood to reason that Kruszewski could not demand compensation and/or obligations from a peasant for failing to honor an invalid contract.<sup>2</sup> Thus, after more than five years of administrative appeal and petitions, Jan Szkarnulis won his battle to avoid extradition to his hated landlord.

This reversal of the provincial government by the Commission for Internal Affairs explains the desire of many peasants to have their cases resolved in the courts, or at least by the central government, rather than by administrative appeal to local authorities. It seems that at least

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Szkarnulis to Governor, June 11, 1838, k. 62-63.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Legal Department Opinion, October 11, 1842, k. 209-210; KRSW to Governor of Augustów Province, November 29, 1842, k. 214.

some of the peasants were aware of limitations on their landowners' power.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the examples of Rupiński(see Chapter X) and Szkarnulis indicate that villagers stood a somewhat better chance of gaining satisfaction in the courts and central government agencies where their appeals could reach authority unconnected with local interests.

While the problems of contracts, corvée, the right to a holding, and transfer were the chief economic issues that concerned the peasants, the question of their personal and day-to-day relations with the landlord should not be overlooked. Although the peasants' own reports of their physical abuse at the hands of the manor were certainly exaggerated, mainly because of a desire to discredit the landowner during litigation over economic issues, this does not mean that physical punishment and other abuses toward the villagers were entirely unimportant in the conflict between village and manor. For example, the issue of the landowner's treatment of his peasants was a thread that ran through the entire Kruszewski affair. As mentioned earlier, the peasants Mizer, Iwaszka, the innkeeper Arnold and other villagers had fled the Kruszewski estate; the three named above were forcibly returned to Kruszewski in May, 1837 by order of the Sejny district commissioner. It was then that Karol Mizer turned to the military commander of Augustów province, accusing Kruszewski of cruelty to his peasants. "Landowner Kruszewski treats his peasants with excessive severity," wrote Mizer, "for he beat my brother Wincent with an iron club so hard," that the latter lay in bed

<sup>1</sup> For example, A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Karol Mizer to Augustów Province Military Commander, May 17, 1837, k. 93-95; cf. Szkarnulis' appeal to the governor above.

for four weeks.<sup>1</sup> This charge was in addition to the accusations that Kruszewski had taken away Mizer's rent and tax receipts, increased his corvée to four days per week, and demanded excessive gratuitous labor.<sup>2</sup>

Most peasants supported Mizer's version of his brother's beating always, however, expressing their dissatisfaction with the four days of corvée required by the landowner. One of the peasant depositions pointed out the problem with hired labor that the manor's physical abuse entailed: when an estate official allegedly struck Mizer's farmhand, the latter left the estate, leaving the unfortunate Mizer to work his holding and perform the corvée obligations alone.<sup>3</sup> One of the more colorful statements on physical abuse came from Kazimierz Iwaszka, a principal in the case against Kruszewski; he claimed that, while he approached and bowed to the landowner with a humble petition, the latter "blessed" him with a club so viciously that Iwaszka became deaf.<sup>4</sup> Other peasants confirmed this account to varying degrees. The landowner's only defender was the local village headman who minimized the severity of Kruszewski's behavior, maintaining that the landlord's treatment of his peasants was "gentle enough."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Mizer to Augustów Province Military Commander, May 17, 1837, k. 93-95.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Mizer's Deposition to Investigator Gałdziewicz, June 30, 1837, k. 97-99.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Depositions of Tomasz and Feliks Szerksznis, July 6, 1837, k. 100-104.

<sup>4</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Deposition of Kazimierz Iwaszka, May 16, 1837, k. 127 and ff.

<sup>5</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Deposition of Wincent Karaliuss, August 27, 1837, k. 116-117.

While it is clear that peasants, in many cases, exaggerated the manor's cruelty toward them for maximum dramatic effect, it is also evident that villagers were pushed around with little regard for their dignity. For his part, Kruszewski admitted that he had struck Mizer's brother several times with a "stick"(not an iron club!) for carelessly damaging some of the manor's garden plants that the landowner had imported from abroad at great expense. As for Iwaszka, Kruszewski acknowledged "striking him on the shoulders once."<sup>1</sup> Whatever the truth about the severity of the physical punishment on the Kruszewski estate, the landowner's own attitude indicates that the random pushing around of villagers was not uncommon in the countryside.<sup>2</sup> Even priests on Church estates were not immune to charges of violence against the peasants; in one case, a parish pastor was accused of striking working women.<sup>3</sup>

The estate not only abused and humiliated peasants physically; it also "beat them up" financially through outright fraud. A case in point was the "communal fund" of the Zypliai estate in Marijampolė district, established by the Countess Tyszkiewiczowa in 1815. The communal fund monies were collected by estate officials but the peasant gmina was supposed to have the right to dispose of the funds. In this case, the money was supposed to go for state taxes. However, an investigation by the Augustów governor's office, begun in 1848, showed that during the previous thirty-three years the manor had collected more funds than the obligation to the

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Kruszewski Deposition of May 16, 1837, k. 127-130; Kruszewski Deposition of August 7, 1837, k. 100-104.

<sup>2</sup> Akielewicz, "Słówko," 109.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 16: Balwierzyszki, Tomasz Makianis to Bishop Straszyński, August 29, 1843.

state required; and, aside from legitimate expenses for various peasant needs, had "made expenditures having no connection with the needs of these peasants."<sup>1</sup> Some of the irregular spending that was actually the legal responsibility of the manor included the costs of supplying army recruits, the reimbursement due villagers for supplying horses necessary to transport state dignitaries, and expenses connected with the gmina mayor's office. While, for some reason, the governor seemed sincerely determined to rectify the situation, the investigations conducted by the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs and the Marijampolė district commissioner were less than rigorous. In fact, the governor accused the district commissioner of "limiting himself to recording the protests of the owner of the Zyle estate, Bartkowski, rather than collecting the necessary information [for the investigation]." Fraud in the Zypliai case was almost certain, and the provincial government, usually a defender of landowning interests, maintained that "any explanations by landowner Bartkowski were without foundation;" meanwhile, the audit of estate books continued, although its results are unknown to us.<sup>2</sup>

In any event, it is clear that the most important issues between village and manor were not the landowners' cruelty or even fraud, but rather the problems of corvée and illegal transfer. The opinion of the government investigator in the Kruszewski case was generally favorable to the peasants. "It can be guessed," wrote Gałdziewicz, "that a peasant would not leave his holding, one to which he is accustomed since birth, for a

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7048, Governor of Augustów Province to KRSW, January 14, 1850, k. 285-286; also Governor to KRSW, May 5, 1848, k. 268 and following documents.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7048, Governor to KRSW, January 14, 1850, k. 285.

frivolous reason.<sup>1</sup> Investigator Gałdziewicz also thought that the courts should be the villagers' last recourse; in his opinion, one of the reasons for peasant escapes was that the courts did not provide peasants with sufficient protection.

The most interesting part of Gałdziewicz's conclusions, however, dealt with the question of whether the peasants and management of the Veisiejai estate had aided the numerous escapes from Kruszewski's estate. Did the peasantry, in fact, work together to facilitate the illegal transfers? For one thing, investigator Gałdziewicz adamantly exonerated Prince Ogiński, the owner of the Veisiejai estate, from any wrongdoing in the alleged "recruiting" of Kruszewski's peasants. He also rejected the allegation of the violent peasant "attack" on Kruszewski's estate (p. 317 above). In fact, Gałdziewicz implied that Kruszewski's charges were motivated by personal animosities and suggested that the landowner be reprimanded for casting aspersions on such a "respected" figure as Prince Ogiński. The investigator dismissed testimony which supported Kruszewski's charge that the Veisiejai estate was actively recruiting his peasants.<sup>2</sup> However, there was evidence of peasants providing help to fellow villagers who were planning an escape; for example, some peasants freely admitted helping to move the escapees' effects.<sup>3</sup> Peasant escapes were not always surreptitious "flight in the night" affairs; often, they were moves that were common knowledge in the village and

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Gałdziewicz Opinion, undated, k. 192-197.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Depositions of Maciej Płylnik, May 13 and July 6, 1838, k. 149-158.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Depositions of Kazimierz Skrobuł and Others, May 16, 1838, k. 118 and ff.

the manor. How many such transfers succeeded is unknown as detailed statistics are unavailable, but it is certain that they sometimes did. In 1839, local authorities admitted that Mizer and Iwaszka had been excessively burdened with corvée, and the governor ordered that they be issued transfer permits.<sup>1</sup>

The above examples of peasant transfers are from the thirties. There are indications that the problem of unauthorized peasant transfers grew worse in later years, as did the dislocation of the rural population generally. The increasing number of transfers frustrated the provincial government. Only stern measures, it was felt, would be able to stem this tide; yet, practically, local authorities could do little. In 1841, the government of Augustów province sent a letter to the Sejny district commissioner, complaining that the "numerous instances of arbitrary transfer by the peasants from one estate to another are often a cause of unnecessary investigation which results in great financial loss to peasant and landowner." The provincial government accused district authorities of being unable or unwilling to apply the laws of 1807 and 1810 which regulated peasant transfers. It ordered the Sejny district commissioner not to waste time with investigations that had little to do with the law, but to strive to return runaway peasants to their places of origin as quickly as possible in order to minimize the losses to the rural economy. Specifically, the province gave three orders to the district authorities:

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Sejny District Commissioner to Gałdziewicz, undated, k. 197-198; Governor of Augustów Province to Sejny District Commissioner, May 21, 1839, k. 205-206.

(1) To check out complaints of unauthorized peasant transfers without referring the matter to the provincial government, and to return immediately those villagers who had violated transfer regulations, allowing them to migrate only the following year; (2) to return peasants instantly if their contracts were still in force, letting the courts handle such situations; (3) to demand accounting from those gmina mayors who accepted peasants on their estates without completing the [necessary] formalities.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, on the surface, it seemed that the government was determined to halt illegal peasant migration. Actually, practical and jurisdictional problems often prevented the implementation of this stance. The case of the Nemajūnai villagers of the Kerčeliškiai (Pol. Kiercieliszki) estate in Sejny district exemplified this dilemma. In April, 1841, the land-owner of the estate, a noble with the illustrious name of Günther de Mirów-Myszkowski, informed the Sejny district commissioner that eight peasant households had left his estate without completing the required sowing. Myszkowski also claimed that the peasants had damaged estate property by taking the benches and windows from their cottages with them. Yet the landowner failed in convincing either the district commissioner or the provincial government to effect the return of his villagers, despite the fact that, during an investigation of the matter, the peasants admitted failing to inform Myszkowski of their move and acknowledged that they did not complete the required sowing--clear violations of the transfer laws. In January, 1842, Myszkowski appealed to the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs, complaining that in spite of the "laws of the land," the provincial government, disregarding its own hard line, had ordered him to issue his villagers transfer permits and even pay

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Governor of Augustów Province to Sejny District Commissioner, July 26, 1841, k. 226-227.

the costs of the administrative investigation!<sup>1</sup> The landowner received scarcely more satisfaction from the central authorities; the legal department of the Commission, while not denying the legitimacy of Myszkowski's complaints, agreed that the villagers should not be returned. The legal department argued that too much time had passed before the landowner had filed his complaint, and the peasants could not now be moved back to Myszkowski's estate without incurring a loss to their new landowners. Myszkowski was advised to go to court for compensation; the legal department's sole concession to the landowner was the recommendation that the villagers pay the costs of the government's investigation into the matter.<sup>2</sup>

The government's inaction is even more striking when compared with the peasants' open defiance. One peasant deposition stated that the village headman of Nemajūnai feared the "mutinous" peasants and thus made no attempt to stop them from taking estate property. The outcome of the case is unclear, though later documents suggest that when the government attempted to force the peasants to pay at least some compensation to their former landlord, some of them left for Kalvarija district to the north, hoping to avoid harassment and apprehension by authorities.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, unauthorized peasant transfer was a difficult problem to deal with.

The depositions and statements of Myszkowski's villagers repeated

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Myszkowski to KRSW, February 5, 1842 and February 19, 1842, k. 219-222.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, KRSW Legal Department Opinion, February, 1842 (attached to Myszkowski's letters above), k. 222.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Investigator's Opinion, undated, k. 306 ff.

some of the usual peasant grievances: excessive labor obligations, including guard duty; the brutality of the estate manager; the problem of servitudes, specifically access to woodlands.<sup>1</sup> Yet there were also some new elements. On Myszkowski's estate, a few peasants engaged in a curious kind of unauthorized internal or "intra-estate" transfer. For example, the peasant Jakób Gilis stayed on the estate; however, he reportedly "left his corvée holding of one wózka and became a hut peasant[Pol. chałupnik], but did not sow his [former] land." The villager Karol Czeponis similarly abandoned his holding, but remained in the same village, "taking over half of the rented land of Wincent Gilis."<sup>2</sup> Such villagers seem to have abandoned their holdings because they were no longer able to continue as "fully landed" peasants. In effect, though they stayed on the estate, they "resigned" their holdings. Gilis claimed he was unable to do his sowing because he "had nothing to plow or sow with;" Czeponis, meanwhile, stated that he did not have the "necessary draft power" to perform his corvée obligations and requested money renting status.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of Myszkowski's villagers, and from the other examples, it is clear that unauthorized peasant migration often had its own patterns. Frequently, peasants tended to leave and resettle in groups of at least two or three households. Many villagers headed from private to state domains, certainly an understandable move from the point of view of "self-

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Deposition of Maciej Januszko, undated, k. 270.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Deposition of Adam Krzywanis, undated, k. 260-261.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Depositions of Czeponis and Gilis, undated, k. 265 and ff.

betterment." Certainly, peasant transfers of this kind had an admixture of hope, as well as despair.<sup>1</sup>

The above examples of the kinds of legal and mostly non-violent resistance to the manor and its exploitative system were not, of course, confined to the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts. The same issues aroused villagers in other parts of Lithuania and Poland. As in Trans-Niemen Lithuania, the peasants of Russian Lithuania and the Kingdom depended on educated, literate persons, often from the lower gentry, to help in writing the petitions and presenting their case to higher authority.<sup>2</sup>

The legal and non-violent opposition to the manor in southwestern Lithuania was most characteristic of the landed villagers. The majority of the peasants involved in the cases cited above held at least a włoka (30 morgi) of land. While these villagers certainly faced economic injustices, most of them could, by no means, be described as "impoverished" or "vagrant." In Russian Lithuania, the well-to-do "free people," under pressure from landowners who sought to enserf them, played an important role in peasant resistance. For example, the peasants of Ignacy Karp's estates, ostensibly emancipated in 1808, carried on a long struggle against excessive obligations until 1848, when most of them were compelled to accept disadvantageous contracts.<sup>3</sup> Though small in number relative to other groups of peasants, these "free" villagers, one historian

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6698, Depositions of Adam Krzywanis and Wincent Grabluss, undated, k. 245 and ff.

<sup>2</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos irimas, pp. 262 ff.; cf. also numerous petitions in Iuchas and Iasas, Tiazhby.

<sup>3</sup> Ulashchik, "O krest'ianskikh vol'neniakh," 155 ff.

concluded, "occupy a very important, if not first, place in the history of the peasant movement in pre-reform [Russian] Lithuania."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the legal and non-violent resistance against the manor was led by the landed peasantry, the villagers' elite. Their resistance had a clear aim: to free themselves from corvée where it still existed, and to liberate their holdings from the manor's control. In short, the peasants strove for economic independence. This same spirit of "independence" led the peasants to resist controls on their life that came from sources other than the manor.

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<sup>1</sup> Ulashchik, "O krest'ianskikh vol'neniakh," 168.

## CHAPTER XII

### VILLAGE, TOWN AND CHURCH: SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ETHNIC CONFLICT IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The manor was not the only institution or power that affected the life of the peasantry, although, at least indirectly, it influenced almost every aspect of rural life. The towns and parishes of southwestern Lithuania played a very important role in the economic and social life of the village; these institutions had a direct and immediate impact on the life of the peasants. In their turn, the villagers were an integral part of town and Church life. Just as the manor exploited the peasant through a system of agrarian obligations, so the town and Church also "taxed" the village population in their own way. It was only natural that this aroused peasant resistance.

#### The Peasants and the Jews: The Issue of Market Tolls and Town Levies.

Contemporary observers of 19th-century rural life easily noticed the antagonism that existed between town and village. Significantly, many of them considered the town an evil influence on the peasants. One land-owner described the town as "innately" harmful to villagers, detailing its numerous inns and other vices.<sup>1</sup> A popular Lithuanian religious book of the time complained that "we [Lithuanians] have already imitated the ways of the decadent world, the idlers and adulterers at the manor and

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<sup>1</sup> Lachnicki, Biografia, pp. 199 ff.

in the town." By contrast, this book extolled the industrious ways of the peasant who "had no time, not a single hour, to dally with the idler."<sup>1</sup> The idleness and moral laxity of town life were not considered suitable examples for Lithuanian villagers.

Although such a moralistic and anti-urban tone was intended as a warning for peasants to "stay in their place," it contained, from the peasant's point of view, a solid element of truth. Certainly, the town, with its markets, blacksmiths and churches, was an economic and social necessity to the villager. Yet, to the peasant, it was also an alien and unfriendly world; alien in custom, religion and language, but particularly unfriendly in the taxes it levied, and sometimes extorted, from peasants coming to market.

The market and fair trading system best reveals the economically symbiotic, and yet socially and ethnically antagonistic, town-village relationship that was characteristic of southwestern Lithuania. Most towns derived their economic life blood from the markets and fairs which attracted the peasantry from the surrounding countryside. Aside from this trade, this region's small towns have been described as quiet. In 1857 one traveler found the town of Sejny exceptionally tranquil, except for the market days which drew crowds. The visitor was astonished at the rurally "cosmopolitan" color in Sejny on such occasions:

Here is the Mazurian, the Lithuanian and the Old Believer, each of them . . . Sejny comes alive: turmoil, tumult, din, a variety of dress; Polish, Lithuanian, Ruthenian, also Jewish words [are heard]. All this makes such a singular

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<sup>1</sup> Tatarė, Tiesiausė Kieles, pp. 138-140.

impression that you involuntarily ask yourself: how can so many different shades present themselves in a small, out-of-the-way place? This can be easily explained, because this is the frontier of Poland and Lithuania, the new homeland of the Old Believers; here is the land of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the town markets and fairs were the all-important points of contact for southwestern Lithuania's varied population. For the townspeople, the colorful markets and fairs provided a source of income not only through the trade and the consumption of town products(for example, liquor) by incoming peasants, but also through the tariffs and taxes that the towns were entitled to collect from market goers. Such tariffs had a long history; in medieval times, visitors were often required to bring in paving stones for the town's fortifications and streets. In the 19th century, such levies, as well as the tariffs on goods being brought into the town, were collected in money. In 1832, Baron Keudell of Šakiai was granted the right to tolls on market days for the "paving and improvement" of this private town. The tolls were relatively modest: a three groszy levy on each harnessed horse entering town; ten groszy for unharnessed horses; two groszy per each head of cattle. Apparently, this toll was unpopular, as the Baron complained that visitors to Šakiai did not pay this "hoof tax" during the first market:<sup>2</sup> The town of Liubavas charged somewhat higher rates: twelve groszy on each head of cattle; eighteen groszy per horse; three groszy per turkey; one grosz for a chicken.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From Józef Tyrawski's travelogue "Sejny i Gubernia Augustowska," in Gazeta Warszawska, March 13, 1857(No. 69), 4.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-156, Keudell to KRSW, undated, k. 51.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-155, k. 449.

In the town of Lazdijai, four groszy were collected "from each wagon weighing two stones."<sup>1</sup> In Sejny, a one grosz tax was paid for a grass cutting scythe; much higher levies were taken for goods such as axles and wagons.<sup>2</sup> As some towns were situated on rivers, there were also bridge tolls.

Naturally, the peasants resented these tolls and market tariffs, and, in some cases, they resisted them. Toll collections were not always an easy, orderly affair. The actual collection was farmed out to the Jews who had to squeeze the money out of reluctant villagers. Confrontations over collections were rarely violent, but they led to constant friction between Jews and peasants. In at least some cases, Jewish-peasant confrontations over tolls seem to have become almost game-like affairs, rich in a kind of "ritual." The account below, taken from a contemporary Warsaw newspaper, is a colorful relation of how one toll collection went in the town of Sejny in 1857. First, the author describes a peasant caravan heading for the Sejny market:

. . . From the loaded wagons heading for the town market, emerge the necks of geese, ducks and chickens, with their drooping little heads, as if anticipating their sad end; at times a fat swine, sentenced to the knife, barely breathing, looks out from a wagon overloaded with grain; on top of all this property sits a content Mazurian[Polish] or Lithuanian girl, with a white kerchief on her head.<sup>3</sup>

On the road, before the tolls, the author describes the scene as

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-155, k. 423.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-155, k. 410-412.

<sup>3</sup> Gazeta Warszawska, August 8, 1857(No. 206).

businesslike and quiet as Jewish women sell their wares to the peasants by the roadside. However, the tranquility is interrupted by a recurrent confrontation, so typical of town vs. village:

Suddenly, one can hear from afar the rattle of wagons and the neighing of horses: a loaded wagon is flying with great speed toward the town in the hope of avoiding the guard, and with it, the required market levy. At this very moment, a war-like command reverberates: 'Halt!'--and a flash of metal in the air gives the sign for the resolute attack; in an instant, the wagon is halted. The Lithuanian [driver], caught in his reckless deed, scratches his head, then pleads that he has nothing to pay with, that he has barely enough money for the market. He comes down from the wagon holding a whip in his hand and bargains with the unyielding guard. Sometimes, he even refuses obedience; woe then to the impudent [peasant]! A dozen Jews cluster around him, while the Lithuanian staves them off the best he can with his riding crop--when suddenly a small Jewish fellow would take off his shoes and, like a wild cat, jump on the Lithuanian with a shrill scream, grasping him with his arms and legs and, with amazing speed, shimmying higher. Like a bat, he buries his nails into the peasant's head of hair. Preoccupied in his dealings with the numerous pack around him, the Lithuanian at first does not notice this small inconvenience, while the little Jewish fellow, kneading the peasant constantly with the knees and mussing his hair, keeps crying: 'Pay! Pay!' The Lithuanian, feeling something irritating on his head, seeks to lift his arms to beat off the unwelcome 'guest,' when a new rattle of arriving wagons and a dozen fists under his nose, or, on occasion, even a careful shove with the fist, applied from a careful distance, deflects his attention from his pestered head. Willy-nilly, he reaches his hand into his breast pocket and pulls out a small bag, hidden somewhere close to his body, and, untying it slowly, counts out the kopecks and three-groszy pieces, squeezing them tightly with his fingers. Confused and unable to quickly regain his composure, the peasant finally pays his few groszy with great difficulty. Turning away, he puts back his bag and wants to finally rid himself of the little nuisance fastened on him, but the little Jewish fellow isn't stupid--with one leap he is already several steps away from the peasant, and is hanging onto another Lithuanian, reaching for the latter's head. There's just nothing to be done; one must drive on. The peasant settles into his wagon, spurs on his horses, all the while shaking his head in dissatisfaction. However, once he arrives in the town square, glances at the white peasant overcoats, and hears the greeting: Sveikas, drūtas[Lith: You're healthy and strong!], and

answers: Kaip žirnis ant kelio[Lith: Yes, like a bean on the road], a smile returns to his face. He greets his brothers happily and forgets about his ruffled hair.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, while peasants looked forward to their visits to town, whether for economic(markets, fairs) or purely social(Church celebrations) reasons, they were always aware that the town could also be a place where they were strangers, subject to possible humiliation.

The colorful account above provides us with a contemporary description of a conflict between two national groups in southwestern Lithuania: the Lithuanian peasants and the Jewish townspeople. The latter were, of course, in an unenviable position; as collectors of town levies, they were resented by the peasants as oppressors, while at the same time, the government harassed the Jews with restrictions on settlement and property ownership. Yet, ironically, in the eyes of the village populace, the Jews were allies of the local government and the landowners. This was not necessarily an unreasonable assumption. In fact, the courts did sometimes back the Jewish tax collector and innkeeper against the peasant. This aspect did little, naturally, to enhance good feelings between the Jews and the villagers.

One case in point was the conflict between the Jews and the peasants in the town of Panemunė, an impoverished, predominantly Jewish, settlement owned by the landowner Frentzel. Here, the landowner collected for his town what was termed a "pavement" fee of two groszy per horse from the peasants arriving for Church services. In 1844, the local priests complained that one, Leyba Handler, had actually attacked the pastor himself

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<sup>1</sup> From Gazeta Warszawska, August 8, 1857(No. 206). The spelling of the Lithuanian text has been modernized.

for a toll payment, and that the "impudent Jew had clutched the pastor and torn his cassock." There were numerous other complaints in Panemunė: one peasant related that the Jews "exact the toll[Pol. myto] not only from products brought in for sale during market days, but even from those [villagers] driving to Church." Since those peasants who refused to pay the levy were later prosecuted, the villagers and the local pastor accused the municipal courts of siding with the Jews. The peasants charged the Jews with confiscating their coats and other effects in lieu of payment; this practice was admitted by at least one toll collector whose confiscations were upheld by the mayor of Panemunė to whom the peasants had appealed for help. One Jewish toll collector's deposition stated that over a hundred peasants had evaded paying the toll in cash, but had finally agreed to payments in grain and potatoes, doubtless as a result of pressure from the town. In Panemunė, the peasant-Jewish confrontations were acrimonious: the villagers complained that the Jews physically abused their families, while the Jews accused the peasants of violent behavior toward them.<sup>1</sup>

Such incidents were common in towns throughout Lithuania, although in some areas, the issue of toll payments took on a different twist. Jan Gasztowt (Lith. Jonas Goštautas), an agrarian radical from the gentry, related an incident indicative of a different form of peasant exploitation. He described how, in one Samogitian village, the peasants were forbidden by their contracts to take their wares to the local town market; instead, they were forced to trade though the local Jewish-run inn which acted as a kind of estate trading post. Prices at this inn were considerably

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 387: Poniemoni Frentzela, Depositions of Father Mackiewicz, Laurynaytis, Walentas, Berko and Others, November 20, 1844.

higher than at the town market; naturally, the peasants felt cheated. According to Gasztowt, estate officials punished the villagers when they disregarded the order not to trade at the town market.<sup>1</sup>

The Town and Country Inn: the Church, the Jews, and the Peasant Temperance Movement.

Aside from the urban tolls and levies, the town and country inn provided another point of conflict between Christians and Jews. However, it must be kept in mind that this conflict was only a part of a larger social and economic problem. First of all, there was the liquor monopoly(Pol. propinacja). From the peasant's point of view, the liquor monopoly was yet another infringement on his economic freedom. For one thing, it involved labor on his part, both in the production of the liquor itself, and then the guard duty--all this after a hard day's work in the fields. Propinacja work was extremely difficult.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, the peasants were forced and encouraged to consume this liquor production in several ways: by a quota of compulsory purchasing, by sales of vodka on credit, and, in some places, by a system of tavern chits(Pol. karteczki) with which villagers were paid for work, and which could be realized only at the local inn. These practices were, on the whole, much more common on private estates and in towns than on state domains.

Despite the fact that compulsory liquor consumption was not, from a

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<sup>1</sup> Jonas Goštaitas, Ponas Teisėjaitis arba pasakojimas apie Lietuvą ir Žemaitiją, trans. and ed. Konstantinas Jablonskis(Vilnius, 1967), pp. 72-74.

<sup>2</sup> Roženowa, Produkcja wódki, p. 39.

legal point of view, a part of the liquor monopoly privilege, it was still practiced in Trans-Niemen Lithuania at mid-century. In February, 1857, the government of Augustów province wrote the Commission for Internal Affairs that, "without doubt, the majority of the owners of landed estates interpret the extent of the liquor monopoly differently and, basing themselves on customary practice, force the inhabitants to drink liquor . . . exclusively from local stores and inns." On the other hand, there was another extreme in the interpretation of the liquor monopoly privilege on state domains where, under the influence of rent reform, peasants began to believe "that the people can buy liquor for their needs, wherever they like."<sup>1</sup>

Freedom from the liquor monopoly had long been an issue among the peasants. It seems, however, that the drastic decline in vodka prices during the first half of the 19th century blunted the peasants' desire to have the right to brew their own beer and distill their own liquor. Nevertheless, villagers sometimes still preferred to preserve their rights to home brewing and stressed this privilege. For example, the peasants of Zypliai estate emphasized this right in their struggle with manorial authorities in 1816. The Church peasants of Balbieriškis also considered that they "always had the right to obtain vodka wherever they liked," and occasionally distilled their own.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, home distilling continued throughout the 19th century; however, it was probably less important in the first half of the 19th century when vodka prices were low. In any

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6706, Governor of Augustów Province to KRSW, March 4, 1857.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 17: Balwierzyszki, Deposition of A. Zwirblis, July 27, 1844.

case, the liquor monopoly in towns and on estates continued in the Kingdom of Poland until 1898.

Towns had always been in the thick of the liquor monopoly issue; for example, it was an important point of conflict between town and estate. The Jewish population in the town was deeply involved in this struggle because landowners sometimes sought to limit the distilling rights of the Jews, especially when they feared that the Jews were expanding their business. In 1818, Baron Keudell of Gelgaudiškis sought to limit the liquor monopoly rights of the Jews in his private town of Šakiai. Keudell accused the Jews of illegally expanding their liquor operation.<sup>1</sup>

Now the landowning class had many conflicts with townspeople. Contemporary documents record, for example, the troubles of a German miller of the Zyliai estate with his landowner; other records show how attempts were made to forbid the Jews of Aleksotas town to sell bread.<sup>2</sup> But it was the liquor monopoly issue that remained the most important point of conflict between town and estate. In Russian Lithuania, where the Jews were never expelled from the country inns(as they were in the Kingdom of Poland), the struggle between landowners and Jews over the liquor monopoly rights was fierce. At first glance, this seems incongruous; after all, it was widely believed(and partly true) that the Jewish innkeeper was often an agent of the landowner, and helped the estate profit from the village population. In fact, many of the Jewish inns belonged to petty gentry,

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<sup>1</sup> A. C. A. D., KRSW-6716, Baron Keudell to KRSW, July 23, 1818.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6869, Cases of F. Klejn and Jewish Bread Sellers in Alexota[Aleksotas], undated.

and more powerful landowners sought to eliminate these inns as a threat to their own liquor monopolies.<sup>1</sup> During the first half of the 19th century in Samogitia, the petty gentry made a practice of building small distilleries, leasing them to Jewish families, and thus biting into the peasants' market on neighboring estates. This practice sometimes led to violent clashes between the gentry and the higher nobility.<sup>2</sup> In Lithuania and Poland, the Jewish tavernkeeper was caught in a bitter struggle between forces over which he had no control. But what of the peasant's place in this complicated struggle and what of his attitudes to the country and town inn?

The institution of the inn, whether it was located in the village or town, fulfilled the same functions. Whether it belonged to the landowner or town, the inn was a most profitable institution; for one thing, it soaked up the income that landed peasants earned from their holdings, or that which the farmhand earned on the manorial farm. The inn was also a store, a miniature credit union, a social and gossip center for the villagers.<sup>3</sup> Within the towns, the inns were attractive places of entertainment that helped draw peasant crowds to markets and fairs;<sup>4</sup> they were

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<sup>1</sup> Augustinas Janulaitis, Žydai Lietuvoje: bruožai iš Lietuvos visuomeninės istorijos XIV-XIX amž. (Kaunas, 1923), pp. 102-105.

<sup>2</sup> Kazimierz Gieczys, Bractwa trzeźwości w diecezji żmudzkiej w latach 1858-1864, Studja Teologiczne, vol. 4 (Wilno, 1935), p. 254.

<sup>3</sup> Józef Burszta, Niewola karczmy (Warsaw, 1953), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> A. C. A. D., KRSW-7, Governor of Augustów Province to KRSW, October 17, 1846, k. 526-529. Relatively few towns had exclusive liquor monopoly rights by the 1840s; in 1846, these included the larger towns of Sejny, Marijampolė, Wiżajny, Pilviškiai. Other towns collected a tax on locally produced and imported liquor. In any case, inns contributed significantly to the incomes of many towns.

usually packed on Sundays, the peasants' only day of rest. In fact, according to one historian, Sunday drinking was so common that "without it, the community life of the inhabitants of the old village would be inconceivable."<sup>1</sup> Drinking and the customs connected with it became an inseparable part of contemporary popular culture.<sup>2</sup>

Even the Church, which was to campaign so vigorously against the evils of alcohol, earned income from its own inns. Within Augustów province there were dozens of such taverns. In 1815, the government confiscated 38 Church inns in seventeen parishes in the Lithuanian districts alone, reimbursing the Church with a monetary compensation (the same way that the Prussians had compensated the Church for expropriated ecclesiastical lands). In the whole of Augustów province, the number of Church inns declined from 48 in 1830 to only 30 in 1864.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the inn was an ubiquitous social and economic institution in the town and countryside; the innkeeper, in his turn, was an extremely important and versatile figure. "During the times when there were no other institutions fulfilling certain needs, such as that of a credit fund, a store, and the like, it was the innkeeper who fulfilled all these functions," wrote one historian of the tavern.<sup>4</sup> The innkeeper was an unusually versatile fellow: ". . . for the peasant, he was everything: a distiller, a merchant, a banker, a moneylender, a friend, an advisor, a doctor, a servant."<sup>5</sup> Naturally, such a variety of social and economic

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<sup>1</sup> Burszta, Niewola karczmy, p. 69

<sup>2</sup> Burszta, Niewola karczmy, pp. 66-73.

<sup>3</sup> Jemielity, Diecezja augustowska, pp. 201 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Burszta, Społeczeństwo, pp. 175-176    <sup>5</sup> Burszta, Społeczeństwo, p. 173.

functions gave the innkeeper extraordinary power and influence among the peasants.

The Jewish population, both in the Kingdom and Russian Lithuania, was traditionally heavily involved in the distilling and sale of spirits to the peasantry. The Jewish tavernkeeper became a familiar figure in Polish and Lithuanian literature, and was usually painted in negative colors. Many contemporaries of the 19th century routinely accused the Jews of profiting from one of the peasants' chief weaknesses: drunkenness. In this view, the Jew was an idle, insidious corrupter of the village populace. One prominent landowner wrote in a book, published in 1815:

The innkeeper of Jewish nationality does not engage in farming; he doesn't even require a vegetable garden; he doesn't engage in any craft. Who has seen any other tool in the hands of the Jewish innkeeper except the crayon which counts and falsely multiplies his account to the detriment of the peasants?<sup>1</sup>

The government reflected this same attitude, especially during the formative years of the Polish Kingdom. During this time, the Kingdom's Commission for Town Regulation concluded that Jewish innkeepers were the main source of peasant ignorance, and that agrarian reform would be meaningless without the expulsion of the Jews from the liquor trade.<sup>2</sup> In fact, Christian innkeepers, many of them Germans, oppressed and exploited their village clients no less "efficiently" than their Jewish counterparts. At any rate, Jews were forbidden to run inns in the

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<sup>1</sup> Lachnicki, Biografia, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> Eisenbach, "Mobilność," 196.

Kingdom between 1820 and 1862. The elimination of Jewish distilling activities in the countryside was effective: between 1815 and 1830, the number of Jewish households in Augustów province engaged in the production and sale of liquor decreased more than tenfold, from an estimated 2,700 to about 250. Over 90% of the Jewish households left in the liquor trade lived in towns.<sup>1</sup> After 1862, the Jewish share of the liquor trade rose sharply again.

While the Jewish(and for that matter, Christian) innkeeper was often depicted as a profiteer from the peasants' moral weakness, the liquor business itself was rarely lucrative for him. The innkeeper usually did not own, but only managed, the inn. Most of the tavern's income went to the owners and holders of the liquor monopoly, that is the landowners, the towns, and occasionally, the Church. Also, the inn was often a violent place, and the tavern manager's occupation occasionally became a dangerous one.

Yet, despite the fact that, between 1820 and 1862, the Jews were largely excluded from the liquor business in the countryside(though not in the towns), the belief persisted that the Jews were particularly responsible for peasant drunkenness and that they strove to maintain this condition. This anti-Jewish suspicion grew during the forties, when village drunkenness reached truly endemic proportions in Lithuania. One popular Lithuanian schoolbook, published in 1861, exemplified this view of the innkeeper as the greedy exploiter: "It's the innkeeper's job to cheat, overcharge, to deceive people, to drink the people's sweat and

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<sup>1</sup> Eisenbach, "Mobilność," 203-205.

blood. Oh, they'll torture them in hell for that!"<sup>1</sup>

The general policy of expelling the Jews from the countryside, and their subsequent concentration in the towns, as well as the presence of Jewish innkeepers within municipalities, had the result of identifying Jewry with the urban world in the popular mind. The anti-Semitic feeling that existed among the peasantry, and that was encouraged by elements within the Church, was also, to some degree at least, an anti-urban prejudice. Another passage from the Lithuanian schoolbook already quoted above, described a toll collection:

. . . the ugly Jew was searching through [my] wagon with an iron club in his hand. The devil knows what he was looking for; then he [the Jew] ordered me to pay the entrance to market, the bridge toll, and the pavement levy . . . Well, that's the way it is in the towns, what can you do?<sup>2</sup>

Clearly, anti-Semitism was unabashedly prevalent among the Christian population of Poland and Lithuania in the 19th century. The Church, in popular books intended for the villagers, and in its sermons, painted the Jew as a greedy "infidel." All this was an extension, on the popular level, of "official" anti-Semitism in the Kingdom: the series of government regulations and restrictions that curbed Jewish life.

The simplified contemporary view of all Jews as exploiters was, of course, inaccurate. Jewish society itself was not monolithic, whether in the villages of Russian Lithuania, or the towns of the Trans-Niemen region. There was a considerable distance between the well-to-do merchants in Lithuania's larger cities and the poorest Jewish garden

<sup>1</sup> Marciński, Grammatyka, pp. 122-123.

<sup>2</sup> Marciński, Grammatyka, p. 124.

peasants and peddlers who lived in thatched huts. These latter Jews would wander through villages, selling herring and loaves of bread. In lieu of money, such an impoverished trader would sometimes be allowed to sweep up a peasant's leftover rye.<sup>1</sup> To Gentile society, the Jews evoked a picture of tenacious solidarity; in fact, there is evidence of severe social conflict among the Jews during the first half of the 19th century, especially between those engaged in trade on a larger scale, and the small peddlers, artisans, and "declassé" people. The Jewish kahal was the institution of self-government which represented the wealthier, dominant element in Jewish society. At times, the poorer elements resisted what they perceived as the kahal's exploitation, particularly in Russian Lithuania, where it was empowered to collect taxes from the community.<sup>2</sup>

While villagers must have been aware of the great differences in wealth among the Jews, their economic conflicts with the Jewish community made peasants see the Jews as a monolithic enemy. Some of the changes that occurred in agrarian relations during the first half of the 19th century exacerbated Jewish-peasant conflict. For example, the villagers of Liubavas, a former town, approved a land consolidation scheme in 1863, by which this rural settlement was to be broken up and then divided into individual farms. This plan threatened the long-standing Jewish commercial and liquor interests, and the Jews opposed the consolidation scheme. The peasants then appealed to the Church for help.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Katkus, Raštai, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Dawid Fajnhauz, "Konflikty społeczne wśród ludności żydowskiej na Litwie i Białorusi w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku," in Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, No. 52(1964), 3-15.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 295: Łozdzieje, Augustów Diocese to Treasury Commission, February 28, 1863.

In this way, and in so many other instances, the Jews were caught up in violent social and economic movements of the period; and while they were not responsible for the social conditions that caused peasant resentment, the position of the Jews as representatives of the land-owners and the towns involved them deeply in the life of the peasantry. Perhaps, the most spectacular example of this involvement in 19th-century Lithuania was the peasant temperance movement, one of the most remarkable popular movements in Eastern European history.

Stimulated in part by a decline in vodka prices, the plague of peasant drunkenness reached epidemic proportions during the forties of the 19th century. The government hoped to cope with it by reducing the number of fairs and markets in the towns which were important, but by no means the only, occasions of mass drunkenness. The government also raised taxes on distilled liquor.

The most interesting response to the problem of excessive drinking, however, was that of the peasants themselves. There was a rapid and dramatic rise of temperance fraternities. The temperance movement of the 19th century originated in Ireland, where Father Theobald Mathew founded his Total Abstinence Society in the 1830s. This model of temperance organization then spread across northern Germany to Prussia, and thence to the Duchy of Poznań. By the forties, temperance societies had arrived in the Kingdom of Poland; by the fifties, they were widespread in Poland, including the country's northern Lithuanian districts. It was the example of temperance fraternities in the parishes of Trans-Niemen Lithuania that

inspired the development of the movement in Samogitia, where it assumed amazing, massive, proportions in the late fifties and early sixties.<sup>1</sup>

The Church was the driving force behind the organization of peasant temperance fraternities. The landowning interests and many Jews, especially in Russian Lithuania where they were never barred from village innkeeping, quite naturally, opposed the temperance movement which was, after all, a threat to the whole liquor monopoly system.<sup>2</sup> The popularity of the peasant temperance movement unsettled the government and landowners. Wherever a priest invited parishioners to join a temperance society, literally thousands of peasants responded. Their names were registered into books of the "Golden Fraternity," and medals were issued to members. The temperance movement had a strong "revivalist," extremely emotional quality and this sometimes led to excesses. The clergy and the fraternities sometimes humiliated notorious drunkards; there are reported cases in which heavy tipplers were forced to crawl around a church on their knees. Some pastors locked up boozers in church cellars, though in at least one case such a harsh method backfired: the confined drunkards raised such a din that they interrupted Mass and had to be released!<sup>3</sup> The inner organization of the temperance societies also encouraged some coercion within the movement. The temperance societies had a definite hierarchy, and the marshals of the parish chapters had the power of expelling or accepting members, and informed the pastor of those who

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<sup>1</sup> Gieczys, Bractwa, pp. 1-2, 14-16.   <sup>2</sup> Gieczys, Bractwa, pp. 5-6.

<sup>3</sup> Michał Brensztejn, "Bractwa trzeźwości na Litwie, głównie w diecezji żmudzkiej, 1858-1863," in Rocznik Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauki w Wilnie, VI(1918), 56-57.

continued drinking.<sup>1</sup>

Within the Kingdom, the government actively discouraged the temperance movement, an unfortunate development for the history of this movement in Trans-Niemen Lithuania since there are now few Church records of the activities and composition of the temperance societies. Although the Church had carried on some temperance propaganda in the Sejny-Augustów diocese even before the fifties, the government told ecclesiastical authorities here that it was up to the civil government to adopt adequate measures against peasant drunkenness. The Kingdom's government ordered Bishop Straszyński of the diocese to release all fraternity members from their oaths and liquidate the temperance movement. In 1844, the bishop informed the Kingdom's government that, as far as he was concerned, no temperance societies existed within his diocese, and that there were no registers of members. But the temperance movement in the Sejny-Augustów diocese grew anyway, despite the government's disapproval. Thus, in 1857 the civil authorities initiated new efforts against the temperance societies in Augustów province.<sup>2</sup>

The temperance movement among the villagers of the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts, though modest compared with that in Samogitia, was not unimportant. Bishop Motiejus Valančius (Pol. Wołonczewski) of Samogitia, Lithuania's leading organizer of the temperance movement, told the Russian government that, during the fifties, a number of parishes in

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<sup>1</sup> Gieczys, Bractwa, pp. 132-133.

<sup>2</sup> Witold Jemielity, "Troska o trzeźwość w XIX wieku w Królestwie Polskim na przykładzie diecezji sejneńskiej," in Ateneum Kapłańskie, Vol. 83, 253-256.

Samogitia had "spontaneously given up vodka . . . on account of the good example from beyond the Niemen."<sup>1</sup> Bishop Valančius cleverly used the Trans-Niemen region as a diversion: he hoped that this alleged influence from the Kingdom would divert the Russian authorities from the societies he was organizing in Samogitia.<sup>2</sup> Since the temperance societies of Trans-Niemen Lithuania left few sources to reconstruct their history, a brief look at the identical phenomenon in Russian Lithuania can shed some light on the development of this interesting peasant movement.

In Russian Lithuania, the first, modest, beginnings of the temperance movement are noticeable in the forties. Several priests, particularly Father Augustyn Kibart and Father Ignacy Sztacha of Šiauliai, began making registers of those parishioners "desiring to attain sobriety." It was not until the fifties, however, that the Lithuanian peasantry on the right bank of the Niemen, influenced by the example of their cohorts on the Polish side, began to organize their own mass temperance movement.<sup>3</sup> The real impetus that gave the Samogitian movement its truly massive and popular character was the support of the ecclesiastical authority; as a general rule, the temperance societies grew most rapidly where they had the support of the local bishops.<sup>4</sup> Bishop Valančius of Samogitia, the first Lithuanian of peasant origin to become bishop of this pres-

<sup>1</sup> Brensztejn, "Bractwa," 59.

<sup>2</sup> Gieczys, Bractwa, pp. 29-30.

<sup>3</sup> Brensztejn, "Bractwa," 51-52; Gieczys, Bractwa, pp. 9 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Burszta, Społeczeństwo, pp. 118-119.

tigious diocese, was enormously popular among the village populace. He was also the major force behind the temperance movement in all of Lithuania. A talented writer in his native Samogitian dialect, Valančius was instrumental in publishing many popular Lithuanian anti-liquor books and pamphlets. A great number of these publications were translations or adaptations of Polish temperance propaganda. Thus, the temperance movement had a very important side effect on Lithuanian life in the 19th century: it stimulated the reading of popular Lithuanian literature among the peasantry. However, Valančius' plans to publish a Lithuanian periodical and some other publications for the peasants were eventually torpedoed by the Russian censorship(for more on the impact of the temperance movement on popular literature, see below, Chapter XV).

In Lithuania, the temperance movement was a predominantly village affair, although a few among the nobility and gentry did support it out of philanthropy(for example, the progressive Samogitian landowner Ireneusz Ogiński).<sup>1</sup> In the large city of Kaunas, only an estimated 15% of the Catholic population belonged to temperance societies; however, in the rural areas of Samogitia, well over 80% of the Catholics were registered in the movement. In 1860, the total membership in Kaunas gubernia was reported as 684,536. In eastern Lithuania and Belorussia, the percentage of the village population involved in temperance activities was considerably smaller.<sup>2</sup>

The great number of militant teetotalers(even when allowing for a

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<sup>1</sup> Gieczys, Bractwa, pp. 152-178.

<sup>2</sup> Brensztejn, "Bractwa," 69-70.

certain amount of secret tippling among the temperance societies' members) had a drastic effect on the liquor monopoly system. The most important single source of income for many landowners, gentry and Jews, as well as a significant portion of the government's revenue in both Poland and Lithuania, were affected. State income from liquor taxes dropped drastically: in Kaunas gubernia, the tax receipts on consumed liquor dropped an estimated 67% between 1858 and 1859. It must be assumed that such a reduction, although perhaps not on the same scale, also occurred in the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts. In 1860, when the temperance movement reached its peak in Samogitia, the Tsar's finance minister proposed Bishop Valančius' expulsion from the country in order to halt the drain on the treasury.<sup>1</sup> Although clearly embarrassed to fight the temperance movement (which had such obvious benefits as reducing the crime rate), the government tried to put some pressure on peasants to drink. This led to determined peasant resistance to the landowners, the executors of the government's will; sometimes, violence resulted. In addition to financial considerations, the government opposed the temperance societies as a dangerous precedent in the Church's organization of a volatile peasantry. Finally, comprehensive bans on the temperance societies in Russian Lithuania were issued in 1864. In the Kingdom, the Commission for Internal Affairs officially closed them down in 1863.<sup>2</sup>

The landowners, for their part, opposed the temperance societies for

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<sup>1</sup> Gieczys, Bractwa, pp. 59-64.

<sup>2</sup> Gieczys, Bractwa, pp. 2, 8.

the same financial reasons as the government. In addition, the temperance movement among the villagers, coming as it did during a period of agrarian unrest generally, was a frightening portent of how peasants could be organized and agitated. The actions of some clergy disturbed the nobility; normally, the Church was regarded as a trusted ally in keeping social order. Now there were some priests agitating the populace against the landowning class.<sup>1</sup>

The Jews, heavily involved in the liquor trade in Russian Lithuania, and, to a lesser degree in Trans-Niemen Lithuania before 1862, were obvious targets of the peasant temperance movement. In fact, one avowed purpose of the temperance societies was to reduce the number of inns, and thus drive the Jews out of the liquor trade all together. The Jews were routinely charged with sabotaging the temperance movement. In an 1862 pastoral letter to the peasantry of Samogitia, Bishop Valančius accused the Jews of serving up new, attractive and cleverly concocted "mixed drinks" known among the villagers as "wine."<sup>2</sup> Given the climate of the time, many such charges were doubtless exaggerated. Yet it would be ludicrous to think that innkeepers and distillers, whether Jewish or Gentile, did nothing in the face of a movement whose purpose was to make their occupations superfluous. In 1858, Ejzyk Littauer, who leased the liquor monopoly in the towns of Sejny and Suwałki, wrote the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs of his financial troubles, complaining of "losses caused by the activities of the temperance fraternity."<sup>3</sup> Thus,

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<sup>1</sup> Gieczys, Bractwa, pp. 178-180.

<sup>2</sup> Gieczys, Bractwa, p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-9, Littauer to KRSW, May 11, 1858, k. 647.

even in southwestern Lithuania, where temperance societies were officially discouraged and lacked strong episcopal support, these village organizations affected the urban distilling economy.

The anti-liquor movement was composed of many elements. These included: the growing social consciousness of the peasantry; the organizational talents of some Church leaders; anti-landowner and anti-urban feeling; and a revolt against the often very real economic tyranny of the inn and innkeeper. Anti-Semitism was a part, though not necessarily the most important element, of the temperance movement. The very economic structure of the Trans-Niemen region, indeed of all of Lithuania, was based on the exploitation of the village populace. This served to put Jew and peasant on opposite sides in day-to-day economic dealings, even though both were oppressed in their own way. This Gentile-Jewish strife was compounded by the peasants' deep mistrust of the town where the majority of the Jews lived. It was in the town, of course, where the villager paid the irksome tolls, drank at the inns (and, as a result, often went into debt), where even the trading scales were sometimes literally weighted against him.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the stereotype of the dishonest and devious Jewish merchant and peddler was, in large part, probably due to the general peasant conviction that villagers did not receive a fair return for their products at market, fair or inn.

The peasants' economic conflicts with the towns involved them in strife with the Jews. Yet a large part of the urban population in Trans-Niemen

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<sup>1</sup> See Kula, Miary i ludzie, pp. 368, 370.

Lithuania were Christian Germans and Poles. There are few documents that can shed light on the peasants' relationship to this segment of the population during the first half of the 19th century, although at the turn of the 20th century, Lithuanian peasants and Polish townspeople clashed bitterly over the language issue in the churches.<sup>1</sup> At first glance, it would seem that during the earlier period, the Christian townspeople should have made natural allies with the peasants; after all, both groups were often in conflict with the landowning class. In fact, the townspeople tended to disassociate themselves from the peasants, even when they both fought against the same agrarian obligations.

The burghers' protest movement against the landowners was particularly strong in southwestern Lithuania during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Numerous cases of town vs. estate litigation were reported in such towns as Punia, Alytus, Perloja, and, especially, in Nemunaičiai between 1772 and 1837. For the most part, the townspeople of the smaller towns sought to prevent their subjugation to corvée labor in particular, and to the landowning class in general, by struggling to retain their municipal privileges. In the Nemunaičiai case, the burghers, as "free" people(i.e. free from corvée), refused to have anything to do with the peasants. It is clear that, in their struggles with the estates, most townspeople sought to avoid identification with the peasantry in any way, feeling that this could only weaken their case.<sup>2</sup>

The townspeople, especially Christians who risked reduction to

<sup>1</sup> A. D. L., Ser. A, 184: Kalwaria, Petitions of the Lithuanian Peasants to the Bishop of Sejny, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> Jučas, Baudžiavos irimas, pp. 252-255.

"peasant" status, clung pathetically to their old "privileges." A case in point were the burghers of Meteliai in Sejny district. In 1810, the prefect of Łomża department concluded that his tiny municipality "could not, by any means, qualify as a town," on account of the impoverished state of its inhabitants, while the subprefect of Sejny district, after describing the town's miserable appearance, remarked that Meteliai "could not even be called a decent village, though it is called a town." "The inhabitants," he wrote, "are used to the plow since a long time ago . . . they don't even have an idea of reading and writing."<sup>1</sup> Despite their desperate straits, the townspeople of Meteliai petitioned the State Council of the Duchy of Warsaw to reinstate town privileges granted them under the old Polish-Lithuanian rulers and ostensibly safeguarded by the Prussians after 1795. The burghers expressed their fear that they would become "villagers" if the neighboring Meteliai estate succeeded in expanding and taking over the town.<sup>2</sup> The attempts of the Meteliai burghers to retain municipal status, like the efforts of townspeople in other small towns, met with little sympathy from the government. The Duchy's Interior Ministry rejected the townspeople's petition for renewed municipal status and fiscal independence from the estate, suggesting they turn to the courts for satisfaction.<sup>3</sup>

The townspeople's fear of being identified with the lowly "villagers,"

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-198, Łomża Prefect to Ministry of Internal Affairs, December 9, 1810; Subprefect of Sejny Report, November 29, 1810, k. 11.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-198, Metele Townspeople to Ministry of Internal Affairs, December 30, 1810, k. 13-15.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-198, Ministry of Internal Affairs to Metele Townspeople, January 17, 1811, k. 17-18.

or perhaps more important, with the peasants' obligations system, as well as the national, linguistic differences between village and town, explain the lack of cooperation between these two groups, despite a common enemy. This should not be surprising. Even peasants were known for their lack of solidarity between the different social groups. An alliance between the disparate groups that inhabited the towns and villages of Trans-Niemen Lithuania was out of the question.

Finally, even those small municipalities which were almost entirely agrarian by nature, found little in common with the Lithuanian peasants in the countryside. Villagers were sometimes involved with towns in purely "agrarian" disputes, for example, land tenure. In 1845, excessive land comminution led the peasants of two villages near the former town of Sudargai to request that their hamlets be attached to this "municipality," since "the village not only holds land mingled with town lands, but the very homesteads of the landed peasants are intermingled between the town houses and in the town square." There is no evidence that district or provincial authorities did anything in this case, and the peasants protested against the government's unresponsiveness.<sup>1</sup> Even when a town was an actual village, it proved an obstacle and source of frustration to the peasants.

The peasants' alienation from the towns continued throughout the 19th century. It was only at the turn of the 20th century that the ethnically Lithuanian population slowly became more urbanized to any extent that can be termed significant.

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-201, Juszkaytis to Marijampolė District Chief, June 23, 1845.

The Peasants and Their Parish Church.

Commentators of the 19th century often reported that the Lithuanian peasants of the Kingdom distinguished themselves as pious and God-fearing; their relationship to the Catholic clergy and Church, it was said, was extremely close.<sup>1</sup> One popular Lithuanian religious book published in Suwałki in 1853 boasted that, while "in the land of the Poles, an enforced tithe is required for the sustenance of the clergy . . . in our dear Lithuania, there are no such customs because [the people] love and provide for their priests."<sup>2</sup> There is no doubt that, in the Lithuanian village, the Catholic priest exerted a tremendous moral authority and enjoyed great social prestige. No greater honor could befall a peasant family than to have a son enter the priesthood. The passage below, while taken from the memoirs of a Lithuanian Social Democrat born at the end of the last century, certainly holds true for the first half of the 19th century as well:

He [the priest] had unchallenged power, not only in matters concerning the soul, but in temporal life as well. He was the light which, like the lantern in front of the church altar, shone in the parish day and night. He was the judge who could condemn a man in confession, scold him publicly from the pulpit during a sermon, or privately while visiting the peasant's home . . . the priest was God's unchallenged representative. The halo that surrounded him spread from the altar to the rectory, and from there to the village. A part of this halo would be shared by the priest's parents and relatives . . . What then was a doctor, an engineer, or even a lawyer beside the priest?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Akielewicz, "Słówko," 110; Butkiewicz, "Opis," 299 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Tataré, Tiesibes Kieles, p. 195.

<sup>3</sup> Steponas Kairys, Lietuva budo(New York, 1957), pp. 37-38.

Thus, the priest's powers and responsibilities were not solely spiritual and moral. The clergy was also responsible for promoting social welfare as, for example, in the upkeep of paupers' homes. Parish priests were responsible for education in the parish school, the keeping of civil records of all kinds, for the announcement and translation of government decrees and public events, and the conducting of the rural census.<sup>1</sup>

On the whole, it seems that the Lithuanian peasants respected the clergy and the Church, but this respect was not unconditional. Leaving aside the important problem of Polonization (discussed more fully in Chapter XV), an examination of several instances shows that the Lithuanian peasants were quick to resist the clergy when they felt unjustly burdened by ecclesiastical obligations. The examples of peasant resistance to excessive obligations on Church estates noted in previous chapters, reveal that village parishioners were quite capable of discerning, when necessary, a "landowner" under the cassock.

But there were other kinds of Church exploitation which, though seemingly minor, the peasants felt entitled to resist. In some cases, the villagers felt that the pastors of parishes abused their power to collect extra monies. In 1821, a group of villagers in Bartniki parish complained to their bishop that the pastor had "falsified" documents and forcibly collected Easter donations, amounting to "six złoty from the landed peasants and other well-to-do parishioners, three złoty from lower [parishioners], and two złoty from farmhands and milkmaids." This

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<sup>1</sup> Kazys Grinius, "Keletas dokumentų," 391.

pastor was also accused of collecting money twice for the same church organ.<sup>1</sup> It seems that the villagers considered such extra payments analogous to the "gratuitous" obligations exacted from them by the landowners. In 1850, the peasants of several villages near Vilkaviškis asked to be exempted from the responsibility for the upkeep of the parish church, arguing that the jura stolae payment (see above, p. 117) for religious services was enough for this purpose. In this particular case, the local Evangelical landowner of the estate supported the peasants.<sup>2</sup>

The issue of the jura stolae payments, a financial aspect of parish life that was easily abused, is reflected in the petitions of the villagers of Gizei parish during the 1830s. In September, 1838, a number of parishioners asked their bishop to keep the popular pastor who, according to them, had earned the "love and respect of the entire parish by his example and pious deportment." Perhaps, more important, the peasants added that the popular pastor "does everything for free, and does not collect the jura stolae."<sup>3</sup> The bishop refused the request and appointed a new pastor who began collecting the service fee, eliciting more protests from parishioners and strife within the parish.<sup>4</sup>

These Lithuanian parishioners, often pictured by contemporaries as

<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 24: Bartniki, Andrzej Laukaytis and Others to Bishop Gołaszewski, June 15, 1821.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 593: Wiłkowiszki(Akta Kaplic), Peasant Depositions, May 10, 1850.

<sup>3</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 110: Gize, Peasants of Gize to Bishop Straszyński, September, 1838.

<sup>4</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 110: Gize, Depositions of Jan Brazys and Others, January 3, 1845.

pious and obedient, sometimes raised considerable trouble for Church authorities in agitating against unpopular pastors. They could also be just as rambunctious in support of popular clergy. In 1828-1829, this same Giżai parish was the scene of an ecclesiastical conflict involving the peasants and concerning the transfer of a popular local pastor, one Father Widzbor. The peasants, as was their custom, petitioned the bishop of the diocese to cancel Widzbor's proposed transfer.<sup>1</sup> In this case, the parishioners' resistance to a new pastor was exceptionally strong, prompting an unusual investigation by a local Church official who himself, having arrived in the parish, was confronted by a mob of peasants supporting Father Widzbor. The popular pastor was quickly suspended and packed off to Marijampolė for a retreat, as Church authorities suspected that the pastor himself had roused the peasants to a "revolt" in his behalf. More careful investigation, however, revealed that the peasants' demonstration had been provoked by the appearance of an extremely unpopular rival of Father Widzbor, a priest from a nearby parish. The two priests had apparently had their disagreements over the important parish visiting rights (Pol. koledowanie, see above, pp. 116-117) with the peasants supporting their own pastor.<sup>2</sup> The Giżai case was not exceptional; very often, the peasants were quick to express their preferences for their pastors. Significantly, economics played a part in many of the petitions concerning investiture of parish priests.

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. L., 110: Gize, Tomasz Senkus, Macielewski and Others to Bishop Manugiewicz, September 30, 1829.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. L., 111: Gize, Deposition of Gmina Mayor Woytowicz, January 20, 1830.

Yet it would be cynical to assume that the peasants' conflicts with the Church were based solely on material considerations. Issues of nationality and language became extremely important in the relationship of the peasantry to the Church during the 19th century (see Chapter XV). It is certain that misunderstandings occasionally arose from some pastors' lack of familiarity with their peasant parishioners' language and customs.<sup>1</sup> Periodically, the Sejny-Augustów diocese made efforts to match Lithuanian-speaking priests with their congregations; however, this policy was not always consistent and was abandoned during the late 1830s by Bishop Straszyński. Thus, the day-to-day friction between peasant parishioners and the Church was motivated both by economic issues, such as the jura stolae contributions, and also by linguistic and cultural considerations.

The villagers' problems with Church authorities should not, however, obscure the peasantry's basic identification and solidarity with the Catholic faith during the 19th century. The Catholic peasant was easily aroused against any real or imagined threat to the Faith, and this fact occasionally led to strife between different religious groups. During the 1820s, there were reports of trouble between Catholics and the Old Believers (Pol. Filiponi) whom the Catholics accused of proselytizing and even forcibly baptizing adults into Old Belief.<sup>2</sup> Friction between Jews and peasants was, of course, also partly based on religion. In fact,

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in one parish, two peasants accused the pastor of confiscating candles that they were selling in front of the church, apparently a traditional practice that the pastor was ignorant of. A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 314: Łuksze, Depositions of Laskowski and Derwinis, November 29, 1839.

<sup>2</sup> Stanisław Jamiołkowski, Opisanie kościoła sejneńskiego pod względem historycznym, architektonicznym i inwentarskim (undated, unpublished manuscript located in the A. D. Ł.), p. 139.

the resistance of the Lithuanian peasantry to Russification during the 19th century was largely due to a desire to defend Catholicism against what were perceived as Orthodox intrusions. The Church, as the keeper of the faith, was the single institution closest to the Lithuanian village.

## CHAPTER XIII

### DESPAIR AND HOPE: THE POOR PEASANTRY AND THE LEAN YEARS OF THE FORTIES AND FIFTIES

#### Hunger and the Rise of the Landless.

On the whole, the peasantry's struggle against what it considered oppressive institutions was essentially an "optimistically realistic" one; in many ways, villagers tried to take advantage of events to further their own aims, such as an end to corvée, access to forests and pastures, and property rights. The announcement of agrarian decrees usually created high and, sometimes, false expectations among the peasants, but these expectations, revolving around concrete economic issues, were rarely unrealistic. The leaders of the peasantry in their resistance to the landowners were usually the top strata of village society: well-to-do villagers who had the most to gain by challenging the prevalent agrarian system.

Yet, while the first half of the 19th century saw the emergence of the well-to-do Lithuanian peasantry within the Kingdom, this was also a period of increasing impoverishment for a large section of the rural population. Historians have long been aware of the "social stratification" of the village in Poland and Lithuania; however, the very term seems to obscure the cruel details of this process and the suffering it imposed on poorer villagers. Sometimes, the losers in this stratification process sought relief in what can be called "escapist" remedies, such as emigration to a rumored "New World."

The early forties of the 19th century were an unstable period in the countryside of southwestern Lithuania. Sensing an increase in the displaced village population(for example, journeymen and vagabonds), the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs requested provincial governments to collect rural statistics for the ten years preceding 1843. On account of the difficulties in gathering the data, substantial figures for the village population were available only for 1841-1843. Though the statistics were incomplete, they showed a disturbing trend: during these three years, the number of landless farmhands in Augustów province increased by an estimated 120%.<sup>1</sup> Of course, a number of garden peasants and smallholders were expelled from their holdings during this period, but this alone can barely begin to explain the rise in the number of landless villagers. Economic reasons, such as poor harvests, the inability of many garden peasants and smallholders to survive on their meager plots, and an increased demand for hired labor, were certainly more important.

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<sup>1</sup> The figures for Augustów province are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Landed Peasants</u>	<u>Garden Peasants</u>	<u>Landless Farmhands</u>	<u>Total</u>
1841	164,355	52,193	16,000	232,548
1842	172,325	48,852	24,010	245,187
1843	180,140	45,841	35,549	261,530

The data are contained in A. G. A. D., KRSW-6942, Governors' Reports to KRSW, January 16, 1846, k. 435 ff., and are published in Chamerska, O położeniu, p. 29. These figures, though showing a polarization of the village population, are probably too low in all categories; for comments on the statistics see Chamerska, O położeniu, pp. 8-9.

Although there are few statistics for the middle and late forties, there is no doubt that the number of landless villagers continued to increase. This was a period of disastrous harvests and near famine in Augustów province, especially its Lithuanian northern region. Many landed peasants were ruined. Governor Tykiel of Augustów province reported in 1844:

The state of the peasants on private estates is now wretched, the main reason for this situation being the two-year bad harvest which has affected the province. As a result, even formerly prosperous rent-paying peasants on state domains have been driven to poverty . . . It is impossible to attribute this poverty to the overburdening of the peasants by the owners of landed estates, even though this, in fact, exists on several estates, or to the frequent transfer of peasants . . . which is not extremely significant.<sup>1</sup>

The lack of industry in the Trans-Niemen region made it impossible to absorb the unemployed rural populace; this further contributed to the misery of poor villagers. Furthermore, the unemployed and indigent rural populace could still turn to the "traditional" ways of relieving their distress: begging, petty theft, even the formation of robber bands. The bureaucratic apparatus of the Kingdom was too weak and inefficient to combat such large scale rural disorder.<sup>2</sup>

There is ample evidence that Governor Tykiel's concern over the effects of the bad harvests was not exaggerated. The year 1844 was especially difficult on account of continuing July and August rains that

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6942, Governor Tykiel to KRSW, January 21, 1846, k. 415-417.

<sup>2</sup> Chmura, Problem siły, pp. 216-217.

made it impossible to harvest rye until the end of August; in fact, all crops were gravely damaged. The next year was no better, dashing hopes that the peasants could recover their losses. By February, 1845, landowners in some areas reported that they were no longer in a position to offer loans to the peasants. Cattle were disappearing as peasants slaughtered them for food; other cattle simply died for lack of feed.<sup>1</sup> Desperate farmhands, released from work by landed peasants, simply turned themselves over to local authorities for survival. "In the national gmina of Kadaryszki[Kadariškiai] over a dozen people from the laboring class appeared at the end of June [1845], suffering from a lack of potatoes, insufficient food, and inability to find work for even a piece of bread," reported the district chief of Sejny. "I ordered most of them distributed among wealthier villagers, to feed them in return for house-work."<sup>2</sup> In March, 1845, some deaths from starvation were reported in and around the town of Wiżajny. The townspeople liquidated their treasury to buy food and petitioned authorities to provide them with seed for spring planting.<sup>3</sup> While the central government and some landowners considered the district government's appeals for help "alarmist,"<sup>4</sup> local

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7059, Governor Tykiel to KRSW, August 29, 1844, k. 3-5 and February 28, 1845, k. 61-62.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7059, Sejny District Chief to Augustów Governor's Office, February 15, 1845, k. 63.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7059, Townspeople of Wiżajni to Governor Tykiel, March 6, 1845, k. 215 ff.; Sejny Assistant District Chief to Governor Tykiel, March 6, 1845, k. 212-214.

<sup>4</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7059, Bierniacki Report, March 18, 1845, k. 137-138; cf. Goltz, "Kiłka słów," 286.

authorities took steps to prevent famine: they bought grain to distribute to the needy and, in December, 1845, Governor Tykiel ordered that vodka distilling be limited in order to put new grain into circulation for food production.<sup>1</sup>

Unemployment among the farm laborers presented a serious problem. In December, 1845, the district chief of Marijampolė reported that the landed peasants intended to terminate all of their farmhands, whose contracts usually ended around Christmas or New Year's, and do without hired help for the next year. The district chief estimated that there were 28,249 peasant servants(for example, milkmaids, shepherds) and 30,179 other hired hands--a total of almost 60,000 persons who stood to lose their means of livelihood. Previously, Governor Tykiel had sought to alleviate this condition by ordering landed peasants to feed the hired help in the villages; however, the district chief of Marijampolė felt there was not "even the slightest hope that landed peasants would be of any help in feeding the population of the farmhand class."<sup>2</sup> The landed villagers of southwestern Lithuania, known for their prosperity, were driven to bare subsistence. "Those who have some kind of grain," wrote the Kalvarija district chief, "use it together with scraps to make bread, and eat it along with some vegetables for dinner; for breakfast it's potatoes, and in the evening, the same."<sup>3</sup> Although the potato crop

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7063, Governor Tykiel to All District Chiefs, December 13, 1845, k. 35-43.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7063, Marijampolė District Chief to Governor Tykiel, December 15, 1845, k. 69-70.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7063, Kalvarija District Chief to Governor Tykiel, January 10, 1846, k. 73.

in Kalvarijski district was sufficient, it was not distributed evenly; thus, some households didn't even have that. Furthermore, bad harvests disturbed the planting cycle: rye harvests in Kalvarijski district were so low in 1845, that some peasants had nothing to sow for the following winter. Landed villagers could be of little help to their landless brethren in such conditions. As it turned out, Marijampolė district, with its social stratification and large number of landless peasants, suffered greatly during the famine.

The central government responded with more serious relief measures only at the beginning of 1846, when the peasants' distress became fully apparent. It limited grain exports, established some public works, and proposed the construction of large grain magazines in Augustów province.<sup>1</sup> The landowners, on the whole, seem to have been of little help to the peasants, even though they were required by custom to loan the peasants grain and seed in times of need. For one thing, two successive years of poor yields, even after the closing down of distilleries, depleted the manorial grain stocks. On the donated estates, the landlords were often absentees. Here, the estate managers could not issue the peasants manorial provisions without the permission of the landlords who, far away from the scene of the peasants' distress, often refused to heed their managers' appeals for help. The situation was hard to correct, for despite Augustów Governor Tykiel's plea to make aid to the village mandatory, he had to admit that "there exist no regulations empowering the seizure of the

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<sup>1</sup> Śreniowski, Studia nad prawem, pp. 65-66.

landowner's funds for the purpose of helping the peasants."<sup>1</sup> The situation must have indeed been desperate if the government was thinking of "taking from the rich and giving to the poor!"

While local authorities were able to bring some measure of relief in the agrarian disasters that struck all of Lithuania in the mid-forties, they were unable(or, perhaps, unwilling) to protect the village from other abuses. In Kaunas gubernia, landowners took advantage of the rising grain prices to export grain along the lucrative Niemen route. Sometimes, they reportedly seized the peasants' grain from storehouses on state domains.<sup>2</sup> Speculation and hoarding were rampant at such a time, necessitating an ID system for purchasing grain at state warehouses.<sup>3</sup>

The food shortage led to violence and considerable insecurity in the countryside. Many peasants were reduced to begging, stealing and even group attacks in search of food. Landowner Frentzel, the mayor of Panemunė gmina, reported a dramatic rise in begging, as well as the appearance of bands of peasants who stole and extorted food. Some local villagers feared to travel any distance to buy food, fearing the possibility of robbery.<sup>4</sup> Unemployed farmhands, garden peasants, and the other lower strata of the rural populace created another problem as they crowded into the towns when the demand for their labor vanished. The

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7063, Governor Tykiel to KRSW, January 29, 1846, k. 162-163.

<sup>2</sup> Koniukhova, "Sel'skoe khozaiistvo," 228-229.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7063, Governor Tykiel to KRSW, November 18, 1846, k. 221.

<sup>4</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7063, Frentzel to Marijampolė District Chief, December 4, 1845, k. 73-74.

number of rural vagrants increased markedly, and authorities were forced to admit that "a considerable number of the inhabitants had become used to vagrancy, wandering from place to place, begging for food." Forced to live on shrubs, many weakened and died, and the government complained of finding the dead near public roads.<sup>1</sup>

Escape From Hunger: The False Hope of a 'New World.'

How did the peasantry and, especially, the poorer villagers respond to the critical food situation? There were different kinds of peasant migration and emigration. Most movements occurred within the same region; according to government reports, at least 90% of legal and illegal peasant transfers were within the same district.<sup>2</sup> Contemporary records indicate that some Lithuanian families in Augustów province emigrated legally to Russian Lithuania. In 1841, two such families applied for an emigration passport from the Kiduliai gmina in Marijampolė district to settle in a Lithuanian village in Vilnius gubernia. Before a peasant household emigrated legally, it had to prove that it had not participated in the "former rebellion"(that is, the insurrection of 1831), and had to be cleared of all public and private debts. Intention to emigrate was then published in the provincial government's newspaper. If no one came forth to contest the departure, permission could be granted, although obtaining

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7063, KRSW to Governor Tykiel, January 31, 1846, k. 123; see also Kalvarija District Chief to Governor Tykiel, January 10, 1846, k. 173.

<sup>2</sup> See figures in Chamerska, O położeniu, p. 29.

the passport itself was not an easy or quick process.<sup>1</sup>

The mobility of the landless farmhands and garden peasants was far more extensive. While their migrations were mostly concerned with finding work within the same district, times of stress, such as the poor harvests of the mid-forties, inspired many such villagers to "escape" further. The "America" fever that gripped some areas of western Trans-Niemen Lithuania during 1845-1846 was very curious in this regard. During the late summer and fall of 1845, rumors spread through Kalvarija and Marijampolė districts that the Prussian government was sending people who could provide the necessary travel documents to America. Soon, more detailed and "refined" versions of this news took hold in the villages: it was said that the President of the United States had sent a large sum of money to Prussia in order to cover travel expenses for those willing to go to the New World. In September, 1845, Governor Tykiel reported that a "considerable number of peasants, especially the hired farmhands and landless villagers, intend to go [to America] with their families." The governor toured Kalvarija and Marijampolė districts, after which he suggested the denial of passport applications to prospective emigrants and tighter border security.<sup>2</sup> While most of the peasants reaching the Prussian border were turned back by the provincial authorities, others managed to cross into Prussia on their way to America. As news of the American "opportunity"

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7904, Augustów Governor's Office to KRSW, June 30, 1841.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6679, Governor Tykiel to KRSW, September 30, 1845, k. 1.

spread, poorer Jews were soon also trying to emigrate to America.<sup>1</sup>

The office of Polish Viceroy Paskevich expressed serious concern when news of the emigration fever among the Lithuanian border peasants reached Warsaw. The office reported new rumors: one of them had it that a Berlin colonist society was trying to organize settlers from the Kingdom and was spreading attractive tales of the riches awaiting people in America. These rumors excited the peasants. In the border villages, "workers and people of both sexes" began selling their belongings, announcing publicly that they were heading for the New World. When a local official asked the peasants why they were embarking on such a distant journey, the villagers replied that "their life will be much better for them [there] than here." The Kingdom's Viceroy was particularly upset when it was reported that a committee of the colonists' society in Prussia was accepting all healthy persons over forty and sending them to Klaipėda(Ger. Memel), as the gathering point for the future "voyagers." The central government considered this a "serious matter" and demanded that the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs investigate.<sup>2</sup>

Governor Tykiel of Augustów province, probably spurred on by the Viceroy's insinuation of inactivity in the face of the emigration fever, also began to investigate the matter seriously. The governor also took some countermeasures to halt the wild spreading of rumors; for example, he asked Bishop Straszyński of the Sejny-Augustów diocese to publicly deny

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6679, Governor Tykiel to KRSW, October 14, 1845, k. 4; Captain Zarzyski's Report of September 30, 1845, k. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6679, Viceroy's Office to KRSW, October 22, 1845, k. 8-9.

the rumors. Officials carefully examined the peasants' charges that the colonist society's "agents" had urged people to emigrate, and that some of the clergy had announced an American "shortage of labor" from the pulpits. The Augustów military commander's assistant went to Gumbinnen in Lithuanian East Prussia as part of the total investigation. It turned out that there was, in fact, an agency in Tilsit which sponsored emigration to America, but that it refused applications from the Kingdom. Apparently, it had no agents in the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts.<sup>1</sup> The government found no hard evidence that priests had contributed to the rumors, and the clergy denied, in sworn statements, that they encouraged the "emigration."<sup>2</sup> Finally, the investigation concluded that the whole excitement of "going to America" had been started by an innkeeper and an "unknown inhabitant" from the Schirwindt area in the predominantly Lithuanian border region of East Prussia. The innkeeper had told the peasants that the King of Prussia had purchased land in America, and that His Majesty wanted to settle people there from both Prussia and Poland.<sup>3</sup> Such was the power of "rural rumor" during times of stress. Rumor was abetted by such rural social events as church holidays and fairs, where thousands of peasants gathered and then exchanged, embellished and improved "news" of this sort.

In addition to the details of how peasants communicated such hopeful

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6679, Report of the Assistant to the Military Commander of Augustów Province, November 5, 1845, k. 41-42.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. B, 181: Akta Kancellaryi, Sworn Statements of November 8, 1845.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6679, Governor Tykiel to KRSW, January 8, 1846, k. 53-54.

tidings as the "opportunities" in America, the government's investigation conclusively revealed the causes of the mid-forties "emigration" to America. In October, 1845, a group of nine peasant households was turned back from the Prussian border; six of them admitted being "emigrants." In their depositions to authorities, the peasants stated that, in view of their large families with children, they had been unable to feed themselves by working as hired farmhands. It was, they said, to prevent "dire consequences that we planned to emigrate to America through Prussia . . . especially, since from the news reaching us, they pay three złoty or 45 kopecks to each person for food, so that our livelihood is assured." There is no doubt that these farmhands were the economic bottom of peasant society: "We have no immovable property," they admitted, "and our only movables consist of our clothes which have no value."<sup>1</sup>

The peasants were not the only ones who saw America as an escape from intolerable conditions. During the mid-forties, Jews also made the trek to the New World. It is revealing that, by the government's own admission, "such escapes began at the time when police authorities started enforcing regulations concerning the changes in Jewish dress and the shaving of beards" in some parts of the Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Of course, the "going to America" movement of southwestern Lithuania was not a freak; rather, it was a normal response of people undergoing intense economic and social distress.

Emigration fever returned to Augustów province during the early fifties of the 19th century, a period of continuing hardship for the poorer

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6679, Depositions of Jerzy Kaylus, Augustyn Mateuszas and Others, October 13, 1845.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6679, Secretary of State to KRSW, July 31, 1851, k. 61 and ff.

peasantry. The Kalvarija district chief reported in August of 1851 that some of the poorest villagers intended to neglect the winter planting for lack of rye reserves, a potentially disastrous development for local agriculture. The prospect of low yields and continued rural hunger alarmed officials all over Augustów province. The Sejny district chief appealed to the people to conserve grain as much as possible.<sup>1</sup> Sure enough, a new America arose at this time: central Russia. Many peasants began to apply for passports as rumors flew about free land and the Russian government's alleged aid program for new settlers. Most of the prospective emigrants were penniless, and the provincial government feared that only "vagrancy" could result from issuing peasants passports. It is impossible to ascertain how many villagers from the Lithuanian districts responded to this new rumor, but it is known that many Polish peasants from southern Augustów province applied for passports.<sup>2</sup>

Emigration, fancied or real, was one important peasant response to economic hardship. Some historians have observed that rural upheaval, whether social, political or economic, was sometimes accompanied by religious-messianic movements among the people.<sup>3</sup> The Catholic peasantry of Trans-Niemen Lithuania were, on occasion, prone to mystical, mass expressions of faith(see above, pp. 233-234), yet there is only scattered evidence of a "religious" response to agrarian crisis and instability.

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<sup>1</sup> Śreniowski, Studia nad prawem, pp. 142 ff.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-6669, Governor Tykiel to KRSW, May 29, 1852, k. 57-59.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millenium: Revolutionary Messianism in Medieval and Reformation Europe and Its Bearing on Modern Totalitarian Movements(New York, 1961).

However, there are two sources that offer an intriguing glimpse of a revivalist Evangelical Lithuanian sect called, in Polish, Mukrowie or Mukry. The scarcity of sources makes the information concerning this group somewhat speculative, but it is of sufficient interest to be presented at its face value.

One of the sources on this sect is Aleksander Połujański's 1859 travelogue, Wędrówki w gubernii Augustowskiej (Travels Through Augustów Province).<sup>1</sup> According to Połujański, the Mukrowie of Trans-Niemen Lithuania were descended from a sect known in medieval times, and called itself, in Lithuanian, Prusu Lietuwiszkas Szwentukas (literally: The Prussian-Lithuanian Righteous One). The sect apparently originated in Lithuanian East Prussia, where most of the population was Evangelical Lutheran. Połujański reported that the Mukrowie were first discovered by the authorities of Trans-Niemen Lithuania in 1824. Catholics accused the sect of holding meetings with a distinct revivalist flavor: large groups of people reportedly prayed through the night, read prayerbooks and "wept;" more seriously, the Mukrowie allegedly slept together indiscriminately after their fervent prayers. There is no evidence of their number, but, at first, the Mukrowie may have consisted of barely thirty people. They were concentrated in the western border areas of Sejny district in and around the town of Wiżajni, an area populated by a significant Evangelical minority. In the early 19th century, the leaders of the Mukrowie were two Lithuanians: Krzysztof Kubylin and Michał Baczkunas.

A letter from the Augustów provincial commission to the Kingdom's Commission for Religious Confessions in 1824, confirmed the rumors that

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<sup>1</sup> The Mukrowie are described in Połujański, Wędrówki, pp. 303-306.

a dissident sect existed. In fact, provincial authorities questioned two adherents of the group. The dissidents maintained that their only difference from other Lutheran Evangelicals was that they prayed in a kneeling position. The local Lutheran pastor felt that the sect members sought to separate from the established Church, but admitted that they came to his own regular church services. . The provincial commission promised to undertake a thorough review to get at the truth about the allegations against the Mukrowie, but archival documents on this are still lacking.<sup>1</sup>

According to Połująński, the Mukrowie story took a different turn in 1847, a time of considerable hardship in the region. A Germanized Lithuanian named Nagis, a peasant from East Prussia, began claiming that he had been in heaven, and had been sent to earth to save certain souls. One of his followers, a relative named Michał Kun, soon found a number of adherents, not only among the Lithuanian Protestants of Trans-Niemen Lithuania, but also among some Catholics. Połująński reports that, according to a government survey, the Lithuanian Mukrowie sought to somehow include the Old Testament in the New and create something akin to the Koran. They did not smoke or drink. The sect itself was tolerated in Prussia, but not in the Kingdom; by 1855, it was reported that their secret meetings had been suppressed.

This is virtually all that is known about the Mukrowie of Augustów province. It is certainly not enough, but, together with the examples of emigration excitement in the forties and fifties, suggests that the

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., CWW-1401, Augustów Provincial Commission to Commission for Religious Confessions, August 27, 1824, k. 1-2.

peasants, especially the poorer ones, were not immune to "escapist" solutions when conditions became unbearable. Certainly, there are enough historical examples to show that rural escapism is not to be considered a rare or abnormal phenomenon: it was simply another way peasants sought to remedy their situation. Even well-to-do landed peasants were not immune to hope (for example, the rumors of hidden manifestoes, the Tsar's alleged benevolence), although their struggle more often revolved around the realistic, practical issues of corvée and property rights. It should not be surprising that the landless and impoverished, who stood to gain the least from agrarian reform and suffered the most from the unpredictable turns of the agrarian economy, occasionally turned to dreams of the New World and temporal, as well as spiritual, salvation.

However, a "messianic" search for utopian alternatives was not an effective tool with which landed peasants could resist their exploitation. During times of national political and economic crisis, the peasantry often reacted with massive, sometimes violent, protest.

## CHAPTER XIV

### MASS AGRARIAN UNREST BEFORE AND DURING THE GREAT REFORMS, 1831-1864

The general political and economic developments in Poland and Lithuania during the 19th century decisively affected the peasantry. The period before 1864 was a particularly volatile time in Polish and Lithuanian national political life and agrarian relations. Especially significant were the anti-Russian insurrections of 1831 and 1863, the conspiracies of 1846-1849, and the great agrarian reforms in Russia and the Kingdom of 1861-1864. The peasantry responded actively to all of these events. In addition, the village populace was the center of great concern and debate among the nobility and government officials in both the Kingdom and Russian Lithuania.

#### The Agrarian Question Among the Nobility and Gentry of Poland and Lithuania Before 1864.

The twenties had been a period of relative quiet in the public debate on peasant reform. The anti-Russian insurrection which began in Warsaw in November, 1830, marked a turning point in the history of the agrarian question. While the peasants in the regular Polish army fought bravely enough, the village populace back home was not entirely enthusiastic about the revolt. In March, 1831, the Kingdom's Sejm (or Parliament) met to discuss the peasant question. The nobility and gentry were divided along right, center and left lines on the problem of agrarian reform. In

the end, the conservatives scuttled any meaningful reform within the Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> In Russian Lithuania, the rebels issued some proclamations to the peasantry, promising them an end to personal serfdom on the Polish example. Local rebel commanders sometimes issued their own proclamations on granting the peasants freedom and even land. However, no coherent program of agrarian reform emerged in Russian Lithuania either since landed interests opposed any initiative on the peasant question.<sup>2</sup>

More important than the insurrection itself for the evolution of the peasant debate was the aftermath of the rebellion: the so-called Great Emigration, or the mass exodus of almost 10,000 Polish and Lithuanian nobility and gentry to Western Europe, mainly France. The majority of the emigrants were impoverished, even landless, gentry; among the rest, there were some powerful aristocrats, like Adam Czartoryski, who favored an agrarian reform by which only well-to-do peasants would become proprietors.

In France, the emigrants argued the causes of the 1831 debacle. Many Poles and Lithuanians believed that the conservatives' negative attitude toward agrarian reform was responsible for the insurrection's failure. Virtually everyone now recognized the peasant question as an important national issue, regardless of political persuasion. Czartoryski's conservative camp, known as the Hotel Lambert, was in a minority. The Polish National Committee, led by the well-known historian from Vilnius, Joachim Lelewel, formulated a kind of central position on the agrarian question; but, while he decried corvée as morally abominable, Lelewel's political

<sup>1</sup> For details see Maksymilian Meloch, Sprawa włościanńska w powstaniu listopadowym, 2nd ed. (Warsaw, 1948), pp. 84-159; also Kieniewicz, Emancipation, pp. 82-86.

<sup>2</sup> Feliksas Sliesoriūnas, 1830-1831 metų sukilimas Lietuvoje (Vilnius, 1974), p. 394 ff.

caution prevented him from formulating a strong, pro-peasant platform. It was the Polish and Lithuanian emigrant "left" that provided the most radical, comprehensive and forceful presentation of agrarian reform. In 1832, a group called the Polish Democratic Society broke with Lelewel's National Committee and began working on a radical, democratic solution to the peasant question. The Democratic Society's solution to the agrarian problem was proclaimed in December, 1836, and became known as the Great Manifesto, or Poitiers Manifesto. It stated that in the future, independent Poland, all peasants farming a plot of land would become owners of that land without paying indemnity. In general, the Polish Democratic Society had a faith in the peasant masses somewhat akin to that of the later Russian populists.<sup>1</sup> There was also a small group of radicals who adhered to utopian-socialist views that were widespread in Europe during the 1830s, but it proved to be an isolated sect, although its slogans were later revived within the radical underground movement in the Kingdom itself.<sup>2</sup>

Among the members of the Great Emigration, there were some ex-rebels from Russian Lithuania. They formed their own emigre organizations which the Poles bitterly accused of harboring separatist tendencies with regards to a future Polish state.<sup>3</sup> One of the more prominent radicals among the Lithuanian gentry was Jan Gasztowt (Lith. Jonas Goštautas), a signatory of the Great Manifesto. In 1839, Gasztowt published a book in Poitiers

<sup>1</sup> For details see I. Miller, "Krest'ianskii vopros v programme Pol'skogo Demokraticeskogo Obshchestva (30-e i 40-e gg. XIX v.)," in Voprosy istorii, IX(1948), 41-62; for the political program see Czesław Leśniewski, "Gmina w Polsce odrodzonej według projektów Towarzystwa Demokratycznego z lat 1840-1841," in Studia historyczne ku czci Stanisława Kutrzeby, II(Cracow, 1938), 483 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Kieniewicz, Emancipation, pp. 107-108.

<sup>3</sup> Sliessorius, Sukilimas, pp. 413-416.

entitled Pan Sędzic czyli opowiadanie o Litwie i Żmudzi (The Honorable Judge, or a Story About Lithuania and Samogitia) in which he exposed the nobility's oppression of the peasantry in Lithuania.<sup>1</sup>

During the 1840s, some of the radical gentry tried to disseminate patriotic and democratic propaganda among the peasantry; though partly successful in Prussian Poland, the attempts to arouse the villagers failed both in the Kingdom and Russian Lithuania. Only the agitation of Piotr Ściegenny, a charismatic village priest, met with some peasant response.<sup>2</sup> In Lithuania and Belorussia, there were several attempts to organize democratic propaganda among the peasants and even to stage a revolt. One of the more dramatic attempts at revolution was that of Szymon Konarski, an energetic radical from Suwałki, whose conspiracy was uncovered. The leader himself was shot in 1839.<sup>3</sup>

Several radical secret societies were organized in Lithuania during the mid-forties, partly under the influence of the more powerful Polish movement in the Duchy of Poznań. One of the conspiracies was led by the brothers Dionyzy and Onufry Skarżyński, sons of the landowner of the small Bendrés estate in Sejny district. The Skarżyński brothers managed to recruit a number of liberal landowners and gentry, as well as a few government officials and priests from Trans-Niemen Lithuania. Dionyzy Skarżyński later claimed that he had acted because of the "difficult fate of the local peasants and their subjugation by the landowners." He

<sup>1</sup> Jablonskis, "Valstiečių judėjimas," 63 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Stefan Kieniewicz and Witold Kula, eds., Historia Polski, Vol. II, Pt. III(Warsaw, 1959), 132-134.

<sup>3</sup> Kieniewicz and Kula, Historia Polski, Vol. II, Pt. III, 118-124; cf. Janik, "Sprawa ludowa," 255-256.

compared the sorry state of these villagers with the relative welfare of the peasants in Prussia.<sup>1</sup> The two brothers even planned to attack Russian units in Sejny and Kalvarija, but the plot collapsed in 1846 when the conspirators realized they did not have enough strength for such action. Agitation among the peasants in this affair was weak and was limited to the efforts of the Skarżyński brothers themselves.<sup>2</sup> In 1848, two Marian monks were arrested in Marijampolė district for anti-Russian propaganda, one of the few weak manifestations of militancy in Trans-Niemen Lithuania during the 1840s.<sup>3</sup> On the whole, the conspiratorial movements of the forties within the Kingdom and Lithuania were ineffective, and the response here to the European revolutions of 1848 was very weak.

Before the 1850s, public debate on agrarian reform within the Kingdom was limited to a few treatises, primarily on the problem of corvée. In 1830, Jan Żukowski wrote his well-known book O pańszczyźnie (On Compulsory Labor), a direct attack on corvée which advocated reform on the Prussian example. Under the iron rule of Pashkevich, the Kingdom's reactionary viceroy between 1831 and 1855, the agrarian liberals were discouraged. However, progressive landowners did reestablish the Agricultural Institute at Marymont in Warsaw in the early 1840s and began publishing the influential National Economy Yearbooks (Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego) which advocated new agricultural methods and moderate social reforms. Although this liberal, capitalistic, and moderate group came out against corvée as outmoded and inefficient, it also supported complete freedom

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<sup>1</sup> Dawid Fajnhauz, Ruch konspiracyjny na Litwie i Białorusi 1846-1848 (Warsaw, 1965), p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> Fajnhauz, Ruch, pp. 158-160.

<sup>3</sup> Jonas Totoraitis, Marijampolės kunigu marijonų vienuolynas (Marijampolė, 1924), p. 35.

in the landowners' dealings with the peasants. The most prominent land-owner of this ilk was Andrzej Zamoyski, who headed the movement and whose own reforms on his enormous complex of estates in Lublin province were the model for many of the nobility.<sup>1</sup>

The debate on the nature of agrarian reform grew more heated during the mid and late fifties. The influential Agricultural Society, established in 1857, quickly became the Kingdom's major forum not only on the peasant question, but also on the political future of the country in general. By this time, few landowners advocated the continuation of corvée. The public forum saw a debate between those who favored only rent reform, and those who proposed that peasants be given title to their holdings. The first group was headed by Zamoyski. He argued that retaining the nobility's right to the land would make costly redemption by the villagers unnecessary(that is, peasants wouldn't have to pay for the land if they didn't have any!) and that, in any case, rent reform was an inducement for peasants who otherwise tended to laziness. Zamoyski also feared that, once begun, the process of making peasants landowners would lead to social disorder as the landless peasantry would demand its share of land.

The arguments for making the peasants landowners were systematized by Tomasz Potocki, more commonly known by his pseudonym Krzyżtopór. He believed that social equilibrium was best maintained through a distribution of property. In Potocki's system, landowners would be indemnified, but the village holdings sold at low prices. An elective communal government, controlled by the landowner and parish priest, would be established.

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<sup>1</sup> Kieniewicz and Kula, Historia Polski, Vol. III, Pt. II, 65-66; cf. E. Halicz, Kwestia chłopska w Królestwie Polskim w dobie powstania styczniowego (Warsaw, 1955), pp. 79 ff.

Thus, while the peasant would become a property owner, he would still be under the effective control of higher authority, specifically, the landed nobility.<sup>1</sup> Potocki's arguments found considerable support among the landowning upper classes.

To the left of these two groups of landowners were the more radical Polish intelligentsia and lesser gentry. The radical orientation was popular in the so-called borderlands: Lithuania, the Ukraine and Belorussia. During the fifties, one group in Kiev advocated a "radical change" in social relations, not just a simple parcelling out of land to the peasantry.<sup>2</sup> In the Kingdom itself, another radical group was established at the Warsaw Medical School which was opened in 1857. Two years later, Kapitula(The Chapter), the first federation of Warsaw radicals, was formed.<sup>3</sup>

Poland's budding middle class found another, more or less moderate democratic group which advocated education for the masses and hoped to persuade the nobility to give the peasants land and freedom. This group, led by Edward Jurgens and Agaton Giller, was ridiculed and dubbed "The Millenarians" by radicals for its cautious and evolutionary approach. These various political groupings of nobility and gentry were to split later into "Red" and "White" factions during the 1863 insurrection.

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<sup>1</sup> Kieniewicz, Sprawa, pp. 88-92; Kieniewicz, Emancipation, pp. 150-153.

<sup>2</sup> Krzysztof Groniowski, "Rewolucja agrarna w ideologii obozu demokratycznych," in Z epoki Mickiewicza, ed. Stefan Kieniewicz(Wrocław, 1955), 177.

<sup>3</sup> R. F. Leslie, Reform and Insurrection in Russian Poland 1856-1865 (London, 1963), pp. 82-86.

An important impetus for reform in the Kingdom was the debate among the nobility of Russian Lithuania on the abolition of serfdom. In 1857, Governor-General Nazimov of Vilnius directed Lithuanian landowners to present proposals for emancipation of the serfs with land, even though these same landowners had previously opposed suggestions that peasants be given title to their holdings.<sup>1</sup> In many ways, Lithuania's landowners tried to undercut the peasants' planned rights to the land and even preserve compulsory labor obligations. Peasant evictions began in the late fifties with the result that, on the eve of the Tsarist Emancipation Manifesto of 1861, agrarian unrest reached new levels of violence in Russian Lithuania.<sup>2</sup> The activity of the nobility in Lithuania, the knowledge that Alexander II was about to promulgate an emancipation for the Empire, and the patriotic agitation in the Kingdom since 1860, increased the pressure on the nobility in the Kingdom of Poland to take a stand on peasant reform and Polish independence.

In February, 1861, the Agricultural Society met in Warsaw to consider rent reform and land for the peasants. Within a few days of the meeting, a demonstration for Polish autonomy erupted in the city during which five people were shot to death by police, including two members of the Agricultural Society.<sup>3</sup> In March, 1861, the Tsar issued his Emancipation Edict in Russia which excited the peasantry of the Kingdom as well. In May, the Tsar issued an ukaz allowing all the Kingdom's peasants to commute their

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<sup>1</sup> N[ikolai] N. Ulashchik, "Iz istorii reskripta 20 noiabria 1857 goda," in Istoricheskie zapiski, XXVIII(1949), 166, 177.

<sup>2</sup> Mečislovas Jučas, "Baudžiavos panaikinimas Lietuvoje," in Lietuvos valstiečiai, 86-96.

<sup>3</sup> Kieniewicz, Sprawa włościańska, p. 133.

corvée obligations into a temporary ransom, pending thorough rent reform. By 1862, corvée had been effectively abolished within the Kingdom, but the land issue remained unsettled. In June, 1862, a clandestine patriotic Polish Central National Committee was established in Warsaw. It sought to effect an improbable social compromise with the goal of uniting both the peasantry and gentry into a common front for the liberation of Poland by granting the peasants property and equal rights, yet avoiding infringement on the nobility's property rights. The Committee's Agaton Giller advocated a social revolution that would be "quiet, peaceful, dignified, and in which the entire nation would participate."<sup>1</sup>

On January 22, 1863, the National Central Committee, acting as a provisional government, issued a manifesto announcing the national insurrection against the Russians. Two decrees concerned the land question. The first granted landed peasants title to their holdings outright and promised the landowners compensation from the state. The second promised at least three morgi of land to landless and garden peasants, if they participated in the insurrection.<sup>2</sup> As far as the National Committee was concerned, this solved the peasant problem.

The left wing of the Reds, or the so-called "revolutionary democrats," were dissatisfied with the moderate course of the insurrection's leadership. This radical group operated in Warsaw, Lithuania, Belorussia and the Ukraine. The radicals saw Poland's strength in its petty gentry,

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<sup>1</sup> Ruch, August 10, 1862. As published in Prasa tajna z lat 1861-1864, ed. Stefan Kieniewicz, I(Warsaw, 1966), 343-344; also see Głos z Warszawy, May 20, 1862 in the same collection(I, 197).

<sup>2</sup> English text is in Kieniewicz, Emancipation, Appendix H, pp. 258-259.

peasants, working class and youth.<sup>1</sup> Zygmunt Sierakowski, who associated with the Russian Land and Freedom populists during the 1850s,<sup>2</sup> and Konstanty Kalinowski, a member of the landless gentry from Belorussia, were leading radicals in Lithuania. Kalinowski published a peasant newsletter in the Belorussian language during the insurrection entitled Mužycckaja prauda(The Peasant's Truth); it has been described as "considerably more radical than any other peasant periodical in the entire area of the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth," at least for this period.<sup>3</sup> The most prominent and popular leader of the radical Reds in Samogitia was Father Antanas Mackevičius(Pol. Antoni Mackiewicz), a priest who led guerrilla bands of peasants. Significantly, some of these "Reds" also advocated a kind of national autonomy for Lithuania and Belorussia. In Trans-Niemen Lithuania, Mikalojus Akelaitis(Pol. Mikołaj Akielewicz), though less radical than Kalinowski or Mackevičius on the social question, sought to arouse the Lithuanian peasantry against the Russians(for more on this see Chapter XV below). Although Soviet historiography has probably exaggerated the influence of contemporary Russian radical intelligentsia (for example, Alexander Herzen) on the radical movement in Poland and Lithuania, there is no doubt that a number of these radicals of the 1863 insurrection responded to personal contacts with Russian populists and their underground literature, as well as to the small number of dissident

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<sup>1</sup> Kieniewicz, Sprawa włościańska, p. 277; Bronisław Szwarc, "Założenie Komitetu Centralnego w r. 1862," in W czterdziestą rocznicę powstania styczniowego(Lwów, 1904), 449.

<sup>2</sup> See V. A. D'iakov, "Materialy k biografii Sigizmunda Serakovskogo," in Vosstanie 1863 g. i russko-pol'skie revoliutsionnye sviazi 60-kh godov, eds. V. Koroliuk and I. Miller(Moscow, 1960), 63-124.

<sup>3</sup> Dawid Fajnhauz, "Praca konspiracyjna powstania styczniowego na Litwie i Białorusi, 1861-1864," in Rocznik Białostocki, IV(1963), 47.

Russian officers who abetted the insurrection.<sup>1</sup>

Opposing the Reds' radical views on the agrarian question were Lithuanian moderates, the so-called "Whites," led by prominent landowners like Jakób Gieysztor. Gieysztor, although an opponent of compulsory labor and serfdom, was concerned that the landowners preserve their economic freedom of action. In a treatise published in 1859, he wrote that the Russian government had acted intelligently by "allowing the landowners themselves to continue settling [agrarian] relations."<sup>2</sup> In addition to their desire to keep the countryside subservient, the Lithuanian Whites desired a strong union with Poland; on this count, they suspected the Reds of separatist tendencies. The Whites were cautious men. Gieysztor himself admitted in his memoirs that he was skeptical of the anti-Russian revolt and its chances of success.<sup>3</sup>

The political divisions of the nobility on the peasant question were roughly these: the great landowners, the bourgeois or middle-class democrats, and the so-called revolutionary democrats.<sup>4</sup> In some cases, for example that of Zygmunt Sierakowski, there was a change from the "bourgeois" camp to "revolutionary" democracy.<sup>5</sup> Almost all of the Polish and

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<sup>1</sup> V. B. Bikulin, "O russko-pol'sko-litovsko-belorusskikh revoliutsionnykh sviaziakh perioda vosstaniia 1863-1864gg.," in Revoliutsionnaia situatsiia v Rossii v 1859-1861gg., IV(Moscow, 1965), 301 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Jakób Gieysztor, Głos szlachcica do swych współbraci o wolności i równości kmicieej(Poznań, 1859), p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> Jakób Gieysztor, Pamiętniki z lat 1857-1865, III(Wilno, 1913), 155, 165.

<sup>4</sup> Krzysztof Groniowski, Problem rewolucji agrarnej w ideologii obozów politycznych w latach 1846-1879(Warsaw, 1957), pp. 26-30.

<sup>5</sup> Groniowski, Problem rewolucji, pp. 87-90.

Lithuanian nobility and gentry sought independence from Russia. The stumbling block for effective national unity was the social question. The defeat of the 1863 insurrection, and the proclamation of the Tsar's land reform for the Kingdom in March, 1864, granting the peasants land without redemption payments, made the nobility's debate on the agrarian problem in Lithuania and the Kingdom irrelevant.

#### The Peasants and the Political-Agrarian Crises, 1831-1864.

As mentioned before, the peasantry responded massively to the great turning points in 19th century Polish and Lithuanian history. One of the first was the insurrection of 1831. Although the Polish and Lithuanian rebels failed to implement any significant reform for the peasantry, the villagers were active during the insurrection in a number of ways. They made up the majority of the Polish army and, therefore, fought on the side of the insurrection as regular soldiers. In some areas of Lithuania, the peasants understood the rebels' invitation to take up arms for independence from Russia as an abolition of compulsory labor.<sup>1</sup> When the revolutionary leadership failed to take any dramatic initiatives in this direction, many peasants rebelled against the insurgents. In the Telšiai area of Samogitia, the villagers revolted against manorial administration and resisted recruitment into the rebel army. Peasant opposition to the insurrection's leadership was evident in other parts of Russian Lithuania as well.<sup>2</sup> Thus, while some Lithuanian peasants there supported the

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<sup>1</sup> Sliesoriūnas, Sukilimas, pp. 396 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Sliesoriūnas, Sukilimas, pp. 416-434.

rebellion in the hopes of gaining their freedom, other peasants, enraged by the continuation of corvée and the repressive measures of some rebel units, refused to perform compulsory labor, destroyed rent records, and even attacked and killed a number of estate officials.<sup>1</sup>

Peasants were quick to exploit the confusion that war brought. In January, 1831, the Provincial Commission of Augustów province complained to ecclesiastical authorities that the villagers on both state and private lands were "taking advantage of the present time of disturbance in the country to invade the state forests in groups, causing damage, while the officials and lower forest service are unable to resist them." The government asked the diocesan priests to use the pulpit to order the peasants to cease such attacks.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the issue of forest servitudes was a major one among the peasantry of southwestern Lithuania. Here, it was the well-to-do peasantry who were in the forefront of agrarian unrest and popular resistance. Many landed villagers complained bitterly that, due to excessive obligations, they were unable to retain the necessary farmhands.<sup>3</sup>

Peasant resistance to the rebel government was most pronounced in the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts. One main cause of village unrest and suspicion towards the government was conscription into the national guard, the paramilitary units of which were to be made up of peasants. In Trans-

<sup>1</sup> Augustinas Janulaitis, "Valstiečiai ir 1831m. revoliucija Lietuvoje," in Lietuvių tauta, Vol. 4(1910), 480-484; cf. Feliksas Sliesoriūnas, "Klasiniai prieštaravimai 1831m. sukilime Lietuvoje," LTSRMA Darbai, XVIII(1965), 102-105.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. B, 528: Przeniesienia Targów, Augustów Provincial Commission to Diocesan Administration, January 2, 1831.

<sup>3</sup> Meloch, Sprawa włościanńska, p. 65.

Niemen Lithuania, some peasants escaped conscription by fleeing to neighboring Prussia. Other villagers simply refused to be inducted into the guard units, ignoring the Catholic clergy's patriotic pleas to support the rebellion. One case of massive resistance occurred in Kalvarija district during Christmas of 1830. Authorities here told the villagers to go to the town of Kalvarija to join a large guards' cavalry unit. The peasants refused to obey after a guard member, one Jerzy Baniszakis, and his son persuaded a crowd of villagers to resist the government order. When the local gmina mayor arrested the two agitators, the peasants attacked the military escort on the road to town. The village mayor, fearing bloodshed, released his prisoners, but the villagers continued their "revolt," forcing the government party to barricade itself in the local gmina building. Finally, the fortuitous help of some of the well-to-do local peasants managed to temporarily calm the crowd, which was able to present its grievances. They protested that their proposed induction was just another obligation cooked up by the landowners. They also complained that the government had announced no concessions to the peasants, but had, on the contrary, demanded they fulfill their obligations. In addition, it was vigorously collecting the salt and tobacco monopoly levies.

The local gmina mayor's recommendations of how to deal with the peasants are interesting. First, he proposed that the government abolish the salt and tobacco taxes, dismiss the tax collectors, and then announce these moves to the populace from the pulpits. In addition, the mayor suggested that the proposed formation of the cavalry unit be abandoned; that the government appoint Lithuanian speakers as leaders of peasant guard units

so that discipline could be maintained, and that authorities avoid assigning as officers former rural officials whom the peasants mistrusted. As a final, public relations move, the mayor suggested that the priests be told to announce publicly that "the fatherland will reward them[i.e. the peasants] for their labors."<sup>1</sup>

Yet, while many peasants opposed the Polish nobility during the insurrection, they rarely went over to the Russian side. As it was, the Russian army did not treat villagers with kid gloves. There is evidence that the Russians, on occasion, committed atrocities against the peasants. One memoir records how in Kaunas gubernia, Russian troops burned peasants alive in their homes.<sup>2</sup> Village resistance to the Russians in Lithuania increased during 1831 with the drafting of peasant recruits into the Russian army. In fact, when the Russians announced their recruiting policy, small armed units of peasants were reported making their way into southwestern Lithuania to join up with rebels in the Kingdom.<sup>3</sup> Some villagers, caught serving in rebel units or resisting authority, were flogged, others even executed.<sup>4</sup>

On the whole, the peasants had few political or national sympathies during the 1831 anti-Russian insurrection in Poland and Lithuania. They were primarily interested in those issues immediately touching on their

<sup>1</sup> Meloch, Sprawa włościańska, pp. 68-71.

<sup>2</sup> Henryk Mościcki, Powstanie 1831 roku na Litwie: wspomnienia uczestników (Wilno, 1931), pp. 87-88.

<sup>3</sup> See Feliksas Sliesoriūnas' comments in Goštautas, Ponas Teisėjaitis, pp. 114-115.

<sup>4</sup> Feliksas Sliesoriūnas, "Caro valdžios priemonės 1830-1831m. sukilimui Lietuvoje slopinti," LTSRMA Darbai, Ser. A, XIX(1965), 127-128.

welfare, such as military recruitment and corvée. Where they did volunteer for the rebel forces, the peasants did so in the hope of gaining new concessions from the nobility. For their part, the rebel military commanders tried to use peasant manpower as much as they could; in south-western Lithuania, one commander organized peasant paramilitary groups under the village headmen.<sup>1</sup> As regular soldiers in the rebel army, the peasants were deeply involved in the military aspect of the 1831 insurrection. In Lithuania, one historian of the uprising estimated that villagers made up anywhere between 62.5% to 92% of the rebel forces, depending on the unit, even though peasant volunteers within the ranks were a minority.<sup>2</sup> Despite their importance, the peasants could do little to effect an outcome favorable to themselves. While thousands of peasants fought in the rebel ranks, the masses of the people remained indifferent to the national cause of the insurrection.<sup>3</sup>

More important for agrarian relations within the Kingdom than the insurrection itself was its aftermath. The occupation of the country by Marshal Ivan Paskevich and his Russian forces in 1831 introduced the Russians as a new factor in landowner-peasant relations. On the one hand, the Russians desired to exploit the peasants' antagonism toward

<sup>1</sup> Sliesoriūnas, Sukilimas, p. 367.

<sup>2</sup> Sliesoriūnas, "Klasiniai prieštaravimai," 90-91.

<sup>3</sup> For military events in Trans-Niemen Lithuania see Sliesoriūnas, Sukilimas, pp. 366-372; cf. Andrzej Szcześniak, "Działania partyzanckie w Augustowskim i Płockiem w czasie wojny 1830-1831," Studia i materiały do historii wojskowości, Vol. 7, No. 2(1961), 283-321. For a general treatment, see R. F. Leslie, The November Insurrection and Polish Politics (London, 1963).

the Polish manor, the source, as they saw it, of anti-Russian conspiracies. On the other hand, the Russians feared that a radical peasant reform in Poland would create a dangerous example for the peasants in the Russian Empire. Throughout the entire post-1831 period in the Kingdom, the Russian authorities oscillated between the attractive temptation of using the peasantry for keeping the nobility in check, and the sober realization that they could scarcely undertake major reforms in the Kingdom without similar changes in Russia. During the early thirties, Fiodor Engel, Viceroy Paskevich's chief advisor, proposed major reforms (some of them enacted in 1846), but Nicholas I and Paskevich decided to leave the agrarian question alone for the rest of the decade. In 1831, the government issued a rescript ordering the Kingdom's peasantry to continue compulsory labor under the threat of military retaliation; unfortunately, this had the effect of creating rumors in the village that the Russians intended to restore serfdom and thus hardly led to a lessening of tensions in the countryside.<sup>1</sup>

Opposition to corvée continued to grow steadily during the thirties, as seen in the examples of peasant petitions and resistance in previous chapters. It was during the 1840s, however, that agrarian unrest in Trans-Niemen Lithuania first reached what can be called massive proportions. The peasant movement here came later than in the western parts of the Kingdom: in the east, the expansion of manorial lands at the expense of village holdings and peasant evictions did not begin on a larger scale until after 1840. In any case, there were fewer evictions in Augustów

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<sup>1</sup> Grynwaser, Kwestia agrarna, pp. 81-90.

province, where state domains predominated, than anywhere else in the Kingdom. The economic backwardness of the eastern regions made it more attractive for landowners to expand agricultural production through an increase in the peasants' obligations, as well as a revocation of village servitude rights to pasture and forest. This was different from the western parts of the Kingdom, where landowners were quicker to introduce capitalistic methods to manorial agriculture by evicting peasants and using hired labor in their stead.<sup>1</sup>

In 1846, two events inspired the peasantry to massive resistance against manorial obligations: the Galician jacquerie which began in late February, and the Tsar's ukaz of June 7. The Russian government was grateful for the way some peasants cooperated with authorities in rooting out the few attempts at staging another national uprising in Poland and Lithuania in 1846-1848. However, the Galician revolt showed that, once aroused, the peasants were not easily stilled. Thus, the Kingdom's government tried to isolate its population from the Galician peasant uprising.

On April 10, 1846, Governor Benedykt Tykiel of Augustów province issued a circular to all the town and gmina mayors in which he expressed his fears that bargemen, travelling via the Augustów Canal to the Niemen River, would spread the Galician revolutionary "fervor." To quarantine the disease, Tykiel ordered that bargemen, especially those from Galicia, be forbidden to set foot on land. He ordered that any such trespassers be kept under guard and isolated from all contacts with local inhabitants, particularly peasants. The purpose of this policy, Tykiel explained, was

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<sup>1</sup> Grynwaser, Kwestia agrarna, pp. 96 ff.

to prevent "in the case of contact, any incitement, or exertion of influence on local inhabitants that is incompatible with order and tranquility."<sup>1</sup> Such measures, however, were unable to dampen the people's suspicion that something was brewing. The jittery atmosphere in the countryside was reflected in the trivial litigation concerning the peasant Adam Wronowski from Lazdijai, and a Jewish craftsman, Szmouř Glikman, in early 1846. The peasant, fearing that Glikman was about to denounce him to the authorities for stealing wood, allegedly threatened to "repay" the Jew "when the Revolution begins." Despite Wronowski's denials, the government charged him with making criminal threats.<sup>2</sup> The government's expenditure of time and paperwork investigating such trivial complaints can only be attributed to nervousness about the Galician massacres, and expressions of national revolt in Poland and Lithuania.

The direct effect of the Galician events was, naturally, strongest in the Kingdom's districts bordering on Austria;<sup>3</sup> however, even in the northern Lithuanian districts there was some response. A number of landowners, fearing a peasant revolt, are known to have fled across the Niemen River to neighboring districts in Vilnius and Kaunas gubernias, leaving their managers to handle the estates.<sup>4</sup>

More important than the Galician peasants' uprising, or the national-

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7333, Governor Tykiel to Town and Gmina Mayors, April 10, 1846, k. 168.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7229, Documents on Wronowski Affair, k. 5-15.

<sup>3</sup> Grynwaser, Kwestia agrarna, pp. 112 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Jurginis, "Baudžiava Lietuvoje," 33.

istic and radical rumblings of some of the nobility, was the Tsar's ukaz of June, 1846(see above, pp.57-58) for details of the decree's provisions). In view of the approaching harvest season and fearful of peasant unrest, the government decided to postpone the decree's announcement to the villages until the fall. Word of it leaked out, however, and soon rumors flew that the Tsar had abolished all labor obligations. Throughout the summer and fall of 1846, peasant resistance to corvée grew steadily. Even the official announcement of the ukaz in late August failed to still the unrest: as a rule, the peasants simply interpreted the decree in the most favorable sense. In many instances, villagers refused to sign protocols announcing the decree. In September, 1846, Governor Tykiel of Augustów province reported to the Kingdom's Commission for Internal Affairs:

Peasants have ceased performing obligations to the manor the instant it[i.e. the decree] was announced, because of an erroneous understanding of the highest ukaz. On the one hand, they assume that they are immediately free from gratuitous obligations; on the other, the peasants have been insubordinate because of the inappropriate behavior of the landlords and managers who exacted gratuitous obligations [Pol. daremszczyzna]. . . not allowing the uneducated rural populace the possibility of reflection and a gradual understanding[of the reform]. The refusal of signatures [on the ukaz announcements] was a result of exaggerated hopes which some shysters were able to inculcate prematurely. It originates also from the deep-rooted mistrust of officials' activities among the peasants, especially the Lithuanians, which goes so far that they refuse to sign even those things which they understand well and which correspond to their interests.<sup>1</sup>

Peasant resistance to corvée was more pronounced in Augustów province than anywhere else in the Kingdom. On a number of private estates in Sejny and Kalvarija districts, the headmen refused to sign the necessary documents announcing the decree. On some of the estates of the huge Prienai

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted in Grynwaser, Kwestia agrarna, p. 127.

state complex held by Prince Leon Sapieha, there were also reports of peasant resistance. One villager, a certain Jerzy Milaszewski, claiming that the provisions of the Tsar's ukaz were not being announced in their entirety, stole the government representative's copy of the decree instructions and disappeared. Another peasant claimed that a neighboring pastor had announced the Tsar's cancellation of all manorial obligations from the pulpit. In such an atmosphere of rumor and hope, the local peasants refused to work for the manor. In September, 1846, the district secretary of Marijampolé arrived with twenty Cossacks to flog Milaszewski, but the villagers attacked the soldiers and freed their comrade. Later, the provincial governor himself arrived and his party flogged eleven peasants who had taken part in the confrontation with the Cossacks. Only the so-called "permanent execution" (Pol. egzekucja), which consisted of the peasants being forced to feed and pay for the troops stationed in their villages, finally forced the peasants to submit.<sup>1</sup>

Peasant unrest in Trans-Niemen Lithuania continued into 1847. In April of that year, some ninety peasants from the Lower Gelgaudiškis estate in Marijampolé district went on strike, claiming that the Tsar's 1846 decree cancelled all labor requirements. Two hundred troops were sent from the provincial capital of Suwałki to suppress the strike.<sup>2</sup> It was only natural that most of the peasant resistance in 1846-1847 centered around private estates affected by the ukaz.

While the peasant unrest of 1846 and 1847 was more militant and

<sup>1</sup> Related in Grynwaser, Kwestia agrarna, pp. 133-134.

<sup>2</sup> Grynwaser, Kwestia agrarna, pp. 143-145.

massive than the petition writing of earlier years, it was still relatively weak compared to the movement of the sixties. In fact, the governor of Augustów province suggested that gmina officials and land-owners exaggerated the degree, if not the extent, of rural unrest during 1846-1847. Despite this, authorities sometimes overreacted in their physical punishment of the peasants, creating even more, if temporarily suppressed, bitterness between village and manor.<sup>1</sup> The period between the end of the minor outbreaks in 1847, and the renewed peasant unrest of the late fifties, was a deceptively non-violent one.

The struggle of the peasants, particularly the corvée villagers, against the manor continued in a more or less individualistic and scattered fashion until the late fifties when the peasant movement again took on a more massive and violent character. Within the Russian Empire, rural violence increased markedly during the mid-1850s, that is, the time of the disastrous Crimean War. In Russian Lithuania, the war aroused the peasantry's hope for a change in their situation. Attempts to induct village recruits for the war aroused discontent and even, in some cases, open resistance to the government. Officials reported wild rumors of impending social "equality" among the peasants of Kaunas gubernia.<sup>2</sup> Peasant resistance to the manor grew during the late fifties, while the nobility and gentry debated the terms of an emancipation.<sup>3</sup>

The outbreaks of peasant insubordination in Russian Lithuania doubt-

<sup>1</sup> Grynwas, Kwestia agrarna, pp. 143-145.

<sup>2</sup> L[eonas] Mulevičius, "Klasiu kovos paaštėjimas Lietuvos kaime Krymo karo metu(1853-1856m.)," in Lietuvos valstiečiai, 74-80.

<sup>3</sup> S[tanislav] A. Lazutka, Revoliutsionnaia situatsia v Litve, 1859-1862 (Moscow, 1962), pp. 76 ff.; also Jučas, "Baudžiavos panaikinimas," 89 ff.

less reached the ears of the Lithuanian peasants in the Kingdom, but it was Alexander II's Emancipation Manifesto of February 19, 1861 (Julian Calendar) that incited the villagers of southwestern Lithuania to a new wave of protest and resistance. Of course, the 1861 Emancipation Manifesto applied only to the peasants living in Russia. However, the peasants of the Kingdom were quick to conclude that the Tsar's benevolence extended to them as well, thus freeing them from obligations to the manor. Naturally, peasants living near the Russian border heard of the emancipation first--and all of the districts of Augustów province bordered on the Empire. In June, 1861, the district chief of Marijampolė reported that one Maciej Kaszuba, a peasant from Šaltupiai village, had aroused not only the state villagers of his estate, but had set an "inflammatory example to the peasants of the private Freda estate" nearby. Kaszuba even announced that he was ready to go to St. Petersburg in order to obtain the abolition of corvée obligations and the granting of manorial land for the local peasants. In his report, the district chief explained the reasons for the peasantry's excitement in Marijampolė district:

The relations of this district's peasants with the peasants in the Empire considerably facilitates their insubordination and disobedience; this [development] is furthered by the district's location, separated as it is from the Empire only by the Niemen. From there[i.e. Russia], the peasants bring in all kinds of rumors; and even go to the Empire purposely for information, especially the plenipotentiaries, who lead [the peasants] into error, making up non-existent things and 'news'...<sup>1</sup>

Enthusiastic peasant responses to the Russian emancipation have been

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Grynwas, Sprawa włościanska, p. 20.

recorded in the predominantly Polish Łomża district in southern Augustów province and in other areas bordering the Russian Empire; here too, villagers refused to go on with their corvée obligations.<sup>1</sup>

During the month of April, 1861, a dozen estates, involving over fifty villages and over 400 peasant households, reported instances of peasant insubordination in the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts. Sixteen estates reported agrarian strikes in Sejny and Marijampolė districts during the first half of May.<sup>2</sup> The resistance initially was entirely passive and "economic:" there were no political slogans, just a quiet refusal by entire villages to perform compulsory labor. In July, 1861, the assistant to the district chief of Marijampolė recorded the attitude of the Lithuanian peasants who were quoted as saying:

'Do with us what you wish, we are not going to do corvée, because the Tsar has abolished it and ordered us to pay rent. If we went out to do compulsory labor [now], then the landowners would inform the Tsar that we are working willingly even after his ukaz, and that would leave us performing corvée.'<sup>3</sup>

As in all times of agrarian crisis, the power of the "rural rumor" considerably inflamed the situation. A police captain in Sejny reported that "among the peasants, rumors are spreading that the Emperor had long ago freed them from obligations to the landowners" and that it was the latter who kept the villagers in bondage against the Tsar's will.<sup>4</sup> Of

<sup>1</sup> Grynwaser, Sprawa włościańska, pp. 109 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Grynwaser, Sprawa włościańska, pp. 25-29.

<sup>3</sup> As quoted in Grynwaser, Sprawa włościańska, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Grynwaser, Sprawa włościańska, p. 37.

course, similar rumors were rife in other parts of Lithuania and in Russia, where the peasantry were convinced that the "real" provisions of the emancipation were far more generous than those announced. This attitude occasionally led to violence against the landowners who were accused of hiding the "real" Manifesto.<sup>1</sup>

In May, 1861, a new ukaz was proclaimed in the Kingdom. It stipulated that all peasants holding three or more morgi of land could commute their corvée to a temporary ransom by October 1st of that year. The amount of this cash ransom was calculated according to soil quality. Over 95% of the peasantry in the Kingdom accepted the ransom. In Marijampolė and Sejny districts, 100% of the villagers were reported to have accepted the ransom provision by the end of 1861. In Kalvarija district, less than 1% of peasant households were performing corvée labor by 1863.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the fall of 1861, for all practical purposes, marked the end of corvée in the Kingdom of Poland, as well as Trans-Niemen Lithuania. Still, throughout the summer of 1861 peasant resistance continued: in Augustów province, 184 village headmen reportedly refused to sign the protocols announcing the new ukaz. In July, peasant insubordination was endemic in Marijampolė district. Here, unrest engulfed thirteen estates, involving 216 villages with over 2,000 peasant households. In most cases, the villagers of Marijampolė district refused en masse to carry out any more compulsory labor, although the law required peasants to continue corvée

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<sup>1</sup> See V. Neupokojevas, "Valstiečių judėjimas Lietuvoje panaikinus bau-džiavą(1861-1862m.)," in Lietuvos valstiečiai, 106-107, 130; cf. Terrence Emmons, "The Peasant and the Emancipation," in The Peasant in Nineteenth Century Russia, ed. Wayne S. Vucinich(Stanford, 1968), 56-61.

<sup>2</sup> Tomasz Szczechura, Ruch chłopski w walce o ziemię 1861-1864(Warsaw, 1962), pp. 116-118.

at least until November 1st. In fact, agrarian strikes in Marijampolė district at this time involved as many village households as the rest of the Kingdom's districts combined.<sup>1</sup>

The archival documents concerning the details of peasant disturbances in Marijampolė district were destroyed during the Second World War; fortunately, Hipolit Grynwascher has preserved some documented accounts by publishing them in his prewar study on village unrest in 1861-1862. The agrarian disturbances in the Trans-Niemen region were set off in May, 1861, by peasant strikes on several large private estates in the northwestern corner of Marijampolė district on the Niemen River, including Baron Keudell's Gelgaudiškis estate and the large Tyszkiewicz estate. These strikes were followed in early June by peasant disturbances in the gmina's along the border with Russian Lithuania. According to the Marijampolė district chief, the private peasants were inspired by the example of their colleagues on state domains.

As Marijampolė's district chief traveled from place to place, he found that the peasants were convinced that corvée had been abolished.<sup>2</sup> The district chief's reports indicated that while, in most cases, military compulsion eventually forced the villagers to submit, new cases of resistance kept appearing throughout the summer of 1861. Reports of violent threats against village headmen suggest that their frequent refusal to sign protocols announcing the ukaz of May 16 were at least partly due to fear of retaliation from their fellow villagers.

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<sup>1</sup> Grynwascher, Sprawa włościanńska, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the account of the district chief's visit to the Marwa estate in Grynwascher, Sprawa włościanńska, p. 147.

The quartering of troops, or the so-called "permanent" egzekucja, was, in the face of very stubborn peasant resistance, a long and frustrating ordeal for the authorities. The peasants of the Klebiškis (Pol. Chlebiszki) state domain, consisting of 46 villages, held out the longest of any in the Kingdom (a total of 49 days), despite the quartering of 270 regular soldiers and nine Cossacks. The mayor of the Klebiškis gmina reported that the villagers "are continuing [in their resistance] if only to show the other peasants that they have endured the payments, so that they can boast of greater stamina than the others . . ."<sup>1</sup> Even when the peasants finally decided to declare their submission before the ranking local military officer, one Col. Fenshave, their subsequent performance of compulsory labor obligations was so lackadaisical that the district chief was forced to intervene, this time to arrest the most prominent resistors.<sup>2</sup>

The resistance of the Marijampolė district peasantry was remarkable both for its massive scale and persistence. What could've been the cause of this massive protest against a reform intended to abolish corvee, a long standing object of the villagers' hatred? There are several reasons. One is that the peasantry of this region, possessing as they did holdings of unusual size, were anxious for the immediate implementation of the ransom reform. The peasants realized that since the land in Augustów province had been classified as third class soil, the ransom payments here would be relatively low. In fact, after Kalisz, the districts of Marijampolė and Sejny had respectively the second and third lowest

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Grynwaser, Sprawa włościaniska, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> A more detailed account of peasant resistance in Marijampolė district during the summer of 1861 is in Grynwaser, Sprawa włościaniska, pp. 146-155, 216.

ransom payments in the Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> Also, although the agrarian unrest was led by the landed peasants, Marijampolė district had a large proportion of garden and landless peasants who were excluded from the reform; they also joined the strike movement to protest their plight. Furthermore, Marijampolė district still retained a relatively large proportion of corvée peasants in 1860--about a third of the peasant households still performed compulsory labor, compared to only 13% of the households in Kalvarija district and 18% in Sejny.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the well-to-do peasants of Marijampolė district were better able to withstand the compulsory quartering of troops in their villages. They could feed the soldiers and pay the levies for a much longer time; naturally, this contributed to the duration and persistence of peasant protest. The above factors explain why rural unrest in Marijampolė district increased during the summer of 1861, precisely when, almost everywhere else in the Kingdom, the peasant resistance of the previous spring had died down.<sup>3</sup>

When the temporary ransom of labor obligations went into effect on November 1, 1861, corvée became a dead issue. The issue of compulsory labor had inspired a degree of solidarity among the villagers; when it disappeared, many peasants felt less need of unity against the manor.<sup>4</sup> In addition, most peasants were unable to continue large scale resistance against the landowners in the face of military repression. All this

<sup>1</sup> Szczecura, Ruch chłopski, pp. 120-121.

<sup>2</sup> Szczecura, Ruch chłopski, p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> Czesław Rajca, Ruch oporu włościan w Królestwie Polskim, 1815-1864 (Poznań, 1969), p. 187.

<sup>4</sup> Rajca, Ruch oporu, pp. 213-214.

combined to make 1862 a relatively quiet year in the countryside. In June, 1862, Aleksander Wielopolski, head of the civil government in Warsaw, announced a new Imperial decree on rent reform which established landowner-dominated committees to evaluate the amount of rent due from each peasant holding of over three morgi. In calculating rents, the committees were supposed to take into account the corvée ransom payment, as well as the financial situation of each village household. However, since the landowners were to retain important rights (such as keeping inns), and were able to cancel most servitude privileges of the peasants, the 1862 reform proved unsatisfactory from the village point of view. Moreover, the June ukaz failed to satisfy the peasants' desire for property, stating only vaguely that the granting of title to the land would follow later.<sup>1</sup>

By 1862, most landowners had accepted the principle of property rights for the peasants. However, landowners and peasants disagreed sharply on the terms of granting land. Basically, the landowners wanted compensation and retention of pasture and forest privileges for themselves. The peasants, on the other hand, wanted the land free with full servitude rights, as well as the return of land taken by the manor since 1846. The Polish Provisional Government's proclamation of January 22, 1863, which called for a national uprising against the Russians, also included land decrees that, in general terms, satisfied most of the peasantry's expectations of property.

The peasants' reaction to the anti-Russian revolt of 1863, also known as the January Insurrection, was mixed. In some regions of the Kingdom,

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<sup>1</sup> Kieniewicz, Emancipation, pp. 159-160.

for example, in the southern and western regions, the village population was slow to respond to the uprising, despite the Polish insurgents' decrees granting land to the peasants without redemption payments. However, in Samogitia and Augustów province, the rural populace responded with some enthusiasm.

For two years preceding the actual insurrection, the peasants had observed the patriotic and religious demonstrations of the nobility, gentry and townspeople. On August 12, 1861, a massive demonstration of Polish-Lithuanian unity took place on the anniversary of the Union of Lublin(1569) in Aleksotas, a suburb of Kaunas on the east bank of the Niemen River. Symbolically, a number of people crossed over from the "Lithuanian" bank of the river to the "Polish" side and vice-versa. One of the organizers of the demonstration was the prominent Lithuanian educator Mikalojus Akelaitis. Among the 30,000 people estimated to have taken part in the affair, there were reportedly a good number of Lithuanian peasants from both sides of the river.<sup>1</sup> In 1861-1862, there were many smaller national demonstrations in Trans-Niemen Lithuania, especially in or near churches. Although these demonstrations often consisted of little more than the singing of patriotic and religious hymns, the Russian authorities sometimes reacted violently, as in the town of Augustów, where Cossacks invaded a church in October, 1861.<sup>2</sup>

The Catholic clergy of Trans-Niemen Lithuania played a very important role during the insurrection. Most made no secret of their anti-Russian

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<sup>1</sup> Chańkowski, Powstanie styczniowe, pp. 67-68.

<sup>2</sup> Juozas Vaišnora, "1863 m. sukilimas Suvalkijoje," Tautos Praeitis, Vol. 2, No. 2(1965), 107-109.

inclinations. A number of priests propagandized the villagers to support the rebellion. The Catholic clergy proved ideal for this last function: long accepted as the "town criers" of Lithuania, often familiar with the language and customs of the people, they had a considerable impact on the peasants' attitude toward the January Insurrection. Some priests took an active part in the fighting against the Russians, while others joined in supportive clandestine activities. During 1863-1864 within the Sejny-Augustów diocese, one priest was executed and 64 others reportedly punished for their part in the insurrection, most of them with exile to Russia.<sup>1</sup>

During the 1861-1863 period of patriotic demonstrations within the Kingdom and Lithuania, attempts were made to present a united social and national front against the Russians. For example, many Poles and Lithuanians were aware that during the 1830-1831 uprising thirty years before, much of the Jewish population had supported the Russians, no doubt partly because of some rebel excesses against them; in some places, the Jews actively opposed Polish forces and aided the Russians.<sup>2</sup> Now, many agitators urged the Jews to take part in patriotic demonstrations alongside the Christians. This tactic met with some success: Jews reportedly took part in patriotic demonstrations organized in the towns of Prienai, Kalvarija and Vilkaviškis, where agitators proselytized the Jews and called for "peace and harmony" between different social groups.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Vaišnora, "1863 m. sukilimas Suvalkijoje," 114-122.

<sup>2</sup> Szczęśniak, "Działania partyzanckie," 303, 306; Janulaitis, Żydai Lietuvoje, pp. 138-144.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., KRSW-7356, KRSW to Viceroy, February 25, 1862, k. 121-122.

The rebels' provisional government promised full civil rights to the Jewish population in June, 1863; reports of Russians arresting Jews suggests that some of them, at least, responded to patriotic propaganda and fought with the Poles against the Russians.<sup>1</sup>

A number of moderate rebel leaders attempted to reconcile the Lithuanian peasants with the nobility and direct both against the common enemy. The Lithuanian writer Mikalojus Akelaitis and Father Antanas Tatarė were active in this respect (for more on their activities see Chapter XV below). Bishop Valančius of Samogitia tried to exploit his prestige among the peasants to persuade them to lay down their arms in 1863.

However, attempts to direct the peasantry's attention away from social conflicts largely failed. In fact, the insurgents' announcement of land grants to the villagers aroused considerable interest among the well-to-do peasantry in southwestern Lithuania. Here, the peasants' participation in the anti-Russian rebellion became more pronounced during the spring of 1863.<sup>2</sup> One of the most effective units fighting in the Užnemunė region was that of Paweł Suzin, a Polish officer from Kaunas who was killed not far from Balbieriškis in June, 1863. Suzin's lieutenant, Telesfor Nieszokoc (Lith. Telesforas Nešokotis), led a large unit made up almost exclusively of Lithuanian peasants; in this outfit, Lithuanian was the language of command.<sup>3</sup> Another unit made up exclusively of peasants is

<sup>1</sup> Artur Eisenbach, ed., Żydzi a powstanie styczniowe: materiały i dokumenty (Warsaw, 1963), pp. 1 ff., 125, 138, 158, 168.

<sup>2</sup> Augustinas Janulaitis, 1863-1864 m. sukilimas Lietuvoje (Kaunas, 1921), p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Chańkowski, Powstanie styczniowe, pp. 186-187.

reported to have battled the Russians near Seirijai in the summer of 1863.<sup>1</sup> In the southern Polish areas of Augustów province, the petty gentry and Kurpie (see above, p. 46) proved particularly eager adherents to the insurrection. The petty gentry proved especially responsive to Polish nationalism.

Some historians have concluded that the percentage of peasants in the insurgents' ranks during 1863-1864 was less than it had been in 1831. According to this version, the peasantry and townspeople of Augustów province together constituted only 30% of the insurrection's forces there in 1863, and about 44% in 1864; thus, the gentry and nobility supposedly made up close to 60%.<sup>2</sup> This estimate, however, conflicts with more weighty evidence which indicates that the proportion of peasants in the ranks was at least 60%, perhaps higher in western and southwestern Lithuania. Certainly, the majority of the rebels here were peasants.<sup>3</sup> The lower figures were based on lists of people punished or otherwise detained after the insurrection. This is bad methodology: it is highly likely that villagers who fought in the rebellion, more so than others, were able to return to their homes without being intercepted, or were simply released by Tsarist officers anxious to pacify the peasantry.<sup>4</sup> Actually, the

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<sup>1</sup> Vaišnora, "1863 m. sukilimas Suvalkijoje," 109-110.

<sup>2</sup> V. A. D'iakov, I. I. Kostiushko, I. S. Miller, "Rol' krest'ianstva v vosstanii 1863-1864 gg.," in Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii Vostochnoi Evropy 1963 g., 16-20, 24-28.

<sup>3</sup> Iu[ozas] Zhiugzhda, "Otrazhenie agrarnogo voprosa v vosstanii 1863-1864 gg. v Litve," Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii Vostochnoi Evropy 1963, 35-38.

<sup>4</sup> V. B. Bikulin, "K voprosu ob uchastii litovskikh krest'ian v vosstanii 1863-1864 gg.," in Revolutsionnaia situatsiya v Rossii v 1859-1861 gg., III (Moscow, 1963), 138.

question of absolute numbers is irrelevant in comparing peasant participation in 1863 with that in 1831. There was no Polish army made up of peasant draftees in 1863; thus, while it is likely that the percentage of peasants under arms may have been greater in 1830-1831, the important fact is that in 1863-1864, most of the peasants in rebel ranks were volunteers. Thus, it can safely be said that the rural population's involvement in the insurrection was much greater in 1863-1864.

While fighting against the Russians, the peasants by no means forgot the agrarian nature of their own struggle. In some cases, the peasants renewed tactics already tried in 1830-1831. In 1863-1864 there were numerous reports of peasant encroachments on the forests. Near Suwałki, villagers attacked the local forest service in the spring of 1864, beating the rangers severely--only a band of Cossacks barely managed to subdue the peasants.<sup>1</sup> In other cases, landowners were threatened or even attacked. The insurrection also contributed to a breakdown of law and order in the countryside. Rebel units sometimes hanged people for stealing. In Kalvarijskij district, an "unknown number of people" reportedly hanged a peasant, one Tomasz Podziukinas, and his wife, and burned all the household's buildings and animals.<sup>2</sup>

In terms of peasant participation, there is no doubt that the insurrection was most successful in Samogitia. It was here that the peasants took the most active role in the insurrection, sometimes independently from the action of the nobility and gentry. "I did not use the gentry,"

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<sup>1</sup> Szczechura, Ruch chłopski, pp. 188-189.

<sup>2</sup> See Korytkowski's letter to KRSW Director Ostrowski, June 28, 1863 in Vosstanie v Litve i Belorussii 1863-1864 gg., ed. V. D'jakov et al (Moscow, 1965), pp. 299-302.

explained peasant guerrilla leader Antanas Mackevičius, "because I saw in them the old Polish gentry [szlachta] who cared little or not at all about the people. They were more Poles than Lithuanians."<sup>1</sup> Local peasants, the most notable being Adomas Bitė and Kazimieras Lukoševičius, organized their own military units. Clashes with rebel units in Samogitia were reported as late as the end of 1864, long after the insurrection had been suppressed elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

By the summer of 1864, the insurrection in Trans-Niemen Lithuania, despite considerable peasant support, was confined to small bands of guerrillas. The three Lithuanian districts of the Kingdom, as well as Augustów district, were temporarily detached from Poland and placed under the jurisdiction of Governor-General M. N. Murav'ev of Vilnius, whose brutal suppression of the anti-Russian movement earned him the popular epitaph "The Hangman." When the situation had calmed down in 1864, the four districts were returned to the Kingdom's jurisdiction.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Mackevičius' deposition published in Vosstanie v Litve, pp. 55-57.

<sup>2</sup> Ona Maksimaitienė, Lietuvos sukilėlių kovos 1863-1864 m. (Vilnius, 1969), pp. 235 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Maksimaitienė, Lietuvos sukilėlių, p. 235. A considerable amount of literature exists on the military and political events of 1861-1864. Some of the better surveys are: Maksimaitienė, Lietuvos sukilėlių; Chańkowski, Powstanie styczniowe; L. Bičkauskas-Gentvila, 1863 m. sukilimas Lietuvoje (Vilnius, 1963); Kostas Jurgėla, 1862-1864 m. sukilimas Lietuvoje (Boston, 1972); Ona Maksimaitienė, "Sukilėlių koviniai veiksmai 1863 m. Augustavo gubernijoje," in LTSRMA Darbai, Ser. A, XIX(1965), 143-168. For Poland, see Walerjan Przyborowski, Dzieje 1863 roku (Cracow, 1902), 5 vols. and the same author's Historya dwóch lat, 1861-1862 (Cracow, 1892), 5 vols. On the insurgents' plans to use the Trans-Niemen region as a base for supporting the revolt in Russian Lithuania, see Stanisław Chańkowski, "Powstańcze plany wyprawy na Litwę," in Wiek XIX: prace ofiarowane Stefanowi Kieniewiczowi w 60 rocznice urodzin (Warsaw, 1967), 335-343.

The insurrection of 1863 had an important effect on the development of the Lithuanian national movement (for more on this see Chapter XV). The rebel leaders of Augustów province realized the importance of the Lithuanian peasant element here and issued a number of Lithuanian language proclamations on the agrarian situation and the general progress of the insurrection. For example, on February 12, 1864, the rebel Commissar for Augustów province Bronisław Radziszewski (also known as "Czynskis" to the peasants) issued a notice accusing the Russians of forcing the collection of rents which had been abolished by the insurgents' government. With an eye to the peasants, Radziszewski declared: "I command all landowners and manors, forced by the Russians to take rents from the farmers, to return this money to the landed peasants within 24 hours." Furthermore, Radziszewski informed the peasants that those landowners who did not obey this order out of fear from the Russians, would be punished by the Polish government which "has granted the land to the farmers forever."<sup>1</sup>

The relative success of the insurgents in attracting the peasantry to their cause, especially in western Lithuania, forced the Russian government to respond with its own concessions to the rural populace. In March, 1863, the Tsar announced a special decrease of redemption payments by 20% for the peasants in Russian Lithuania.<sup>2</sup> Murav'ev also appealed to the villagers to betray rebels to the government. Murav'ev himself viewed the peasants as a potential ally against the intrigues of the treacherous Poles. "The rural population," he once wrote, "will

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<sup>1</sup> Text is in Vosstanie v Litve, p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> The details are in Kieniewicz, Emancipation, pp. 170-171.

always serve as the bulwark against the vehemence of Polish propaganda."<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to evaluate the success of Russian concessions to the Lithuanian peasants since, by the end of 1863, it was already clear that the insurrection had been defeated, at least from the military standpoint.

While the peasants participated in the January Insurrection far more actively than they had in the anti-Russian uprising of 1830-1831, there was no wholesale agrarian revolution in Lithuania. "The failure of the revolutionary democrats to turn the revolution in Lithuania and Belorussia into a national [and] social war [against the landowners]," concluded one Soviet historian, was due to their failure to solve the budding national question.<sup>2</sup> It seems in retrospect, however, that it would have been too much to ask both the radical gentry insurgents and the peasants to overcome their class mistrust and national differences.

Thus, while the peasants approved the rebels' January, 1863 manifesto granting them land, they were also anxious to keep their options open, especially after it became apparent that the rebellion had failed. Prince Bariatinsky, commander of the Preobrazhensky regiment stationed in Trans-Niemen Lithuania, wrote his superior, Governor-General Murav'ev:

The Revolutionary Committee [of the rebels] has freed the peasants from all obligations to the landowners; naturally, with the purpose of gaining their favor. Already for a whole year, they have paid nothing. But what is strange is that with all that, they have little faith in this measure, and everyone is waiting for something from the Emperor. This is evident in the avidity with which [the peasants] seize up all kinds of published sheets

<sup>1</sup> M. N. Murav'ev, "Graf M. N. Murav'ev: zapiski ego ob upravlenii v severo-zapadnom kraie i ob usmirenii v nem miatezha," in Russkaia starina, XXXVI(1883), 139.

<sup>2</sup> V. Neupokoev, "K voprosu o prichinakh neudachi vosstaniia 1863 g. v Litve," in Revoliutsionnaia situatsiia v Rossii 1859-1861 gg., IV(Moscow, 1965), 299.

distributed to them. I dare say this situation is most difficult: it falls on us either to promote socialist ideas [sic], or to instigate the peasants, who are waiting for something from the Sovereign, against ourselves.<sup>1</sup>

Bariatinsky exaggerated the peasants' indifference to the rebels' January Manifesto, but, in any case, the peasants did not have long to wait for a favorable gesture from the Tsar. Alexander II announced his comprehensive Great Reform for the Kingdom's peasants on March 2, 1864 (or February 19, 1864, Julian Calendar). This decree gave all landed villagers immediate title to their holdings (for details, see above, pp. 56-57).

The March ukaz was announced everywhere in the Kingdom with the greatest possible pomp. In Sejny district, wherever possible, it was read to mass gatherings of headmen, gmina mayors, clergy, peasants, and even landless villagers. Despite truly energetic efforts to explain the decree so as to forestall the widespread rumors that greeted previous such announcements, the ukaz was not always clearly understood in the countryside. In some instances, officers explaining the provisions of the decree understood them poorly themselves. The vast majority of the Lithuanian population in Augustów province understood neither Polish nor Russian, and this caused a problem until the government issued Lithuanian language proclamations.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the March decree made a great impression on the peasantry here, especially those on private estates; and yet, despite the ecstatic expressions of joy recorded by Russian officials, there were disquieting rumors that the landowners

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted in Bikulin, "K voprosu," 139.

<sup>2</sup> Kostiushko, Krest'iantskaia reforma, pp. 140-141.

intended to "roll back" the decree. And almost immediately after the announcement of the reform, or as happened in Sejny district on the same day, the peasants besieged military authorities with requests for retroactive justice, such as the return of alienated land. Others begged for the abolition of market levies.<sup>1</sup> Thus, even the historic Great Reform of 1864 did not bring peace and mutual trust between village and manor.

There were several major problems that the March reform failed to tackle adequately; for example, the issue of the landless peasants and the question of forest and pasture rights. Also, in lieu of redemption payments, a heavy land tax was imposed on the villagers. Yet the 1864 reform marked the real end of an era for the peasants of southwestern Lithuania. Most important, the issues of corvée, rents and property rights were basically solved. It is true that, even after this reform, the peasants continued to exist as a class with special obligations and privileges. The Lithuanian peasantry continued to exist as a distinct (and often despised) class. These qualifications, however, do not diminish the importance of the 1864 reform in breaking the village's ties with the Polish manor, and helping free the well-to-do peasant population to further develop economically. As a result, the makeup of the Lithuanian society in Trans-Niemen Lithuania, as well as its position in this region, changed markedly during the second half of the 19th century.

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<sup>1</sup> Kostiushko, Krest'ianskaia reforma, pp. 143-145.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE, EDUCATION AND NATIONAL CULTURE BEFORE 1864

Lithuanian nationalism, in the modern sense of a coherent and politicized movement, had its real beginnings in the last two decades of the 19th century. However, it could not have been possible without the slow, but steady expansion of Lithuanian national cultural life before that time. Since almost all Lithuanian-speaking people came from the peasant class, the emergence of any significant Lithuanian national movement was tied up with social and economic developments within the village. The national differences between the Lithuanian-speaking village and the Polish manor deepened the social schism between the landowners and the peasantry. Ethnic conflict further exacerbated relations between village and town. The national hostility between Poles and Lithuanians did not become bitter and public until the turn of the 20th century. Its manifestations during the first half of the 19th century were not consciously nationalistic, but rather the byproduct of social antagonisms: the result of the historical Polonization of the Lithuanian nobility over the centuries.

#### The Lithuanian Language and the Origins of Polonization.

The linguistic division of Lithuanian society into a Polish-speaking nobility and a Lithuanian-speaking peasantry was a long and gradual one. The Polish language first penetrated Lithuania during the Christianization of the country in the late 14th century. The last Grand Duke known to

have spoken Lithuanian was Jagiełło's (Lith. Jogaila) son Casimir (1440-1492). Spoken Polish came into wider use in the Grand Duke's court by the middle of the 16th century and radiated outward from here. Quite naturally, the magnates and large landowners accepted the Polish customs and language first. Many of the lesser gentry and townspeople continued speaking Lithuanian until the 18th century during which, except in Samogitia, they gradually switched to Polish. Thus, by the 19th century, Polish was clearly established as the language of public life and social prestige in Lithuania.<sup>1</sup>

The historic exclusion of the Lithuanian language from affairs of Church and State relegated it to a tongue of the lower social classes. For internal affairs, the Lithuanian chancellory usually used a form of Old Church Slavic,<sup>2</sup> which was formally replaced by Latin and Polish in 1697. For a long time, a kind of linguistic dualism prevailed in Lithuania; for example, while spoken Lithuanian was still widely used in the Grand Duchy's courts during the 17th century, official documents, except for occasional oaths sworn by peasants, were written down in Old Church Slavic, Polish or Latin. Lithuanian as an official state language came into being only during the 20th century.

Lithuanian writing and literature, however, did make some progress ever since the first Lithuanian books were published in East Prussia during the Reformation. In the 17th century, Lithuanian letters underwent a brief "Golden Age," and a few men of the period, most notably

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<sup>1</sup> In the 16th and 17th centuries, Polonization also followed the Russification of the gentry. See Totoraitis, Süduvos-Suvalkijos, pp. 267-274.

<sup>2</sup> This language has also been incorrectly termed "Old Ruthenian" and "Old Russian."

Mikalojus Daukša(Pol. Mikolaj Dauksza), appealed for a wider use of Lithuanian in public life. However, these isolated voices ran counter to the prevailing trend of Polonization and, during the 18th century, the level of Lithuanian literature declined.<sup>1</sup>

The Lithuanians of East Prussia were an exception to this general decline. Since the 16th century, Prussian Lithuanians had schools in their own language; in addition, the native tongue was recognized as an official language in schools, churches, courts and government offices. Royal edicts affecting the peasantry were published in Lithuanian as well as German. In 1832, the first Lithuanian newspaper, Lietuwiszka Ceitunga (The Lithuanian Newspaper), appeared in East Prussia.<sup>2</sup> In Prussia, German and Lithuanian scholars took an increasing interest in Lithuanian literature and folklore during the 18th and 19th centuries. The works of Lithuania's greatest epic poet, Kristijonas Donelaitis(Ger. Christian Donalitius)(1714-1780), were published in Prussia during the early 19th century. Donelaitis was best known for his epic poem Metai(The Seasons), a remarkably powerful description of Lithuanian peasant life and work in East Prussia.

However, the Prussian Lithuanians' cultural movement succumbed to rapid Germanization during the late 19th century. In any case, the Protestant Prussian Lithuanians, with their difficult Gothic alphabet, had only a limited impact on the Catholic Lithuanian peasants in Russia

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<sup>1</sup> See Jurgis Lebedys, Mikalojus Daukša(Vilnius, 1963), pp. 9-26, 270 ff. and Viktoras Biržiška, Senųjų lietuviškų knygų istorija, II(Chicago, 1957), pp. 9 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Michal Römer, Litwini w Prusiech Księzczych(Cracow, 1911), pp. 2-10; Vladas Nausėdas, "Lietuviškos mokyklos Prūsijoje XVI-XVIII amžiaus," Iš lietuvių kultūros istorijos, II, 320 ff.

and the Kingdom. In Lithuania Major, the Polonization of the nobles, gentry and townspeople was virtually complete by the beginning of the 19th century. The Lithuanian language remained important only as a means of communicating with the peasantry.

As far as the Polonized nobility and gentry were concerned, this linguistic difference was a minor nuisance, and it was bound to remain so, as long as the oppressively dependent relations between village and manor prevailed. Once these began to change, however, linguistic relations were bound to be affected. The Soviet historian Vytautas Merkys comments:

The Polonized gentry and clergy of Lithuania viewed the Lithuanian language as a serf tongue . . . Lithuanian publications of the ruling class were full of Polish expressions that were difficult for the people to understand. This is the [Polonized] language that the managers of estates used when addressing the peasants. The Lithuanian language, like the Lithuanian peasant himself, was often an object of scorn. For a long time, it was useful only as a means of communication among the peasants within the boundaries of the estate or parish. However, as the economic relations of the peasants with the market were strengthened, and with the introduction of capitalist relations of production, the importance of the Lithuanian language increased. Wealthier peasants traveled to various markets and towns, and began dealing among themselves economically on a much wider scale.<sup>1</sup>

While it is true, as Merkys says, that the emergence of a well-to-do peasant class corresponded to an expansion in the use of the Lithuanian language, the process was complex and, on the surface at least, sometimes contradictory. Even while the peasants' language made gains in public acceptance during the 19th century, the relatively low social prestige of the Lithuanian language, and the active propagation of Polish by the

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<sup>1</sup> Vytautas Merkys, "Lietuvių nacionalinio judėjimo XIX a. socialinės-ekonominės priežastys," in Lietuvos TSR istorijos bruožai, ed. J[uozas] Jurginiš (Kaunas, 1965), p. 58.

Church and nobility, continued the Polonization process at the same time, while Germanization progressed unchecked in Prussian Lithuania. To some extent, Polonization was also the result of demographic changes. In Trans-Niemen Lithuania, the influx of Polish elements, though limited, must have had some effect on the native Lithuanian populace. In the early 1840s, a number of Polish peasants came to Augustów province; although most stayed in the predominantly Polish southern half of the province, some reportedly penetrated the Sejny area and a few settled in the north-ernmost Mariampolé district.<sup>1</sup> In 1861, the Sejny district reported an influx of Polish craftsmen.<sup>2</sup> In eastern Lithuania, the traditional west-ward expansion of the Slavic languages(Polish and Belorussian primarily) continued in the 19th century.<sup>3</sup> Thus, even while Lithuanian nationalism grew and matured in the 19th century, the ethnographically Lithuanian living space continued to shrink.

The history, or rather the "prehistory," of the Lithuanian national movement during the first half of the 19th century is closely linked with these phenomena: (1) the language policy of the Church, (2) the rising importance of the peasantry in national political affairs within Russia and the Kingdom, (3) the rise in village literacy and the expansion of peasant education and (4) the development of Lithuanian romanticism and a secular literature. These interrelated factors and developments eventually led to the formation of a national intelligentsia, a pre-

<sup>1</sup> Krzysztof Groniowski, "Wychodźcy mazurscy i warmińscy w Królestwie Polskim w połowie XIX w.," in Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie, No. 2 (1960), 250-251.

<sup>2</sup> Gazeta Warszawska, August 26, 1861(No. 223), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Władysław Wielhorski, Litwa etnograficzna: przyroda jako podstawa gospodarcza, rozwój stosunków narodowościowych(Wilno, 1928), pp. 110-112.

requisite of all modern national movements.

The Lithuanian Language, the Church and Polonization Before 1864.

Lithuanian was not a national language in the modern sense; rather, it was the means of communication with, and among, a certain social group. The survival of Lithuanian as a language depended not only on its continued use among the peasantry, but also on the villagers' rejection of other languages, primarily Polish, Russian, German and Belorussian, in favor of the native tongue.

In the three Lithuanian districts of the Kingdom, the overwhelming majority of the rural inhabitants spoke only Lithuanian during the 19th century. According to official estimates made in 1864, the number of people in Augustów province knowing only Lithuanian was:

Augustów district . . . . .	172
Kalvarija district . . . . .	80,341
Marijampolė district . . . . .	119,221
Sejny district . . . . .	62,648
Total . . . . . . . . .	262,382

If we accept this figure as a rough estimate,<sup>1</sup> and then compare it with the total Lithuanian population in the Kingdom (estimated at a little over 260,000 in 1863),<sup>2</sup> it would seem that just about 100% of the Lithuanian rural populace of Trans-Niemen Lithuania spoke no language other than Lithuanian. Such a conclusion would certainly be unrealistic:

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<sup>1</sup> These figures are cited by Kostiuško, Krest'ianskaia reforma, p. 141, fn. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Kazys Pakštas, "Earliest Statistics of Nationalities and Religions in the Territories of Old Lithuania," in Commentationes Balticae, IV-V(1958), 178. For population statistics of Augustów province see above, pp. 40-42.

contemporary accounts reveal that some peasants, particularly those who had served in the army, worked on the manor, or received some schooling, knew Polish. No doubt, many Lithuanian Protestants were at least familiar with German. Taking this into account, and remembering that some linguistic Polonization was occurring around Trans-Niemen Lithuania's southern fringes (in Sejny district), a more realistic estimate should posit, at most, four-fifths of the Lithuanian peasant population in the Kingdom of Poland as monolingual during the first half of the 19th century. It also seems reasonable to assume that the knowledge of Polish among the Lithuanian peasantry was distributed very unevenly; it was more probable in the southern fringes of the Užnemunė region, and certainly more extensive among families intermarried with Poles, as well as among Lithuanians living in or near towns. Also, a Lithuanian man was far more likely to know Polish than a woman, since he had more contact with the world outside the village.<sup>1</sup>

Contemporary accounts of visitors to Trans-Niemen Lithuania during the 19th century leave no doubt about the peasant's attachment to his native language. One landowner, Adam Goltz, complained of the difficulties of asking directions in Marijampolė and Kalvarija districts: "Ne suprantu lenkiškai [I don't understand Polish] is the answer of the reluctant Lithuanian to someone who doesn't understand his dialect."<sup>2</sup> Połujaniski reported that "even if one of the Lithuanians knows Polish, he prefers to

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<sup>1</sup> In his memoirs, the Lithuanian activist Mikalojus Akelaitis says that in his village of "sixty souls," only three men spoke Polish. This was probably not unusual, but it is unlikely that this was the norm everywhere. Akielewicz, "Słówko," 111.

<sup>2</sup> Goltz, "Kilka słów," 286.

speak Lithuanian, even with a Pole, and only extremity or necessity forces him occasionally to speak Polish with those people who don't understand his language.<sup>1</sup> Bonawentura Butkiewicz, a prominent diocesan official, noticed that while the peasants repected most of the clergy, they were particularly enthusiastic about those who "spoke to the Lithuanians in their own language,"<sup>2</sup> perhaps, because, until the end of the 19th century and later, such priests were the only ones from the "world of authority" who addressed the villagers without an interpreter. In his memoirs, Mikalojus Akelaitis reported that those among the nobility who bothered to learn Lithuanian were very popular among the peasantry. He also noted examples of friction between Polish government land surveyors and peasants over language.<sup>3</sup>

The peasantry's strong attachment to the native language compelled Lithuania's religious and secular institutions to deal with the village population in its own idiom. On the other hand, these predominantly Polish institutions contributed to Polonizing much of the Lithuanian population in the 19th century. Perhaps, the most important institution affecting the use of the Lithuanian language in the 19th century was the Church. This was especially true of the Catholic Church. The role of the Church and clergy in the history of Lithuanian culture has long been a subject of controversy among educated Lithuanians. Some have viewed

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<sup>1</sup> Połujaniski, Wedrówki, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Butkiewicz, "Opisanie,"

<sup>3</sup> Akielewicz, "Słówko," 110-111.

the Church as an instrument of Polonization; others have seen it as the preserver of the Lithuanian language. Actually, such discussions are fruitless: the Church and its clergy have, in fact, been both of these things. On the surface, this seems a contradiction, but a more detailed examination of the Church and its linguistic policy in southwestern Lithuania confirms this dual posture.

The episcopal hierarchy of the Sejny-Augustów diocese traditionally recognized the necessity of using Lithuanian to communicate with the peasantry. A 1797 document indicates that the Prussian government also considered a knowledge of the language a desirable requirement in appointing new parish pastors.<sup>1</sup> However, until 1876, only two of the bishops of the Sejny-Augustów diocese are known to have spoken Lithuanian. Bishop Karpowicz(d. 1804) was the only consecrated Lithuanian-speaking Bishop of Sejny during the 1807-1864 period. In 1817, Bishop Jan Gołaszewski informed the government that it would be desirable to appoint a Lithuanian-speaker as his auxiliary bishop, complaining that religious services, such as confirmations, were lagging seriously because the majority of the diocese's inhabitants needed someone to perform episcopal functions in Lithuanian. The government acceded to the appointment of Polikarp Marciejewski who had learned Lithuanian while serving in Urdamina parish. From 1809 to his death in 1827, Marciejewski practically ran the Lithuanian part of the Sejny-Augustów diocese. He propagated the use of the local languages and considered both Polish and Lithuanian as equally

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 378: Pojewon, Chamber of Białystok to Bishop Karpowicz, August 18, 1797.

"diocesan languages."<sup>1</sup> Between 1809 and 1834, none of the bishops of the diocese knew Lithuanian; however, all of them were basically absentee bishops and the diocese was administered by lesser officials familiar with local conditions. All this changed in 1837, when Paweł Straszyński became Bishop of Sejny. An energetic man, who actually made his residence in Sejny, he revitalized and disciplined the diorganized diocese. However, Straszyński's relations with the Lithuanian peasants were not good(see below). After his death in 1847, no new bishop was consecrated. Another Pole, Michałaj Błocki, administered the diocese until 1851 when Marciejewski's nephew, the Samogitian Bonawentura Butkiewicz, became the diocesan administrator. An ambitious and controversial figure, he was never consecrated bishop even though he went to Rome himself in support of his candidacy. Butkiewicz more or less ran the diocese between 1853 and 1860. It was only in 1863 that the Sejny-Augustów diocese received a new bishop, Konstanty Lubieński, the descendent of a prominent Polish family.

Lithuanian bishops were regularly appointed to the Sejny-Augustów diocese only towards the end of the 19th century, and only at this time did the Lithuanian language begin to appear in official Church correspondence. Before this, the higher Church hierarchy, with the exceptions of Marciejewski and Butkiewicz, was not Lithuanian. These two men tried to take the peasants' language into account during their administrations. Marciejewski pushed for a new seminary in Sejny to provide more Lithuanian-speaking priests for the parishes and it opened its doors in 1826. This

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<sup>1</sup> Jemielity, Diecezja, pp. 33-34; Jonas Basanavičius, "Iš Seinų vysku-pystės historijos," in Lietuvių tauta, Vol. 1, No. 3(1907-1910), 367-372.

was a significant step in providing an education for many peasant sons.<sup>1</sup>

Butkiewicz, for his part, is known to have published a diocesan circular in Lithuanian in 1853, the first such document in the Kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

In the period before 1864, the Church used Lithuanian widely only at the parish level. This practice had long traditions. For example, the Puńsk parish chapter of 1597 stipulated that the pastor must be a Lithuanian-speaker.<sup>3</sup> Other such charters are known from the earlier 16th century.<sup>4</sup> In Prienai parish, according to an 1837 document, the rosary was sung in Lithuanian "by the people;" sermons were in both Polish and Lithuanian. In Balbieriškis, "the teachings are announced on Sundays in the Lithuanian language, while on holidays Polish sermons are added."<sup>5</sup> Obviously, those parishes which were predominantly rural tended to be more Lithuanian than those in the towns. The Protestant churches of Trans-Niemen Lithuania used three languages: Polish, German and Lithuanian. In 1853, the parish instructions to the Evangelical Lutheran pastor of Wiżajny required him "to perform services once a month in the German and Lithuanian languages." The parish charter also stated that the "reverend pastor will perform the official functions relating to the Lithuanians of our Evangelical faith in their language."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jemielity, Diecezja, pp. 82-84.

<sup>2</sup> A[ntanas] Ulpis, ed., Lietuvos TSR bibliografija. Serija A: Knygos lietuvių kalba, 1547-1861, I(Vilnius, 1969), p. 69; Vaclovas Biržiška, Aleksandrynas, III(Chicago, 1965), 30-32.

<sup>3</sup> Lietuvių enciklopedija, XXIV, 240. <sup>4</sup> Totoraitis, Sūduvos-Suvalkijos, pp. 267 ff.

<sup>5</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. B, 188: Wykaz Ogólny, k. 6-7, 12, 18, 37.

<sup>6</sup> A. G. A. D., CWW-1370, Instructions for the Wiżajny Evangelical Pastor, October 14, 1853.

Until 1837, the appointment of parish pastors by language ability seems to have been generally applied. Bishop Manugiewicz, who was head of the Sejny-Augustów diocese from 1826 to 1834, refused to appoint non-Lithuanian pastors to parishes in the Lithuanian districts, despite repeated requests by some priests for appointments to the wealthier parishes of Trans-Niemen Lithuania. Manugiewicz followed a fairly consistent policy of appointing as pastors only those priests who spoke the parishioners' language.<sup>1</sup> In some cases, where Polish pastors were appointed to Lithuanian parishes in later years, they retained Lithuanian-speaking curates; as one pastor explained, he kept his assistant "only for help with the Lithuanian language, so that he would be an interpreter of my wishes."<sup>2</sup>

The Church also maintained the use of the Lithuanian language through the religious publications that were popular among the peasantry (this is discussed in more detail below). Bishop Valančius of Samogitia and Father Tatarė from Marijampolė district were among the clergy who authored religious books. Lithuanian religious works ranged from instructions for confession to translations of Thomas à Kempis' Imitation of Christ. The Church-sponsored temperance movement produced an explosion of popular Lithuanian publications.<sup>3</sup> A number of these temperance books no doubt

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<sup>1</sup> Jemielity, Diecezja, pp. 47, 146.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 314: Łuksze, Father Aleksandrowicz to Bishop Straszyński, March 28, 1840.

<sup>3</sup> Valančius' handbook on abstention went through at least six editions between 1858 and 1861. See Ulpis, Lietuvos TSR bibliografija, p. 434; cf. Juozas Tumas, Tremtiniai, romantininkai, Vaižganto Raštai, Vol. XI (Kaunas, 1929), pp. 47-52 and Biržiška, Aleksandrynas, III, 337-346.

reached the Lithuanian peasantry living in the Kingdom of Poland. In addition to books, the temperance societies issued Lithuanian medals and posters; these were modest, but effective, ways of propagating the use of the Lithuanian language.

Despite the maintenance of Lithuanian in many areas of Church life, particularly on the parish level, Polonization made great inroads in some parts of Lithuania during the 19th century. In many parishes, the gentry and nobility, a small minority of the parishioners, successfully pressed for the introduction of Polish and the elimination or curtailment of Lithuanian services. Thus, in Gudeliai parish, hymns and services came to be sung in Polish; only after "higher" society had filed out of the church, would certain announcements be given to the peasants in Lithuanian.<sup>1</sup> The belief of the Polish nobility, gentry and townspeople that Polish was a superior language tended to discourage some priests from continuing Lithuanian services in church. One newspaper correspondent asked priests to abolish "compulsory teaching of prayers and catechisms in Lithuanian." Although admitting that this was necessary in parishes where only Lithuanian was spoken, the correspondent saw no need to encourage the peasants' language in areas where Polish was already the church language. "Why should the peasants today expend funds for the schooling of a child," he asked, "when they teach him Polish but, on return from school to the home, this language will not be used, because in the church and the manor

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<sup>1</sup> Basanavičius, "Gudelių parapijos," 428.



Fig. 10. A Lithuanian Temperance Poster Published in Warsaw Commemorating the "Introduction of Sobriety in 1858." The caption around the Blessed Virgin reads: "Through Your Intercession We Will Endure to the End."

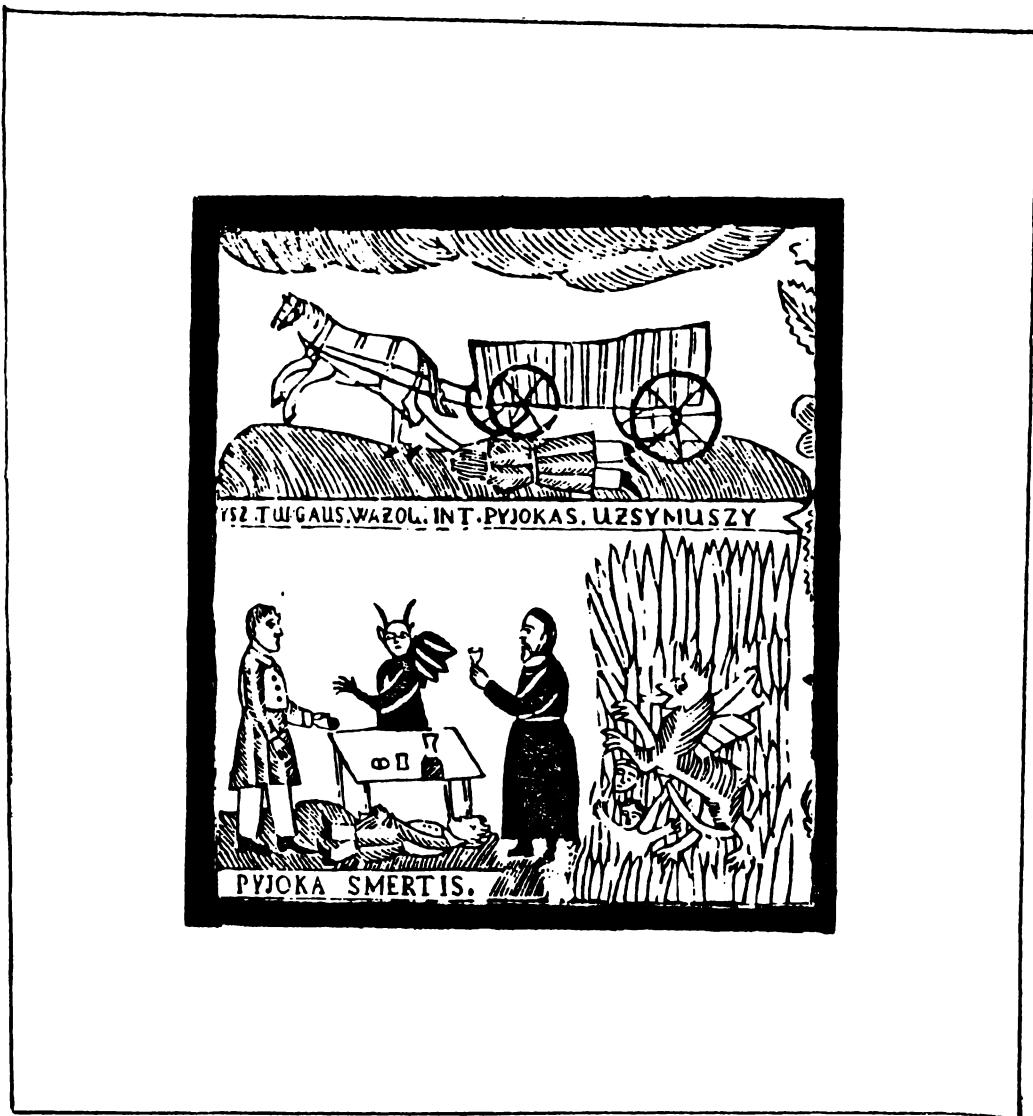


Fig. 11. Closeup: The Fate that Awaits the Drinking Driver, According to a Mid-Nineteenth Century Temperance Poster. The caption for the scene at the top reads; "The Drunkard Was Killed Driving From the Market." The bottom picture is subtitled: "The Death of the Drunkard."

they speak to him in Lithuanian?"<sup>1</sup>

The Polonization of Church life in Trans-Niemen Lithuania made its greatest advances during Bishop Paweł Straszyński's ten year(1837-1847) reign as Bishop of Sejny. Concerned with reforming the lax standards in the liturgy, Straszyński reformed the church services; however, in doing so, he also abolished Lithuanian sermons and services in many parishes of the diocese.<sup>2</sup> Bishop Straszyński not only failed to learn the language spoken by over half of his flock, but was reported to have openly and publicly insulted Lithuanian as a "language of sheep," a derogatory expression not uncommon at the time.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Straszyński assigned many Poles to Lithuanian parishes, ending the former policy of taking language into account in appointing pastors.<sup>4</sup> Połujański, while praising the bishop's administrative abilities, vehemently criticized Straszyński's "hatred of the people's language" in his 1859 travelogue of Augustów province; he was convinced that the attempt to drive out the long-standing tradition of Lithuanian church services was responsible for the peasants' lack of respect for their bishop.<sup>5</sup> At least some Lithuanian peasants never quite forgot Straszyński's "reforms;" in 1906, a petition to the Sejny diocese asking for the return of Lithuanian language church services stated that "as our grandfathers tell us, the

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<sup>1</sup> Gazeta Polska, September 10, 1862(No. 206), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Basanavičius, "Iš Seinų," 372-376.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Akielewicz, "Słówko," 111 and Katkus, Raštai, p. 311.

<sup>4</sup> Jamiolkowski, Opisanie, pp. 45, 170.

<sup>5</sup> Połujański, Wedrówki, p. 288.

rosary and other hymns were sung in Lithuanian long ago, but during Bishop Straszynski's time, the Poles took the rosary away from us."<sup>1</sup> Despite peasant resentment against Straszynski's policies, the language controversy in the churches of southwestern Lithuania took on a violent and bitter form only at the turn of the 20th century.

Despite growing national awareness among the Lithuanian peasantry, and an increase in literacy in the native language, the Polonization process made considerable gains in the 19th century, in part through the Church. This was particularly noticeable along the southern fringes of Sejny district and in eastern Lithuania, where a lower educational level and the proximity of Belorussian and Polish peasants made the Lithuanian villagers more vulnerable to assimilation by Slavic elements. It was, in fact, easier for Catholic Lithuanian peasants to resist Russification than Polonization, for they were "immunized" against Russian influence by their deep mistrust of Orthodoxy. The peasants had no such "vaccine" against Polonization: the very Catholic faith which protected them against Russification was often an instrument of denationalization from the Polish direction.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, before the 20th century, many Lithuanian and Belorussian peasants confused their religious and national identities. In fact, Belorussian ex-Catholics, when converted to Orthodoxy, stated that "we were formerly of the Polish faith, now it seems we are of the Russian

<sup>1</sup> A. D. E., Ser. A, 184: Kalwaria, Peasants to Diocesan Administrator Antanavicius, May 1, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> The Protestant Church in Prussia proved an effective instrument of Germanization among the Lithuanians there. There is little evidence of language policy changes among the Evangelical Lutherans of Trans-Niemen Lithuania in the 19th century.

[persuasion]"--this answer was given when the peasants were questioned about their religious affiliation in 1855.<sup>1</sup> Compared to the Belorussians, the Lithuanians developed a national identity more easily, in part because their language was distinct from the Slavic tongues around them. Still, the Lithuanians' identification with Catholicism made many Lithuanian peasants vulnerable to Polonization.

Conscious resistance to the domination of what the peasants considered "foreign languages" in Trans-Niemen Lithuania's churches began, on a massive scale, only in the late 19th century; at this time, the Lithuanian language actually regained much of the ground it had previously lost in the parishes.<sup>2</sup> There are signs, however, that at least some Lithuanian Catholics and Protestants were concerned about maintaining their native language in the churches of the Užnemunė region as early as the 1820s. In 1820, the parishioners of Pajevonys parish in Kalvarija district wrote a letter to their new bishop Ignacy Czyżewski; having heard that a Polish pastor was to replace their previous one, the peasants begged the bishop not to assign a "dumb" priest to their parish--that is, one who could not speak Lithuanian. "It's not the first pastor we've had whom barely a thousandth of the parish can understand," they complained. The peasants said that they received little religious instruction from a non-Lithuanian pastor; according to them, the hired help had become "disobedient" and untrustworthy, since farmhands received no moral "reinforcement from the mouth of their own pastor." All their problems, the petitioners implied,

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<sup>1</sup> Fajnhauz, Ruch, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Basanavičius, "Gudelių parapijos," 429.

were not so much the result of a bad pastor, as the work of a priest who did not "know [our] language, everywhere detested, but native to us." The parishioners of Pajevonys asked that the bishop at least assign a Lithuanian curate to their parish.<sup>1</sup>

The Evangelicals of Marijampolė provide another instance of early concern with language rights. In 1825, the Lithuanian Protestants here petitioned the Kingdom's Commission for Religious Affairs to allow them to recruit a pastor from the town of Schirwindt (Lith. Širvinta) in Prussian Lithuania. Local authorities supported the petition, stressing that "for the most part, the Lithuanian language is used in these areas."<sup>2</sup> The petitioners claimed that one of the local pastors was too old, while another could not speak Lithuanian, the language for the majority of the local Evangelicals. However, the Kingdom's Commission for Religious Affairs refused the Lithuanians' request for permission to recruit a pastor from Prussia, claiming that it would be inappropriate for a "foreigner" to conduct services in Poland. The government suggested that the people obtain a pastor from Kaunas in Russian Lithuania,<sup>3</sup> in reality, a useless suggestion since the Evangelical pastors there did not know Lithuanian. The Marijampolė parishioners later offered to pay the costs of recruiting a pastor from Prussian Lithuania for their congregation, but their continued efforts were to no avail: the government

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<sup>1</sup> The Complete text of this petition is in Appendix I, below.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., CWW-1340, Augustów Provincial Commission to Commission for Religious Affairs, May 13, 1825.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., CWW-1340, Karol Trapp to Augustów Provincial Commission, April 24, 1825, k. 29-30.

refused to admit a "foreign" pastor.<sup>1</sup> In June, 1825, Karol Trapp, the chief petitioner, composed a letter to the Tsar himself in French, but it was turned over to the unsympathetic Commission for Religious Affairs for resolution. The local Evangelicals finally obtained a pastor for the town of Marijampolė, but the desire of the area's Lithuanians for services in their own language were apparently not satisfied.<sup>2</sup> In 1830, Karol Lange, a theological candidate, reportedly preached sermons here in German and Polish, but the documents make no mention of Lithuanian.<sup>3</sup>

Documentary evidence on the struggle of the Lithuanian peasantry for language rights before 1864 is scarce, but does seem to buttress contemporaries' reports of the peasantry's strong attachment to the native language. Except for the southern fringes of Trans-Niemen Lithuania, it seems that Polonization in the Užnemunė during the first half of the 19th century was a surface phenomenon; despite some inroads, the Polish language found no firm roots in the Lithuanian village. While it is true that, overall, the ethnographically Lithuanian area shrank during the 19th century, most of the recession was in eastern Lithuania, where the peasantry was less affluent, and where the ethnic distinction between Lithuanian, Polish and Belorussian Catholic peasants was often vague.

<sup>1</sup> A. G. A. D., CWW-1340, Karol Trapp to Augustów Provincial Commission, June 27, 1825, k. 34-35.

<sup>2</sup> A. G. A. D., CWW-1340, Commission for Religious Affairs to Augustów Provincial Commission, October 19, 1826, k. 41.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. A. D., CWW-1340, Deposition of Marijampolė Evangelicals, September 5, 1830, k. 140.

The Government, Politics and the Lithuanian Language Before 1864.

Until the middle of the 19th century, central government authorities rarely communicated directly with the Lithuanian peasantry. The Church and the manor normally translated and explained government decrees to the village.<sup>1</sup> However, with the rising importance of the peasantry in national affairs during the 19th century, it became imperative for the various authorities to reach the peasant directly.

The Polish-Lithuanian rebels of the 1790s were the first to publish political appeals to the peasantry in the Lithuanian language (see p. 23, above). Under Prussian rule, several circulars were issued to the Lithuanian populace of the Užnemunė region, usually concerning military supplies and their procurement.<sup>2</sup>

During the 19th century, Lithuanian remained, with few exceptions, an "oral" administrative language in southwestern Lithuania. This was especially true in the lower courts where Lithuanian was often still spoken, especially in the early years of the 19th century; one Lithuanian document was found in the Kalvarija criminal courts dating from 1844. A Lithuanian text enumerating landowner-peasant relations after the emancipation is known to have been published in Gelgaudiškis in 1814.<sup>3</sup> Yet, while the government and manor routinely addressed the peasants through interpreters, all official documents were recorded in Polish, sometimes also in Russian. An agreement between landowner J. Floryanowicz and the

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<sup>1</sup> A partial exception was Prussia, where the royal government published numerous Lithuanian decrees between the 16th and 19th centuries.

<sup>2</sup> Janulaitis, "Aktai ir dokumentai," 348-359; cf. Wąsicki, Ziemie polskie, pp. 24-25.

<sup>3</sup> Vaclovas Biržiška, Senųjų lietuvišku knygų istorija, II, 55-56.

peasants of Keturkaimis (Pol. Kieturkowo) village concluded in 1838, records that the document was witnessed and signed "after its reading and translation into the Lithuanian language for the peasants."<sup>1</sup> Of necessity, the languages of written and oral administration in Trans-Niemen Lithuanian were different.

The peasants' language in Lithuania was looked at as an exclusively village dialect during the 19th century; it was the language of a social class, rather than a nation. In fact, the peasants' national characteristics aroused very little interest in the upper classes--they were just another of those numerous qualities that made up the gulf between manor and village. Actually, many absentee landowners had little opportunity to even hear their subjects' language: the estate managers and the Church dealt directly with the villagers for them.

No doubt, the nobility's disinterest in the culture of the peasantry was compounded by a very real prejudice against the village population on the part of the Polish-speaking classes. For example, the comments of one Church official: "The impudence of the Lithuanian peasants is difficult to describe . . . it is hard to overcome the resistance of the Lithuanian peasant . . . it is necessary to know the Lithuanian peasants who weep, kneel, protest their innocence like lambs, but are [really] rapacious."<sup>2</sup> Naturally, the anti-peasant attitudes of the upper classes extended to all villagers, regardless of nationality; however, the ethnic difference in Lithuania definitely added to the mistrust between the

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<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 613: Władysławów, Agreement between Floryanowicz and the Peasants, October 17, 1838; cf. A. G. A. D., CWW-1340, Deposits of Andruszaytis, Gudaytis et al, July 1, 1827.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 129: Grażyszki, Father Baykowicz's Report, May 24, 1817.

social classes. The Marijampolė district chief reported that the peasant disturbances of 1861 there were due in part to the "mistrust of everything, even government officials, which lies in the character of the Lithuanian people."<sup>1</sup> The generally pro-peasant Szubrawcy secret society of the early 19th century (see above, pp. 256-257) were not above ridiculing the attempts by some of the Samogitian petty gentry to bring the Lithuanian language into literature and public life.<sup>2</sup> In Trans-Niemen Lithuania, it was Bishop Straszyński's anti-Lithuanian policy that exemplified the national prejudice of the Polish upper classes.

Despite the low social prestige of the Lithuanian language, the political and agrarian turmoil that led up to the great reforms of the sixties necessitated public communication with the Lithuanian peasantry on a larger scale. As mentioned above, the Lithuanian rebels of the 1790s had issued political proclamations aimed at the peasantry. Although these documents were crude and ineffective, they were the real beginnings of "Lithuanian publicism."<sup>3</sup> From this time on, the number of written materials for the villagers increased. Peasant unrest during the Franco-Russian War of 1812 compelled the then bishop of Samogitia, Juozapas Giedraitis (Pol. Józef Giedroyć), to issue two Lithuanian circulars which, while praising Napoleon as one "marked by heaven," asked the peasants to submit to their obligations and to the provisional authorities.<sup>4</sup>

The most important political events that stimulated the expanded use

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Grynwaser, Sprawa włościańska, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> Vincas Maciūnas, "Susirūpinimas lietuvių kalba XIX a. pradžioje," in Vairas, Vol. 17, No. 5(1936), 508-509.

<sup>3</sup> Gineitis, Kristijonas Donelaitis, pp. 30-32.

<sup>4</sup> Text is in Janulaitis, "Aktai ir dokumentai," 361-365.

of Lithuanian language political propaganda were the anti-Russian insurrections in Poland and Lithuania(1830-1831 and 1863-1864), and the great agrarian reforms of the sixties. The participation of a considerable number of the peasantry in the 1831 insurrection persuaded rebel authorities to make more announcements to the peasants in both Polish and Lithuanian. The latter language was spoken by many of the rebel troops and came to be widely used in the ranks.<sup>1</sup>

However, it was the period 1861-1864 that really led to the publication of substantial amounts of political and social propaganda aimed at the Lithuanian peasants. The Emancipation of 1861, and the difficulties associated with its implementation, inspired some Russian officials in Lithuania to address the peasants directly. In Russian Lithuania, several thousand Lithuanian copies of the Emancipation Manifesto were printed and distributed in an effort to reduce the peasants' ignorance and suspicions about the terms of the emancipation.<sup>2</sup> Governor-General Nazimov appealed to the villagers to trust the Tsar; in May, 1861, he issued a Lithuanian circular to local police authorities, ordering them to redouble their efforts at explaining the real terms of the Tsar's reform.<sup>3</sup>

In the Kingdom, language problems accompanied the introduction of the 1864 reform in the Lithuanian districts. In Kalvariija district, the peasants complained that the proclamation of the reform was in Polish, a

<sup>1</sup> Feliksas Sliesoriūnas and J. Kruopas, "Nežinomas 1831 m. Lietuvos sukilėlių atsišaukimas lietuvių kalba," LTSRMA Darbai, XVIII(1965), 239-243.

<sup>2</sup> Ivan P. Kornilov, Russkoe delo v severo-zapadnom kraie(St. Petersburg, 1908), p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> LTSR Istorijos Saltiniai, II, 26-27.

language which they either did not understand or understood poorly.<sup>1</sup> In March, 1864, Governor-General Murav'ev, who was in charge of the four northern districts of Augustów province, ordered the translation of the 1864 reform announcement into Lithuanian. Within a few days, ten thousand Lithuanian copies of the announcement were published and distributed. Soon after, Murav'ev suggested to the Kingdom's Secretary of State, N. A. Miliutin, that the 1864 decree itself be published in Lithuanian; furthermore, Murav'ev proposed the printing of the decree in Cyrillic, instead of the customary Latin alphabet. Miliutin replied, however, that unless such a "Cyrillic" reform of the Lithuanian language was made to include all of Lithuania, and not only the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts, it would appear as a grossly political move against Poland.<sup>2</sup> The idea of introducing the Cyrillic alphabet into Lithuanian was abandoned for the moment, but in 1865 the Russian government issued a comprehensive press ban on all Lithuanian publications in the Latin alphabet which lasted until 1904. This move, an attempt to separate the Lithuanian peasantry from the Polonized Church and nobility, eventually backfired and became a major stimulus to anti-Russian sentiment among the Lithuanian people.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the government came to recognize the Lithuanian language as an important element in dealing with the peasantry. However, more important than the government's clumsy attempts to influence Lithuanian villagers

<sup>1</sup> Kostiushko, Krest'iantskaia reforma, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> "Iz zapisok I. A. Nikotina," in Russkaia starina, CXIII(1903), 501-502.

<sup>3</sup> See the article "Press Ban," in Encyclopedia Lituanica, IV, 342-345.

was the wider use of the Lithuanian language during the anti-Russian insurrection of 1863-1864. It was during, and after, 1863 that Lithuanian emerged as a truly national language, transcending the boundaries of the parish and estate. First, the practical needs of command and communication in peasant military units necessitated wider use of the language. The peasant leader Adomas Bitė from Samogitia stated that he did not feel the need for learning Polish since he did not have any dealings with landowners.<sup>1</sup> In Augustów province, the ethnic factor came up in relations between the rebel leaders; thus, when an insurgent commander reportedly insulted four Lithuanians under his command, the Lithuanian leader Mikalojus Akelaitis demanded his replacement. Commissioner Piotrkowski of the rebel National Committee accused a local commander of foolishly assigning Lithuanian soldiers to the Polish Łomża district, while stationing Poles in the Lithuanian districts of Augustów province.<sup>2</sup>

During the crisis years of the early 1860s, even a few of the landowners began to address the Lithuanian villagers in the "peasant" language, no doubt, partly to mollify an unfriendly peasantry. In one district of Samogitia between February and November of 1863, court records were written down in Lithuanian, a practice unheard of before that time. Other contemporary reports indicate that in the rebel army, especially in Samogitia, the Polish and Lithuanian languages were considered to be on an equal footing for the first time.<sup>3</sup> Many archival documents of the period

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<sup>1</sup> Tadeusz Książek, Udział Litwinów, Ukrainów i Białorusinów w powstaniu styczniowym (Warsaw, 1969), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Maksimaitienė, "Sukilėlių kovos," 165-166.

<sup>3</sup> J[uozas] Žiugžda, "Valstiečių sukilimas Lietuvoje 1863 metais," in Lietuvos valstiečiai, 168-170.

reflect this practical increase in the use of the villagers' language: the writing of letters, singing of Lithuanian hymns, etc.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps even more important than this practical impetus that the insurrection of 1863-1864 gave the Lithuanian language was the political propaganda and publications that came out in those years. The writer Mikalojus Akelaitis(see below) authored several samples of this propaganda. In 1861, disappointed in his hopes for the "liberalism" of Alexander II, Akelaitis wrote two polemical Lithuanian poems. Police sabotaged attempts to publish them, but they are still of interest regarding Akelaitis' political propaganda intended for the peasants. The first, entitled "The Story of an Old Man," was a pseudo-historical overview of Polish history, beginning with the Kościuszko uprising of 1794, when, according to the poem, freedom was promised to everyone, only to be undone by the Russians and Prussians. Akelaitis wanted to tell the peasants not to believe that the Russians could bring them freedom, but that they could become part of the "gentry"(that is, free) only through an alliance with the Poles. The second text, called "The Letter from an Old Man in Vilnius," was an account of the massacre of Polish patriots in Warsaw in February, 1861. Akelaitis intended to tell the peasantry that the demonstration which touched off the shootings was intended to thank the landowners for their projected agrarian reforms. He stressed the unity of all national groups in Poland and Lithuania as indispensable for liberation from the Russian yoke.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bikulin, "K voprosu ob uchastii," 140-142.

<sup>2</sup> The text of both poems was first published in Augustinas Janulaitis, "Spausdinti ir nespausdinti 1863-1864 m. sukilio raštai," in Karo Archyvas, I(1925), 217 ff.

During 1864, a number of Lithuanian proclamations to the people were published in Augustów province. On New Year's Day, the province's military commissar, Bronisław Radziszewski, announced severe penalties for betrayal of the insurrection and issued an order in which he warned the peasants against the Russians' treacherous lies concerning land grants. This last appeal contained strong religious sentiments; for example, it emphasized the Russians' mistreatment of Catholics and warned that the Russians were "sending from Russia their bearded priests in the place of our own exiled and martyred clergy, and [were] forcibly converting small children to the Russian faith."<sup>1</sup> Another Lithuanian publication issued in Augustów province on New Year's Day, 1864, was a paraphrase of Konstanty Kalinowski's Mużyczkaia prauda (The Peasant's Truth); it emphasized the insurgents' pro-peasant stance, while accusing the Russians of sowing hatred between the peasants and the nobility. In this appeal, the insurgents promised to concern themselves with the "simple people," in addition to granting land to the peasants and making everyone "equal to one another."<sup>2</sup>

From the point of view of the history of Lithuanian publicism, the most important publication of 1863-1864 was Akelaitis' short-lived bilingual (Lithuanian-Polish) newspaper, Žinios Apej Lenku Wajna su Maskolejs (News About the War of the Poles with the Muscovites). In effect, this curious newsletter was the first Lithuanian political periodical, even though only two issues are known to have come out. The newsletter's circulation was in the thousands. It was distributed in

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<sup>1</sup> In Janulaitis, "Spausdinti," 219.

<sup>2</sup> Text is in Janulaitis, "Spausdinti," 220-222.

Prussia and Kaunas gubernia, as well as Trans-Niemen Lithuania. Only the first issue of Žinios has survived.

On the whole, this publication continued the propagation of pro-Polish nationalism that was typical of many pre-1864 Lithuanian intelligentsia. In Akelaitis' Žinios, the "Polish land" is described as "our Fatherland." As the newsletter explained to Lithuanian leaders: "You see three coats of arms in the stamp [on the title page]--these are our three lands, like the children of one father. The eagle is the Polish land, the knight is Lithuania, and the archangel--that's Ruthenia."<sup>1</sup> Mostly, the newsletter described the battles of the insurgents against the Russians and exhorted the Lithuanians of the Kingdom to "fight the enemy," giving as an example the energetic efforts of the peasants in Samogitia.<sup>2</sup>

Compared to later writing, the Lithuanian political publications of 1861-1864 were very modest, even primitive; but for the times, they provided an important precedent. In any case, the wider use of the Lithuanian language, and the central role of the peasantry in the turmoil of the 1860s raises a significant historical question: to what extent was the participation of the peasantry and its leaders in the anti-Russian insurrection "nationally motivated?" In other words, were the insurrection and the peasants' movement that accompanied it national in the sense of striving for some concrete goals, such as nationhood and Lithuanian independence? The answer seems to be a qualified no. The Lithuanian leader Mikalojus Akelaitis clung to the traditional idea of restoring the old Polish-

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<sup>1</sup> From the text published in Prasa tajna z lat 1861-1864, III, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> For Akelaitis' role in the insurrection of 1863-1864 see Augustinas Janulaitis, Mikalojus Akelaitis, LTSR MA, Istorijos Institutas, Acta Historica Lituanica, Vol. 3(Vilnius, 1969), pp. 54-59.

Lithuanian Commonwealth. A few of the insurrection's "Red" leaders in Lithuania, most notably Father Antanas Mackevičius, the Samogitian guerrilla leader, and Konstanty Kalinowski(Belorussian, Kalinouski), author of the radical Belorussian Mužyckaia prauda newsletters, had a somewhat different view of the relationship of the so-called Lithuanian and Belorussian "borderlands" to both Poland and the Russian Empire. Mackevičius, for example, was aware of the emerging national issue in relation to the peasantry, but his conception of a political future for Lithuania was vague. He wished to "awaken the nation" and create in it a sense of consciousness so that the Lithuanians could decide whether they wished federation with Poland or Russia. In the end, Mackevičius probably hoped for the emergence of a democratic Poland in which the Lithuanians would somehow choose their own national destiny.<sup>1</sup>

Kalinowski's views were more specific. On the eve of his execution in 1864, he composed a letter in which he discussed the national question. Kalinowski described himself as an enemy of any force which wanted to deprive Poles, Lithuanians and Belorussians of their "statehood," or what he called the "basic conditions for the development of national culture." He dreamt of a Lithuanian-Belorussian republic in which the peasants could pursue the "national culture" peculiar to them. Kalinowski believed that forced Russification was evil and warned the Russians, correctly as it turned out, that they underestimated the task of assimilating the Lithuanian peasantry.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Lazutka, Revoliutsionnaia situatsiia, pp. 150 ff.; cf. Mackevicius' own statements in Vosstanie v Litve, pp. 58-61; L[eonas] Bičkauskas-Gentvila, 1863 m. sukilimas Lietuvoje(Vilnius, 1958), p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Vosstanie v Litve, pp. 78-79; A[natolii] F. Smirnov, Vosstanie 1863 goda v Litve i Belorussii(Moscow, 1963), pp. 325 ff.

Mackevičius and Kalinowski were far from being nationalists in the modern sense of the word. Like many of his peers among the Polonized upper gentry, Kalinowski confused the concepts of ethnic and historic nationality(see Preface): he called himself a "Lithuanian," although he was culturally a Pole who wrote his peasant newsletters in Belorussian.<sup>1</sup> Yet, in a significant way, Mackevičius and Kalinowski were forerunners: they were among the first to sense that full social justice for the peasantry somehow involved the national question as well. Both men, with their belief in a vague form of national egalitarianism, stood on the boundary between the federative, traditional ideal of the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth(for example, Akelaitis) and the later devotees of truly modern peasant nationalism.

#### Peasant Literacy, Education and Popular Literature Before 1864.

Despite its wider acceptance in public life, Lithuanian national culture had little chance of development without education and publications in the native language of the peasantry. There was some progress in these fields during the first half of the 19th century. At the turn of the 19th century, the Prussians attempted some educational reforms in Trans-Niemen Lithuania by proposing the expansion of primary and secondary education for the populace; however, the Prussian plans were hampered by a lack of funds and qualified teachers. The Prussians believed that German would eventually replace the local Polish and Lithuanian languages, but they did permit education in the native tongues of the people. In fact,

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<sup>1</sup> See Nicholas Vakar, Belorussia: The Making of a Nation(Cambridge, Mass., 1956), pp. 70-72.

in 1805, Lithuanian was made equal to Polish as a language of instruction in elementary schools.<sup>1</sup> Prussia's rule was brief, however, and her modest attempts at educational reform ended in 1807.

Little was accomplished in education during the brief period of the Duchy of Warsaw(1807-1815). In any case, more reliable statistics on education and literacy are available only for the years after 1820. Traditionally, education was closely tied to the Church which was responsible for maintaining parish schools. However, parish schools were few and, during the early years of the Kingdom, the number of rural schools actually decreased after Viceroy Zajęczek relieved peasants from mandatory school support levies in 1821.

Conditions in the rural parish schools, where they did exist, were primitive: qualified teachers were lacking; school buildings were often non-existent, the people making do with rectories, rented rooms, and even private homes. The local priest, church organist, or sacristan was very often the teacher of "letters" to schoolchildren. Very few peasant girls attended either the rural schools, or the special girls' boarding schools in towns. Primary education in Trans-Niemen Lithuania was predominantly Catholic, but not exclusively so; in 1837, members of the three major religions(Roman Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran, Jewish) reportedly used nine schools in common, while five were listed as Catholic, and three Evangelical.<sup>2</sup>

Available statistics suggest that, during the first half of the 19th century, the number of parish school pupils in comparison to the general

<sup>1</sup> B. Sakalauskas, "Mokyklos ir Prūsų mokyklų politika Naujuosiuoze Rytų Prūsuose," in Praeitis(Kaunas), I(1930), 148 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Jemielity, "Parafialne szkoły," 233-245.

population was very low. The best estimates indicate no more than two dozen parish schools in Trans-Niemen Lithuania before 1848; at most, there could have been a few thousand pupils in various institutions of learning. However, although the number of peasant children receiving a "formal" education must have been exceedingly small, this does not give a full picture of education in the countryside. Notations in Church school reports indicate that many children were taught "privately in the rectory," or that some were "taught in the winter by the pastor," or others simply "taught at home."<sup>1</sup>

The fact is that many more peasant children received a kind of informal or "unreported" education. It was common practice for peasants to send their sons and daughters to the local church organist, sacristan, some pious literate old woman, or even a local shepherd who had mastered the "letters," to acquire at least the rudiments of reading. Many of the shepherd tutors would settle with the family of one of the pupils, while others led a wandering life. These tutors taught the children from the various Lithuanian textbooks and prayerbooks that were popular among the peasants. In general, children were taught solely so that they could "pray from books." Peasants called their local village tutors daraktorius (a corruption of "doctor"). These peasant "professors" made their living from the few pennies they collected from grateful parents.<sup>2</sup> The education, derived from self-made village teachers, and based on a knowledge of reading alone, was, of course, minimal. "One couldn't learn too much

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<sup>1</sup> Jemielity, "Parafialne szkoły," 250 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See Akielewicz, "Słówko," 111; cf. also Gazeta Polska, September 29, 1862 (No. 206), 2.

from such poor teachers," complained one contemporary, "and, even though I began my education at about the age of five, by the time I was twelve, I could only read and write Polish and Lithuanian."<sup>1</sup> Despite the complaint, this was probably a better education than most pupils received from their "village professors."

Thus, there were two forms of primary education in the Lithuanian countryside: the established parish school, and the unofficial village education. Sometimes, these two types of schooling actually coexisted or substituted for one another. For example, in Leipalingis village, there was a small school in 1819 (without a school building), which enrolled 24 boys and two girls. In 1823, after Zajęczek's decree releasing the peasants from compulsory school support, the Church succinctly reported that "there is no parish school, but within the parish there are a few people in some homesteads who teach children reading, writing, and the catechism. The pastor checks on the daraktoriai. The children and tutors behave well. There is no school maintenance fund."<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to the village tutor system which provided the barest elements of literacy in Lithuanian, the structured primary school offered a real chance of advancement: a beginning on the road to the priesthood, or to rural government service as a secretary or court messenger. Yet, throughout the 19th century, and, especially before 1864, many, if not most, peasants preferred their "homemade" education. There were several reasons for this. First, there was the problem of language. At this

<sup>1</sup> Jonas Basanavičius, Rinktiniai raštai (Vilnius, 1970), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ratelaitis, "Leipalingio monografija," 272-273.

time, Polish was the only language of social advancement in southwestern Lithuania, yet the peasants resisted the acquisition of Polish. Father Butkiewicz, the pastor of Naumiestis (Pol. Władysławów) in Marijampolė district, wrote:

The greatest obstacle to better education for the Lithuanians is undisputedly their language which they cherish passionately, but through which they are cut off from their Polish countrymen. It is amazing that with the exception of a few years of Prussian rule, this people [i.e. the Lithuanians] remains continuously under a Polish government and, having always had Polish landowners and priests over them, has not learned their [Polish] language.<sup>1</sup>

Peasant dislike of the parish schools was often fueled by the low esteem and even ridicule with which the villagers' language was regarded in the classroom. Most larger (and better) parish schools forbade their pupils to speak Lithuanian among themselves. The following humiliating practice was followed in one school: "If a pupil spoke out in Lithuanian, the teacher would hang an inscription around [the offender's] neck reading 'ass'; the offending pupil would carry it around, until he overheard another speaking Lithuanian--he would then hang the inscription on [this next] pupil."<sup>2</sup> Needless to say, such practices inculcated, at least among some of the villagers, a feeling of inferiority and shame about their language.<sup>3</sup>

Yet another barrier to peasant education was the popular belief that a religious education was enough. In the view of many peasants, an

<sup>1</sup> Butkiewicz, "Opis," 299.

<sup>2</sup> Motiejus Gustaitis, "Kunigas Antanas Tatarė, pirmutinis Suvalkų gubernijos lietuvių švietėjas," Lietuvių tauta, Vol. 2(1913), 225.

<sup>3</sup> Katkus, Raštai, pp. 250, 310.

education which allowed them to read the popular Lithuanian religious books was education enough. As pastor Butkiewicz noted, the peasants "learn to read with the greatest relish, but only in the native language."<sup>1</sup> Still another reason for the resistance of some villagers to the established schools was economic; it was easy to pay the village tutor a few pennies for reading lessons, but quite another thing to put up the money for a primary school. In 1862, one newspaper reporter from Kalvarija district complained that "here in Lithuania, the people remain in greater ignorance than anywhere else and reject education, almost violently." Apparently, it was difficult to convince "ignorant and suspicious landed peasants" to establish schools.<sup>2</sup> Thus, while favoring literacy, the Lithuanian peasants often mistrusted any "higher" or formal education, unless it led to the priesthood for their sons.

Despite this frequently negative attitude towards a "formal," Polish education, an increasing number of peasant children found their way into the better primary and middle schools of Trans-Niemen Lithuania during the first half of the 19th century. Reports indicate that, during this period, at least half of the pupils at the large Marijampolė primary and middle school were peasants. Some of these pupils went on to the Catholic seminary in Sejny; others, having finished an elementary and even, at times, a secondary education, went back to work the land. Still others went into manorial or government service(for example, as customs officials or court messengers); often, these latter villagers were despised by the

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<sup>1</sup> Butkiewicz, "Opis," 301.

<sup>2</sup> Gazeta Polska, January 22, 1862(No. 16), 2.

peasants--they were said to have "gone gentry." Despite a slowly rising educational level, religion and education remained bound together in the peasant's mind. Formal education was of doubtful value unless it led to the priesthood.<sup>1</sup>

In neighboring Samogitia, the parish school system was much more advanced than in Trans-Niemen Lithuania. The school system, and the use of Lithuanian in primary education, was more advanced in Samogitia largely due to the energetic work of Bishop Motiejus Valančius(1801-1875). He systematized the school network, demanded financial accounting from the parishes, and kept lists of pupils.<sup>2</sup> Still, here too the level of education was low.

The low quality of peasant education in the 19th century must not be confused with illiteracy. Actually, in relation to Russia proper, and compared with many other areas of eastern Europe, the literacy rate among the peasants of western Lithuania was relatively high.<sup>3</sup> There is no way to ascertain the actual level of Lithuanian literacy before 1864 with any statistical accuracy, although it is known that, at least in western Lithuania, the literacy rate was close to 50% by 1900. One source has given the literacy rate for the whole population of Augustów province as 10% in 1860(meaning that the peasant rate was even lower). It is difficult to

<sup>1</sup> Akielewicz, "Słówko," 113; Goltz, "Kilka słów," 286; Połujański, Wedrówek, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> See Antanas Alekna, Žemaičių vyskupas Motiejus Valančius, introd. Vincas Trumpa, 2nd ed.(Chicago, 1975), pp. 49-64.

<sup>3</sup> Ochmański, Litewski ruch, pp. 82-83. The literacy rate among the peasants of eastern Lithuania was considerably lower.

take such figures seriously.<sup>1</sup> Contemporaries repeatedly reported the widespread use of religious books among the Lithuanian peasantry.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, there is a strong possibility that, in some cases, officials measured literacy only in Polish and Russian. Some estimates indicate that the actual adult literacy rate may well have been as high as 50% in Samogitia at the middle of the 19th century. At the same time, the literacy rate was certainly somewhat lower in southwestern Lithuania, but surely nowhere near the minuscule figures suggested by some sources.

In any case, literacy statistics can give an unreal picture of the average peasant household's accessibility to the printed word; after all, one literate person per household was enough to provide at least some book learning for the others. Literacy was unevenly distributed among the peasants; for example, it was much higher among well-to-do households than among landless villagers. Reading ability seems to have been fairly equally distributed by sex, even though few girls attended school.<sup>3</sup> At any rate, the image of an "illiterate and ignorant" village does not fit southwestern Lithuania in the 19th century, especially its landed peasants. If only one person per landed household was literate, then it is highly probable that the majority of the well-to-do and middle peasant households were at least familiar with one Lithuanian book.

What did the literate peasants read? Until the end of the 19th century, the "literary" diet of the village consisted primarily of

<sup>1</sup> See Jemielity, "Parafialne szkoły," 431; cf. Grinius, "Keletas dokumentų," 381-382.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Goltz, "Kilka słów," 286; Butkiewicz, "Opis," 301; Połużański, Wędrówki, pp. 375-376.

<sup>3</sup> In fact, the 1897 census of the Russian Empire showed a higher rate of female, compared to male, literacy in Kaunas gubernia. Mažoji lietuviškoji tarybinė enciklopedija, III, 45.

religious publications. However, there was an important change in both the quantity and quality of Lithuanian reading matter during the first half of the 19th century. Earlier, books had been more expensive and less accessible to the peasantry. Furthermore, some of the 18th century religious books and pamphlets were not only extremely naive, and even superstitious in content, but were written in Lithuanian that was so thoroughly Slavicized as to constitute a jargon all its own.<sup>1</sup> Samogitia's Bishop Valančius, a writer himself, once noted that most of these old Lithuanian books contained such distorted language that some people "feared to take them into their hands."<sup>2</sup>

The Lithuanian books published in Prussia were of better quality, but their Gothic script made them difficult for Catholic peasants to read. The budding Lithuanian romantic movement of the early 19th century (see below) produced some poetry and history, but these were printed in small numbers and were hard for uneducated villagers to understand. One of the more popular early books in southwestern Lithuania was the Lithuanian translation of the Polish author Jan Chodźko's John from Swisłocz, a didactic tale about a wandering huckster, published in Vilnius in 1823. Yet even this book had its limitations: it was written in the Samogitian dialect foreign to most of the Kingdom's Lithuanians.<sup>3</sup> Since the 18th

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<sup>1</sup> A good example was the popular Brama Atwerta ing Wiecznasti (Gates Opened to Eternity) by Michał Olszewski--it went through eighteen editions between 1753 and 1851. This book was sharply criticized for its superstition and poor language, and was finally refused an imprimatur. Biržiška, Aleksandrynas, II, 71; Liudvikas Jucevičius, Mokyti žemaičiai, eds. Meilė Lukšienė and Vytautas Raudeliūnas (Vilnius, 1975), p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Gustaitis, "Tatarė," 211.

<sup>3</sup> Gustaitis, "Tatarė," 211.

century, elementary Lithuanian readers(Lith. elementorius) were popular in the village. Usually, they were strongly religious in content. One of the better Lithuanian readers of the early 19th century was written by Kajetonas Niegabitauskas(Pol. Kajetan Niezabitowski), who worked as a censor for the Commission of Education in Warsaw.<sup>1</sup> A very popular writer of the early 19th century was Antanas Strazdas(Pol. Antoni Drazdowski)(1760-1833), whose secular and religious poems and hymns became immensely popular among the peasants all over Lithuania. The people adapted his works into numerous "folk" variations; however, Strazdas' works reached the Trans-Niemen region somewhat later than the rest of Lithuania.<sup>2</sup>

The number of Lithuanian publications increased sharply from the 1840s onward. During this period, new types of publications were presented to the peasants. In 1846, Laurynas Ivinskis(1811-1881) began publishing almanacs(Lith. kalendorius) for the peasants. These almanacs combined practical farm advice, popular history, religious themes, and even some poetry. They proved very popular among the peasants until the Russian government forced their publication in the Cyrillic alphabet in 1865.<sup>3</sup> In the 1850s, Ivinskis proposed a regular Lithuanian language newspaper to be called Ajtwaras(The Goblin), but despite the support of the influential Bishop Valančius, the Russian censorship refused

<sup>1</sup> Kajetonas Niegabitauskas, Naujas mokslas skaytima dieļ mažu wayku Lietuwas ir Žemaycziu(Warsaw, 1824).

<sup>2</sup> See V[ytautas] Vanagas, Antanas Strazdas(Vilnius, 1968).

<sup>3</sup> Juozas Jurginis, "Ivinskio Kalendoriai," in the author's Istorija ir poezija: kultūros istorijos etiudai(Vilnius, 1969), pp. 205-224.

permission to publish.

In addition to the slowly changing nature of Lithuanian publications intended for the peasantry, there was a veritable revolution in the quantity of Lithuanian books and pamphlets during the 19th century. Of the estimated almost fifteen hundred Lithuanian titles published between 1547 and 1864, more than half came out after 1800. Over three thousand different publications came out between 1865 and 1904. The circulation of individual books increased dramatically during the 19th century: an 1858 treatise on temperance by the popular Bishop Valancius reached some 40,000 copies, a considerable amount for Lithuania, even by today's standards. The geographical publishing center of Lithuanian books also changed at this time, as the emphasis shifted from Prussian Lithuania to Russian Lithuania during the 19th century. Trans-Niemen Lithuania's share of the publishing total was very modest; at most, a dozen publications came out here before 1864, but some of these had a considerable impact on the local peasantry.<sup>1</sup>

The first book published in southwestern Lithuania to use the Lithuanian language was Maciej Marciński's Grammatyka Polska dla Litwinów Uczęcych Się Języka Polskiego (A Polish Grammar for Lithuanians Learning Polish), published in Suwałki in 1833. This book, dedicated to Baron Keudell of Gelgaudiškis, Marciński's patron, urged Lithuanians to learn Polish because their knowledge of that important language was very

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<sup>1</sup> See Biržiška, Senųjų lietuviškų, I, 31; Ulpis, Lietuvos TSR bibliografija, I, xii-xiii; cf. Michał Brengstejn, "Druk litewski: studium historyczno-statystyczne," in Przegląd Historyczny, Vol. 3, zesz. 1 (1906), 95-115.

poor.<sup>1</sup> A new, revised, and much expanded edition of this book was published by Marciniński's nephew in 1861. This new edition contained some interesting passages extolling the Lithuanian language (absent in the 1833 edition), even while the book tried to convince the readers of the advantages of learning Polish:

Even though your Lithuanian language is very beautiful and melodic, Polish is far richer in words and terms, and is very necessary for you today. In spite of all the beauty of the Lithuanian speech, you can't talk in it about everything, as you can in Polish . . . This is because [Lithuanian] was long neglected by all educated people; since the oldest times, nobody has written, nor do they write now, scholarly books in Lithuanian as is done in other languages. So . . . that today, without the Polish language, you are like the blind and deaf of the world. Don't abandon your native language, and don't be ashamed of it, as some of you are, who don't even want to admit that you can speak Lithuanian; but from your whole heart pay attention to the Polish language, in which you will find much that is worthwhile: that is, education, beauty, and all manner of information that you need.<sup>1</sup>

While the younger Marciniński's praise for the peasants' language may have been partly motivated by a desire to ingratiate himself with his village readers, there is no doubt that his admiration for the Lithuanian language was genuine. In one of the grammar's dialogues, he praised Lithuanian as an "ancient language, complete in itself, rich in words . . ." He also complained that the native language had been "conquered" by the people who ruled Lithuania, and that the peasants had lost their own "real" vocabulary to Polish, Russian, and German words. Marciniński attributed this to "our Lithuanian carelessness." In the manner of later nationalists, the younger Marciniński complained that the Lithuanian language was "almost dead." There was no one, he wrote, who looked after the

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<sup>1</sup> Franciszek Marciniński, Gramatyka litewsko-polska: Gramatika arba spasabas isssimokinimo lenkiszko kalbos, ed. with an introduction by Antanas Marcinskas (Warsaw, 1861), p. 3.

Lithuanian language, and admitted that "we should be ashamed . . . as the Prussian Germans [i.e. Lithuanians in Prussia] have beaten us in this regard."<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to account for the younger Marciniński's views on language, which were typical of later Lithuanian nationalists, especially in view of his uncle's apparent disinterest in the nature of the Lithuanian language. There is no record of the younger Marciniński's participation in any of the activities of the later Lithuanian intelligentsia; perhaps, his attitude was an example of the "generation gap" that separated educated Lithuanians during the 19th century. As a rule, the younger generation tended to express a more conscious appreciation of the national language.<sup>2</sup>

Another Lithuanian grammar-reader was published in Suwałki in 1859: Lamentorius lietuviszkas diel mažu wajku (The Lithuanian Reader for Small Children), written by Motiejus Brundza, a priest who worked in Marijampolė district. This book was an adaptation of a popular 18th century reader. It was hardly original, but went through at least fifteen editions during the 19th century.<sup>3</sup>

The most significant popular writer of the Trans-Niemen region before 1864 was Antanas Tatarė (1805-1889), whose religious and didactic writings proved extremely popular among the Lithuanian peasantry. Tatare was born in Marijampolė district of well-to-do parents. His father, like many

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<sup>1</sup> Marciniński, Grammatyka, pp. 145-146.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the Marciniński's see Biržiška, Aleksandrynas, II, 442-443 and III, 304-305.

<sup>3</sup> Ulpis, Lietuvos TSR bibliografija, I, 67-68; Biržiška, Aleksandrynas, III, 328.

other wealthy peasants, felt compelled to educate at least one son. At the age of 23, Tatarė entered the six-year district school in Sejny. In 1831, he fled to Prussia to avoid conscription, but soon afterward returned to the Kingdom and worked as a tutor. In 1832, Tatarė entered the Sejny seminary and was consecrated two years later. Tatarė served as a curate in a number of Lithuanian parishes until, in 1855, he was appointed pastor of Sintautai(Pol. Syntowty) in Marijampolė district. He actively supported the anti-Russian insurrection of 1863 and was, consequently, arrested by Russian authorities. Although the Russians found little evidence of actual treason, Tatarė's case took a turn for the worse when Lithuanian rebels hanged the headman of Sintautai: the unfortunate official was suspected of informing on the pastor. Subsequently, Tatarė was deported to Russia and, upon his return to the Kingdom in 1871, retired to Łomża in southern Augustów province. He died there in 1889.<sup>1</sup>

Tatarė was not the first in Trans-Niemen Lithuania to try his hand at literature in the native language;<sup>2</sup> however, he was the first to publish successfully. His first book was a Lithuanian translation of a popular religious work and was published in 1848.<sup>2</sup> Three years later, Tatarė published his most popular and best literary work, Pamoksłaj Iszminties ir Tejsibes(Teachings of Wisdom and Justice), a book that was twice reissued in the United States at the end of the 19th century. It

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<sup>1</sup> Gustaitis, "Tatarė," 204 ff.; Biržiška, Aleksandrynas, III, 154-155; Poļuaniški, Wędrówki, pp. 375-376, 449-450.

<sup>2</sup> Totoraitis, Marijampolės, pp. 28-30; also on the poet Father Petras Aleknavičius, see Biržiška, Aleksandrynas, II, 201-203 and Ulpis, Lietuvos TSR bibliografija, I, 492.

<sup>3</sup> Antanas Tatarė, Žyburys rankoje duszios krykszcioniszko kielaujantczios ing amžyna i szcześliwa giwenima(Suwałki, 1848).

consisted of 127 fables adapted from Aesop, Krylov, and other authors, as well as several original stories. In the introduction, Tatarė explained that he wrote his book because "up to now the Lithuanians have had in their books only pious prayers and some of the Sacred Scriptures." Thus, in Tatarė's view, it was necessary to study the "languages of the educated world," at least until God could send more writers to supply the Lithuanians with a literature equal to that of other languages. In the meantime, Tatarė explained that he himself would try to fill the gap for now, and spread the necessary wisdom "among my brothers' children."<sup>1</sup>

All of Tatarė's stories contained morals. In some of them, he exhorted the peasants not to envy the material prosperity of the nobility. "If the plain people knew all the worries and misfortunes of the landowners and rich of this world," he wrote, "they would not envy their success on this earth."<sup>2</sup> In his story, "Johnny and the Kitten," Tatarė provided one of the first portrayals of the myth of a "rich America" in Lithuanian literature.<sup>3</sup> In another tale, Tatarė ridiculed a poor peasant woman's "get rich" scheme by which she sought to "buy a house, became an owner [of property] and a mistress, to whom servants would kneel." The author showed the futility of such schemes and warned the peasants not to think about things "which can never be."<sup>4</sup> The theme of satisfaction with one's lot is repeated in other stories; one is aptly entitled "The Rich Man and the Beggar."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Antanas Tatarė, Pamoksłaj iszminties ir tejsibes iszguldineti priliginimais gałwocziu wisu amžiu del Lietuwos wajkielu (Suwałki, 1851), v.

<sup>2</sup> Tatarė, Pamoksłaj, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Tatarė, Pamoksłaj, pp. 139-140.

<sup>4</sup> Tatarė, Pamoksłaj, p. 88.

<sup>5</sup> Tatarė, Pamoksłaj, p. 70.

Thus, Tatarė espoused social conservatism. On the other hand, he also urged the peasants to seek education, achieve literacy, and improve their economic situation. He denounced moral evils such as drunkenness and child beating which lowered the quality of village life. Tatarė felt that the peasants should seek a better life within their own social and economic sphere. In this context, he propagated a kind of rural "work ethic." Goodness and thrift, Tatarė said, were rewarded with economic success; on the other hand, moral laxity led to poverty and, possibly, "landless laborer" status. There is no question that Tatarė sympathized with the well-to-do peasants--together with the landowners, they served as "protectors" and necessary overseers of the poorer, less motivated, landless villagers.<sup>1</sup>

In retrospect, Tatarė's Teachings are relatively poor literature in terms of style and originality. Yet because it is one of the first secular prose works in Lithuanian, it is of historical and literary interest. Tatarė completed another secular book, Pamokslai gražiu žmonių (The Teachings of Good People), which consisted of original didactic tales set against the background of Lithuanian peasant life. For some reason, it was not published in his lifetime and appeared in the United States only at the turn of the century.<sup>2</sup>

In 1853, Tatarė published his third and last Lithuanian book, a religious guide entitled Tiesiausės kieles į dangaus karaliste (The Most Direct Way to the Kingdom of Heaven). Its moral tone was very similar to that of the Teachings, although there were a few new elements; in

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<sup>1</sup> Tatarė, Pamoksłaj, pp. 4-15, 53, 127-132.

<sup>2</sup> Biržiška, Aleksandrynas, III, 156; cf. K[ostas] Korsakas, ed., Lietuvių literatūros istorija, I(Vilnius, 1957), 495-499.

some passages, Tatarė glorified village life and depicted the peasants as the "happiest" people on earth because of their "innocent" way of life. He also paid tribute to the bucolic enchantment of rural life: the close proximity of nature; the carefree thrill of "shepherds playing their flutes on a hill;" and the like. But here again, while admitting that bad landowners "sometimes" oppressed the peasants, Tatarė exhorted the Lithuanian villagers to be patient. One revealing passage: "You can go and complain to the government, but if you don't want to have greater troubles and worries on your head, its better to suffer the injustice [of the manor] quietly."<sup>1</sup> In addition to stressing the need for the peasants to obey their "betters," Tatarė attacked illegal peasant resistance to the landowners and defended the unpopular protectionism and customs duties which raised prices for many imported commodities; they were necessary, he said, for the "prosperity of the landowners and the country." It was up to God, Tatarė told the villagers, to punish "the evil rich."<sup>2</sup> In The Most Direct Way to the Kingdom of Heaven, Tatarė criticized various moral and social problems in the village; among these, he included illiteracy and urged "all those idlers who cannot read" to learn enough to at least make out the Scriptures. As far as Tatarė was concerned, the peasants were literally his flock; often, he referred to them as his "children."<sup>3</sup>

Tatarė's contribution to the growth of Lithuanian national consciousness was unintentional. To him the Lithuanian language was not so much a

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<sup>1</sup> Tatarė, Tiesiaus kieles, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> Tatarė, Tiesiaus kieles, pp. 139-141, 191-195.

<sup>3</sup> Tatarė, Tiesiaus kieles, pp. 76, 81.

value in itself as a tool with which to reach the peasants for their own moral good. Tatarė was unconcerned with either Polonization or the standardization of the Lithuanian language; in fact, his own literary style, full of Slavicisms, attests to this. When Tatarė taught religion at the Sintautai parish school, he did so in Polish, following traditional practice. Tatarė's patriotism, evident in his support of the 1863 insurrection, was clearly of the old Polish variety. However, in his own way, Tatarė contributed considerably to popular education and literacy in the native language, a prerequisite of any national movement in Trans-Niemen Lithuania.<sup>1</sup>

Ethnographic Studies, National Romanticism and Mikalojus Akelaitis.

Aside from the development of popular culture, two other related, but distinct cultural developments in 19th century Lithuania preceded the development of modern Lithuanian nationalism: the romantic fascination with Lithuanian history and folklore among a number of Polish and Lithuanian writers, and a genuine native Lithuanian literary and cultural renaissance which began among the Samogitian gentry in the 1820s. The first movement had its origins in the general spread of national and romantic ideas in Europe during and after the Napoleonic Wars. The historians Joachim Lelewel(1786-1861) and Teodor Narbutt(1784-1864), as well as the poet Adam Mickiewicz(1798-1855), took their themes from Lithuanian history. Narbutt and Mickiewicz particularly idealized the ancient, pagan past of Lithuania. However, these men wrote their works in Polish

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<sup>1</sup> Gustaitis, "Tatarė," 242-243.

and had little knowledge of the Lithuanian language.<sup>1</sup> In the 1840s, a number of Polish scholars and travelers took a closer look at the entire field of Lithuanian studies. Ignacy Kraszewski(1812-1887), while basically in the romantic tradition of Narbutt, was more thorough in his research on some aspects of Lithuanian culture, especially language. In fact, some of Kraszewski's romanticized historical poems served as models for later Lithuanian writers. The Polish ethnographer Oskar Kolberg showed considerable interest in Lithuanian folklore since the 1840s; in 1858, he journeyed to the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts for first-hand research. Aided in his studies by Mikalojus Akelaitis and other Lithuanian informers, Kolberg collected data on the Lithuanian peasants' material culture, songs, legends, customs and sayings. His work proved to be one of the most comprehensive collections of ethnography to date.<sup>2</sup>

Aleksander Połujański's travelogue, Wędrówki po gubernii augustowskiej (Travels Through Augustów Province), published in 1859, was a valuable source for the history of this remote region and aroused some public interest in Polish Lithuania, despite the author's penchant for fanciful philological explanations of place names and uncritical reliance on old legends as sources.<sup>3</sup> Another scholar who took a deep interest in Lithuanian folklore of the Trans-Niemen region was Karol Brzozowski(1821-1904), who studied in the Sejny and Suwałki area as a young man. Here he learned

<sup>1</sup> On Lithuanian themes among the early Polish romantics, see Franciszek Augustaitis, Pierwiastki litewskie we wcześnieym romantyzmie polskim(Cracow, 1911), pp. 68-83.

<sup>2</sup> See Witold Armon, "Zainteresowanie O. Kolberga folklorem litewskim," in Lud, Vol. 42, No. 1(1956), 431-445.

<sup>3</sup> Andrzej Wędzki, "Kultura i nauka na Suwalszczyźnie w XIX stuleciu," in Studia i materiały do dziejów Suwalszczyzny, 263-265.

the peasants' language and wrote down a number of folksongs, which he published in 1844. In this collection, Brzozowski included the original Lithuanian texts to dispell the notion of "many less-informed people [who] think that the Lithuanian language is only a mixture of Polish and Russian expressions."<sup>1</sup> However, scholars like Brzozowski and Połujanński also "stereotyped" the Lithuanian peasant by assigning him certain moral and psychological qualities. In their view, the Lithuanian peasant was "moroze," "closed within himself;" others said that the Lithuanian villager lacked the "joviality innate to the Polish peasant."<sup>2</sup>

In any case, the growing interest in and study of the Lithuanians helped dispel some mistaken notions about this people current in contemporary society. For example, Russia's Minister of Education, Sergei Uvarov, sent the scholar P. Preuss to study Slavic languages in Königsberg in 1840. There, Preuss met Ludwik Rhesa(Lith. Liudvikas Réza) and Friedrich Kurschat, two prominent Prussian Lithuanians. Preuss became interested in their language and wrote a short, but sound, report on Lithuanian, disproving previously touted theories of the language as a Gothic-Slavic-Finnish mixture, and pointing out that the Lithuanians constituted a distinct ethnic group.<sup>3</sup>

One scholar who straddled the fence, so to speak, between membership in the Polish and Lithuanian romantic movements was the ethnographer

<sup>1</sup> Karol Brzozowski, Pieśni ludu nadniemierskiego z okolic Aleksoty z dołączeniem do niektórych melodji(Poznań, 1844), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> For example, see Brzozowski's article in Gazeta Codzienna, December 29, 1857; cf. S. P., "Włoszczanie litewscy," 258.

<sup>3</sup> P. Preuss, "O języku litewskim: raport nadesłany Ministrowi Oświecenia Narodowego z Królewca dnia 1 marca, 1840," Magazyn powszechny, Vol. 7, zesz. 5(1840), 113.

Ludwik Jucewicz(1813-1846), a Lithuanian who published all his works in Polish, but concerned himself exclusively with Lithuanian studies. His major work, Litwa(Lithuania), came out in 1846, but already during the 1830s he had published numerous articles on Lithuanian folklore and customs in the Polish press.<sup>1</sup> Although Jucewicz did not publish in the Lithuanian language, he differed from Polish romantics and ethnographers in his love of the national tongue and fascination with the common people of Lithuania.<sup>2</sup>

Jucewicz belonged to those men who sought to expand the use of the Lithuanian language into secular literature and even scholarship. As early as 1808, Franciszek Bohusz(1746-1820) wrote a book on the origins of Lithuanian in which he fought the prevailing prejudice against the peasants' language. In another work, Bohusz pointed out that Lithuanian was suitable for serious literature(even though some contemporaries ridiculed this notion), and came out against the clergy's Polonization of the language. However, the real Lithuanian romantic movement in literature began in the 1820s among the Samogitian petty gentry. In western Lithuania, the petty gentry had retained the national language and its social position was very close to that of the well-to-do peasantry. The Samogitian movement was clearly affected by the intellectual ferment and Polish romantic patriotism prevalent at the University of Vilnius before 1825, but the Samogitians took a wholly different direction from that of the Poles.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in Gazeta Codzienna, July 13-14, July 29, and August 8, 1839.

<sup>2</sup> Biržis, Aleksandrynas, III, 224-231.

<sup>3</sup> Maciūnas, "Susirūpinimas lietuvių kalba," 169-170, 258 ff.

A powerful attachment to the Lithuanian language was the main aspect that distinguished the Lithuanian romantics from the "Polish-Lithuanian" ones (for example, Narbutt and Mickiewicz). Dionizas Poška (Pol. Dionizy Paszkiewicz) (c. 1757-1830), the best known poet of the Samogitian movement, attacked those who were "ashamed to speak their native tongue," and complained that "others greatly ridicule the native language and don't want to hear our Lithuanian speech."<sup>1</sup> Poška liked the respectability that such authors as Lelewel and Bohusz imparted to the Lithuanian language, but he also demanded that the language actually be used in public life.<sup>2</sup> Other poets of the Samogitian movement also expressed their concern for the language and attempted to stimulate Lithuanian secular literature.<sup>3</sup> Among these was the poet Simanas Stanevičius (Pol. Szymon Staniewicz) (1779-1848). His poem, Szlowe žemaycziu (The Samogitians' Glory), published in 1829, announced a national renaissance of the Lithuanian language. Stanevičius was the first to publish Lithuanian folksongs and point out their artistic value. While studying at the University of Vilnius in the early twenties, he became the Samogitian students' intellectual leader. Both Poška and Stanevičius wrote on peasant themes; in fact, Poška's best-known poem is his Mužikas Zemaycziu ir Lietuwos (The Peasant of Samogitia and Lithuania), published posthumously in the 1880s, in which he criticized the nobility's disdain for the peasants.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Augustaitis, Pierwiastki, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Augustaitis, Pierwiastki, pp. 29-32.

<sup>3</sup> Maciūnas, "Susirūpinimas lietuvių kalba," 500-501.

<sup>4</sup> See Biržiška, Aleksandrynas, II, 54-64 and III, 229-250.

Two other men of the early 19th century broke precedent when they became the first to use Lithuanian as a scholarly language. One was Simanas Daukantas (Pol. Szymon Dowkont) (1793-1864), a historian who was the first to publish a Lithuanian scholarly work. Like Poška and Stanevičius, he was a product of the University of Vilnius, where he met other nationally-minded Lithuanians and graduated the law faculty in 1825. Daukantas' best known work, Budas Senowes Letūwu Kalnieniu ir Žemajtiu (The Nature of the Ancient Lithuanians: Highlanders and Samogitians), was published in St. Petersburg in 1845 and was partly based on the author's work in the archives there. Uncritical, romantic, and idealistic, this book was not important so much as a scholarly work, but as a precedent in expanding the use of the Lithuanian language.

Daukantas' historical work was followed in 1848 by Bishop Valančius' Žemajtiu Wiskupiste (The Samogitian Diocese), a historical study of lasting value. Motiejus Valančius (1801-1875), a close associate of Daukantas, was a unique personality and cannot be easily classified within any movement. The first peasant to become bishop of the prestigious diocese of Samogitia, an educator, able Church administrator, a historian and ethnographer, as well as a talented writer, he was undoubtedly the major figure in 19th century Lithuanian history. Valančius' delightful ethnographic tale, Palangos Juzė (Juzė of Palanga), a story about a traveling Samogitian tailor, was quite possibly the most widely read secular Lithuanian book of the 19th century. Valančius' historical role went far beyond the romantic movement of the first half of the 19th century.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For Valančius, see Alekna, Žemaičių vyskupas Motiejus Valančius and Vaclovas Biržiška, Vyskupo Motiejaus Valančiaus biografijos bruožai (New York, 1952).

The main feature of the early 19th century Lithuanian movement was a kind of cultural nationalism. The romantics idealized the Lithuanian village. Only in the countryside, they believed, could a truly Lithuanian culture and tradition be found. Some of the romantics were against serfdom, and a few actively criticized the Polonized nobility. Yet, the Lithuanian romantics did not arouse most contemporary Lithuanians to an appreciation of their national heritage. For one thing, peasant literacy was still low at this time. Secondly, the Samogitian gentry and others lacked a social program; for example, they paid little attention to the poor peasants, especially the landless laborers, in whom Lithuania abounded. Thirdly, the political feelings of the few educated Lithuanians of the time were still basically oriented towards Poland; their dream was the restoration of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy within the framework of the old Commonwealth. The failure of the anti-Russian insurrection of 1831 dealt a blow to the Samogitian gentry, and the literary and social activity of these men withered away as a movement.<sup>1</sup>

Only Daukantas differed significantly in regard to relations with the Poles. He was the first to publicly and coherently formulate anti-Polish attitudes. Daukantas criticized Polish influence in Lithuania and refused to write any of his works in Polish. Furthermore, he bitterly decried the Union of Lublin(1569) as the end of Lithuanian statehood.<sup>2</sup> In fact, Daukantas was a few decades ahead of his time since the social and

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<sup>1</sup> B. Genzelis, "Del praeities idealizavimo XIX a. Lietuvoje," in Problemos, No. 2(1968), 77-85.

<sup>2</sup> See Vincas Trumpa, "Simonas Daukantas, Historian and Pioneer of Lithuanian National Rebirth," Lituanius, Vol. 11, No. 1(Spring, 1965), 14-16.

linguistic antagonisms that embittered Polish-Lithuanian relations came to a head only late in the 19th century. On the whole, the Samogitian literary movement was one of those historical movements which, while failing to fully realize its aims, created important precedents. The Samogitians' concern with Lithuanian culture and language was taken up by Trans-Niemen Lithuania's best known "peasant" activist of the middle of the 19th century, Mikalojus Akelaitis(Pol. Mikołaj Akilewicz).

Like Antanas Tatarė, Akelaitis(1829-1887) was born in Marijampolė district, though of a somewhat less affluent family. Akelaitis' family had a tradition of participation in past Polish-Lithuanian insurrections: his father was deported for supporting the 1831 rebellion, and Akelaitis' grandfather had served in General Dąbrowski's legion. His relatives' tales of military campaigns had a great effect on Akelaitis and explain some of his later pro-Polish patriotism. After some informal education under village tutors and two years of primary schooling, Akelaitis entered the higher school in Marijampolė in 1845. Despite his obvious ability, Akelaitis finished only four years here before discontinuing his formal education, probably to help his impoverished mother. For several years, he worked as a tutor, reading voraciously in his spare time and thus acquiring considerable erudition on his own. In 1856, Akelaitis came to Warsaw to work as a tutor. It was here that he became increasingly fascinated with Lithuanian studies and began to correspond with the then leading figures of the Lithuanian national movement. In 1858, Akelaitis went to Samogitia where he lived with the Lithuanian historian Simanas Daukantas. Here Akelaitis' financial situation improved and he was able to devote more time to writing. He wrote a number of popular Lithuanian

works, but also contributed to the Polish press in Vilnius. In 1861, Akelaitis became involved in writing anti-Russian propaganda; when the police caught on to him, he apparently fled to Paris sometime in 1862 or 1863. This last year he returned to southwestern Lithuania and was appointed assistant to the insurgents' civilian commissar of Augustów province. Akelaitis worked at providing the rebels with necessary supplies and also wrote some agitational propaganda for the Lithuanian peasantry. When the insurrection's failure became apparent in 1864, Akelaitis fled to Prussia, eventually arriving in France where he spent the rest of his life. Although he became a French citizen and married a Frenchwoman, Akelaitis continued to be active in emigré Polish and Lithuanian politics. He contributed to the growing Lithuanian press then published in Prussia and the United States. Akelaitis is also known to have established a Polish-Lithuanian society in Paris called Želmuo (The Sprout). He died in France in 1887.<sup>1</sup>

Akelaitis was a very prolific and versatile writer who moved around in intelligentsia circles. Yet much of his work remained unpublished, and Akelaitis himself, perhaps because he was self-educated, never received the acclaim he desired.<sup>2</sup> In general, Akelaitis' political propaganda, literature and scholarship can be divided into the following categories: (a) attempts at Polish literature, (b) works on Lithuanian history and ethnology in Polish, (c) Lithuanian grammars and readers, (d) Lithuanian popular literature and propaganda, and (e) publicistic

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<sup>1</sup> Biržiška, Aleksandrynas, III, 359-362; Janulaitis, Mikalojus Akelaitis, pp. 1-72; Akielewicz, "Słówko," 108-111.

<sup>2</sup> See Jurginis, "Valstiečio poeto dalia," in the author's Istorija ir poezija, p. 225.

activity in behalf of the Lithuanian language and peasant education.

Akelaitis' contribution to Polish literature was negligible and almost none of it was ever published. However, he did manage to publish a few things in Polish on Lithuanian history, language and mythology. Akelaitis wrote a short article on Lithuanian gods, in which he corrected some of the romantic historian Narbutt's work; it first appeared in 1858, and was repeated several times.<sup>1</sup> Two other books were published much later: in 1885, a study written under the pseudonym Vytautas, entitled Rzut oka na starożytność narodu litewskiego (A Glance at the Antiquity of the Lithuanian Nation), and a Lithuanian grammar published posthumously in Poznań.<sup>2</sup> Akelaitis' most ambitious works remained in manuscript form and most of them have been lost. These included a large Polish-Lithuanian dictionary; a comparative dictionary of Greek, Latin, Lithuanian, Gothic and Slavic; as well as a descriptive history of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy, written in 1862, for which he received a cash prize from an emigré Polish society.<sup>3</sup> Akelaitis' Polish translation of Kristijonas Donelaitis' epic poem Metai (The Seasons) has also been lost.

Of more lasting value were Akelaitis' memoirs and travelogues in the Polish press, in which he described Lithuanian folklore and the peasantry in general. He often signed his correspondence under the pseudonym of "The Peasant from Marijampolė District."

However, Akelaitis' most important contribution were his Lithuanian

<sup>1</sup> Mikołaj Akielewicz, "Słówko o bogach litewskich," in Biblioteka Warszawska, III(1858), 192-195.

<sup>2</sup> Mikolaj Akielewicz, Gramatyka języka litewskiego (Poznań, 1890).

<sup>3</sup> Biržiška, Aleksandrynas, III, 362 ff.; Jurjinis, Istorija ir poezija, pp. 225 ff.

publications, although his very first one in 1858 became a later source of embarrassment: it was an ode to Alexander II on the occasion of the Tsar's visit to Vilnius. In 1860, Akelaitis published a number of books on which he had been working for several years. He issued a reader for children and several religious booklets, revised Rupeika's popular translation of Chodźko's John from Swisłocz, and, finally, brought out his own most popular book, Kwestorius po Lietuwa wažinedamas žmones bemokinasis (The Mendicant Traveling Through Lithuania Teaching the People). Although this last didactic tale was somewhat unoriginal in conception(it was very reminiscent of a book by the popular Polish author Jan Chodźko), it contained original songs, some Lithuanian history, and practical natural science lessons for the peasants. Akelaitis' Kwestorius ridiculed peasant drunkenness and other vices, and urged villagers to seek an education. Kwestorius was not good literature by today's standards, but its easy style and a vocabulary relatively free of Slavicisms, as well as use of the eastern Lithuanian(Lith. aukštaičiai) dialect which later became the literary language--all this had a positive influence on the Lithuanian literature of the time.<sup>1</sup>

Akelaitis did not content himself with writing literature. He also engaged in publicistic and organizational work, fostering the wider use of the peasants' national language and propagating village education. The earliest source indicating Akelaitis' serious interest in things Lithuanian are his letters to Bishop Valančius, widely recognized at the time as the leading figure in Lithuanian letters. Akelaitis wrote his first letter to the bishop in September, 1856(in Lithuanian), informing

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<sup>1</sup> See Korsakas, Lietuvių literatūros istorija, I, 502-504.

Valančius of his desire to "write a comparative dictionary of the Samogitian language and other Indo-European tongues," and asking Valančius to send him some Lithuanian books. He signed this first letter "Mikalojus Akelajtis" and described himself as the "son of a poor man born on this side of the Niemen."<sup>1</sup> Akelaitis' other letters to Valančius were written in Polish (the language the bishop preferred to correspond in) and were signed "Mikolaj Akielewicz," Akelaitis' Polish "gentry" name.<sup>2</sup>

By 1858, Akelaitis' letters to Valančius indicated that his interest was shifting from scholarly work to the subject of peasant education. Akelaitis was most concerned with establishing a national Lithuanian newspaper; as examples for the Lithuanians, he cited the Prussian Lithuanian newspaper Keleivis (Traveler) and the Latvian Avizes. Akelaitis strongly believed that the Lithuanians in the Kingdom would support a serious newspaper, although, in his enthusiasm, he exaggerated Trans-Niemen Lithuania's cultural level. "Here in Polish Lithuania," he wrote to Valančius, "almost all the Lithuanians, of whom there are 800,000 [sic], know how to read. In Marijampolė's district school, 134 of 221 pupils are the sons of peasants who return to agriculture." Akelaitis maintained that there were parish schools in almost all towns. Optimistically, he told Valančius that if the popular bishop would only take the initiative, everyone would support a Lithuanian newspaper, which would have the effect of "elevating [our] language, that gift given to us, together with our

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<sup>1</sup> Letter of September 25, 1856, as published in Augustinas Janulaitis, "M. Akelaičio laiškai," in Tauta ir Žodis (Kaunas), III(1925), 292-293.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of October 15, 1856 in Janulaitis, "M. Akelaičio laiškai," 295-297.

souls, by our Creator."<sup>1</sup>

Akelaitis made some efforts to establish a Lithuanian newspaper. He pleaded with Friedrich Kurschat, editor of the Prussian Lithuanians' Keleivis, to print his newspaper in Roman letters, thus making it readable to the Lithuanian peasants in the Kingdom of Poland. Kurschat refused. Akelaitis then turned to the magnate Ireneusz Ogiński for help in establishing the proposed periodical Pakeleivingas(The Traveler),<sup>2</sup> but this idea was scuttled by the Russian censorship. Akelaitis did manage to create a fund for a "Lithuanian library" of popular books, and with the help of Ogiński, managed to publish five books(see above) with a total circulation of about 26,000.<sup>3</sup>

Akelaitis clearly expressed his views about the need for more Lithuanian publications in a letter which he wrote to the editors of Teka Wileńska(The Vilnius Portfolio), a Polish journal, in December, 1857. In the letter there is more than a hint of Akelaitis' frustration with the lack of public concern for preserving the Lithuanian language:

There are about two and a half million of us Lithuanians speaking the national language. That's more than the Greeks who live in Hellas, and almost as many as the Danes and Portuguese who have their own literatures. Will we Lithuanians disavow our own word[i.e. language]? With this we would commit voluntary national suicide . . . Have we already forgotten [our] language when we call on a foreigner to make up a Polish-Lithuanian dictionary?<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter of March 4, 1858, in Janulaitis, "M. Akelaičio laiškai," 296-297.

<sup>2</sup> Neupokoev, "K voprosu," 257.

<sup>3</sup> Janulaitis, Mikalojus Akelaitis, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Akielewicz to Kirkor, "List z pod Warszawy," December 3, 1857, in Teka Wileńska, III(1858), 380.

Akelaitis also criticized the Teka Wileńska for paying attention only to the Polish readers who "even without this [journal] have enough means to educate themselves" and complained that "no one wants to remember the majority, the younger brothers, the people."<sup>1</sup>

To save the Lithuanian language from oblivion, Akelaitis advocated more parish schools with Lithuanian as the language of instruction. He also proposed a somewhat idealistic scheme of financing them by universal, but voluntary, contributions of a few groszy per head. Akelaitis' view of the romantic and mysterious power of language, as well as its moral importance, owed much to the ideas of the Slovak scholar Pavel Josef Šafárik(1755-1861). Akelaitis realized that his outlook would meet with suspicion and even scorn among many Poles, but he said that there was no false modesty in his pseudonym, "The Peasant from Marijampolė District." In fact, Akelaitis was adamant in his dedication to Lithuanian studies, regardless of public reaction.<sup>2</sup> He did not minimize the importance of Polish, but felt that his native and acquired languages complimented each other: "It was in the Lithuanian language that I spoke my first prayers for my father's soul and sang the wondrous dajny[Lithuanian folk-songs], while Polish opened for me the gates to the temple of knowledge."<sup>3</sup>

Akelaitis' expansive romanticism and idealism were evident in his scholarly work which, though uncritical in retrospect, was typical of the times. He romanticized Lithuania's ancient history, exploiting the

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<sup>1</sup> Akelaitis' letter in Teka Wileńska, III(1858), 379.

<sup>2</sup> Akelaitis' letter in Teka Wileńska, III(1858), 381.

<sup>3</sup> Akielewicz, "Słówko," 111.

striking similarity of Greek and Lithuanian personal and place names in order to relate the old Lithuanians to the ancient world; for example, Akelaitis maintained, on rather flimsy philological grounds, that Herodotus had written about the ancient Lithuanian tribes.<sup>1</sup> Yet Akelaitis' romanticism was distinct from the brand espoused by Mickiewicz and Narbutt, who did not concern themselves with detailed study of the Lithuanian language. Time and again, Akelaitis reaffirmed the importance of the national language for the study of Lithuanian history and culture. Since most earlier scholars(for instance, Lelewel and Narbutt) did not know Lithuanian, Akelaitis maintained that "all of their studies about the origins of the Lithuanian nation and language have only relative value."<sup>2</sup> Akelaitis praised German scholars who, in his words, "today realize that without a basic familiarity with Lithuanian studies, it is impossible to be a learned linguist or an accurate historian." He hoped the Slavs would follow the German example.<sup>3</sup>

Despite his limited success as a poet and scholar, Akelaitis managed to maintain close ties with some of the leading Polish and Lithuanian literary and scholarly figures of the time. One of Akelaitis' friends was Ignacy Kraszewski, the noted Polish novelist, dramatist and historian, who devoted much of his work to Lithuanian mythology, language, folklore and history. Akelaitis corresponded extensively with Kraszewski to whom he confided his educational plans for the Lithuanian peasantry; in turn,

<sup>1</sup> Mikalojus Akelaitis[Vytautas], Rzut oka na starożytność narodu litewskiego(St. Petersburg, 1885), pp. 3 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Akelaitis, Rzut oka, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Akelaitis, Rzut oka, p. 49.

Kraszewski is known to have helped Akelaitis financially.<sup>1</sup> Akelaitis also worked with Oskar Kolberg, an exceptionally prolific ethnographer, although, unfortunately, none of their correspondence has been found. It is known that some of the manuscripts found in Kolberg's collections on Lithuania were contributed by Akelaitis, including an interesting sketch entitled "The Spiritual Characteristics of the Lithuanians."<sup>2</sup>

Yet, while Akelaitis maintained contact with those Poles who were interested in Lithuanian affairs, he remained adamant about the importance of the Lithuanian language and was cool to those who ignored it. One contemporary observer recalled that while Akelaitis participated in Polish romantic circles interested in Lithuanian studies, he was irritated by those "defenders of Lithuania" who themselves could not speak the country's national language, considering this the height of impertinence.<sup>3</sup> Akelaitis was closest to the more prominent Lithuanians of the time. Like many other educated Lithuanians, he admired Bishop Valančius with whom he corresponded. For a while, Akelaitis lived with the Lithuanian historian Simanas Daukantas, who influenced his literary style. Akelaitis also was impressed with the work of Laurynas Ivinskis, the publisher of popular Lithuanian almanacs for the peasants.

Akelaitis' wider intellectual interests, his devotion to the Lithuanian language as a value in itself, and his national romanticism distinguished him sharply from Antanas Tatarė, Trans-Niemen Lithuania's other

<sup>1</sup> Janulaitis, Mikalojus Akelaitis, pp. 40-42; Z. Ia. Tal'virskaya, "Nekotorye voprosy obshchestvennogo dvizheniya v Litve i Belorussii v kontse 50-kh, nachale 60-kh godov i podpol'naia literatura," in Revolutsionnaia Rossiia i revoliutsionnaia Pol'sha (Moscow, 1967), 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> Kolberg, Litwa, pp. x-xi, 24-30.    <sup>3</sup> Tal'virskaya, "Nekotorye," 30.

popular writer in the first half of the 19th century. In fact, the only historical link between the two contemporaries was their moderate view on the social question and a Polish political orientation. The two men lived at the same time, but from the point of view of the history of Lithuanian nationalism, they belonged to different epochs. Tatař is more reminiscent of the 18th and 19th century Christian "moral" educators of the people; to him, the peasants' language was basically a means of communicating the sacred "word" to the Lithuanian village. Akelaitis, on the other hand, represented the goals of genuine national romanticism: a glorification of the people, a love of the national language, and the creation of an honorable history.

Lithuania's thoroughly Polonized "high society" of landowners and intelligentsia was, with few exceptions, either opposed or indifferent to the budding Lithuanian national movement. The idea of the peasants' language becoming a truly national one struck many Poles as ludicrous; others saw peasant education as useless, unless conducted in Polish. Akelaitis once complained that the "landowners don't want to make any contributions for the peasants."<sup>1</sup>

However, there were a few progressive landowners who recognized the need and advantages of peasant education in the native language. The most consistent noble supporter of the Lithuanian literacy movement was Ireneusz Ogiński, the owner of the Rietavas estate in Samogitia. He contributed to Akelaitis' "Lithuanian library" fund and financed a series

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<sup>1</sup> Letter of March 16, 1858, in Janulaitis, "M. Akelaičio laiškai," 295.

of publications for the Lithuanian peasants, including Ivinskis' almanacs.<sup>1</sup> Another landowner, Adolf Przeciszewski, reportedly sympathized with the Samogitian literary movement and financed the works of Simanas Stanevičius and ethnographer Ludwik Jucewicz.<sup>2</sup> In the Kingdom, Aleksander Poļujański praised Tatarė's literary work and urged Poles who had dealings with Lithuanians to learn the peasants' language since, as he noted, some of the villagers had themselves learned Polish and were using it to communicate with the "upper class."<sup>3</sup>

Akelaitis recognized the value of the nobility's support and wrote to such magnates as the Radziwiłłs, Ogiński, and F. Karp, begging them to provide help "for my poor brothers--the Lithuanian peasants."<sup>4</sup> The response to Akelaitis' work for the peasants was varied. Wrote one Polish journalist:

Mr. Akielewicz[Akelaitis] is attacked because, while working with the people, he plays at Lithuanian studies unnecessarily, or for some unknown reason . . . but what should be done for a people of whom nine-tenths know no other language aside from their native Lithuanian? Perhaps, unteach them [sic] how to read?<sup>5</sup>

Generally, it can be said that the efforts of Akelaitis, as well as other educators, to stress the importance of the peasants' language to the nobility failed, since the latter bothered only with the rights of the

<sup>1</sup> Mykolas Biržiška, "Delei L. Ivinskio 'Aitvaro,'" in Lietuviai tauta, Vol. 2, No. 3(1914), 375-383; cf. Kuryer Wileński, March 22, 1860 (No. 24), 235.

<sup>2</sup> Fajnhauz, Ruch, pp. 124-125.      <sup>3</sup> Poļujański, Wędrówki, pp. 253-254.

<sup>4</sup> As quoted in Tal'virskaja, "Nekotorye," 30.

<sup>5</sup> Kuryer Wileński, July 5, 1860(No. 52), 509.

Polish language under the Russian regime.<sup>1</sup>

The negative attitude of the majority of the nobility and Polonized gentry toward the Lithuanian movement of the 19th century became an important factor in polarizing the two major social groups in Lithuania: the peasantry and the landowning nobility. Another factor also contributed to the Polish-Lithuanian split. After 1860, an increasing number of peasant youths gained access to higher education, and it was then that the peasant students' social and national differences with the Polish-oriented nobility became more apparent. Among the students from the western borderlands and the Kingdom who attended Russian universities, the Lithuanians tended to stand apart and form their own student groups. This was noticeable even before 1864. During the mid-fifties, Bolesław Limanowski, a prominent Polish socialist, met some Samogitian students of peasant origin at Moscow University. He recalled the Lithuanians' strong attachment to their language and traditions, even when they worked together with the Poles. In Dorpat in the late 1850s, Limanowski found Lithuanian students from St. Petersburg who "stressed their separateness from the Poles," an attitude that caused some friction among the students. In the Warsaw Medical Academy, Lithuanian students from the Kingdom reportedly held aloof from the Poles and even established their own student society.<sup>2</sup>

These modest "separatist" sentiments were only hints of what was to come. In fact, it was Trans-Niemen Lithuania that eventually proved to be the arena of most intense conflict between Poles and Lithuanians in the

<sup>1</sup> Janulaitis, Lietuvos bajorai, pp. 593-594.

<sup>2</sup> Bolesław Limanowski, Pamiętniki (Warsaw, 1935), pp. 142-143; Janulaitis, Mikalojus Akelaitis, pp. 52-53.

19th and 20th centuries. Perhaps more than elsewhere, both sides were more consolidated here; it is also clear that the Lithuanian peasants' relative economic strength in this region made them more assertive.<sup>1</sup>

The mid-1860s, while revealing only the very beginnings of modern Lithuanian nationalism, marked an "end of an era" in Polish-Lithuanian relations. As one historian put it, the insurrection of 1863 "saw, for the last time, Lithuanians fighting under Polish leadership against the Russian world for the restoration of a united Polish-Lithuanian political structure."<sup>2</sup> A social reality lay behind this change. The old, united Polish-Lithuanian political front actually depended on the retention of the old agrarian structure. Both Mackevičius and Kalinowski sensed this, and they were right. As the old agrarian structure slowly faded during the 19th century, the emerging Lithuanian landed peasant class and its intelligentsia turned away from the old Polish orientation and began searching for new cultural values and political structures that were based on a new source of identity--the Lithuanian village. Thus, by the end of the 19th century, social, linguistic and political antagonisms developed into an open war between most Polish landowners and much of the Polonized educated class in Lithuania on the one hand, and the Lithuanian "village" intelligentsia and its peasant supporters on the other.

<sup>1</sup> Michał Roemer, Stosunki etnograficzno-kulturalne na Litwie (Cracow, 1906), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Manfred Hellman, "Die litauische Nationalbewegung in 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," in Zeitschrift für Ostforschung, No. 2(1953), 78.

## CHAPTER XVI

### EPILOGUE: THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ORIGINS OF LITHUANIAN NATIONALISM

#### Trans-Niemen Lithuania's Role in the Lithuanian National Awakening.

The events of 1861-1864 marked a real turning point in the history of the Kingdom's Lithuanian peasantry. The manor's power to interfere in the economic life of the village was sharply curtailed; at the same time, the transfer of land ownership to the peasantry entrenched the position of the middle and well-to-do villagers. From now on, even though southwestern Lithuania remained a largely agricultural, undeveloped region, it could no longer be considered truly "feudal." In the words of the noted agrarian historian Stanisław Śreniowski, the granting of land was the process which enabled "the peasantry's exit from the framework of feudal structure."<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that the economic emancipation of the peasantry was complete. Certain manorial privileges lingered on. Particularly aggravating was the question of forest and pasture servitudes. Here again, the Lithuanian peasants led the way in the struggle against the manor; 151 state villages in the newly created and predominantly Lithuanian Suwalski gubernia are reported to have demanded grazing access to state lands in the late 1860s. In 1869-1870, trouble erupted in the Zylpliai and Kiduliai areas over the forest servitudes issue. In Kadariškiai (Pol. Kadaryszki) gmina in 1869, one person was killed in fighting with

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<sup>1</sup> Śreniowski, Uwłaszczenie, p. 15.

forest rangers; the same year, trouble was reported in the stubborn Klebiškis village which had been such a standout in the peasant disturbances of 1861(see above, p. 407). In 1877, the peasants of Kuni-  
giškiai resisted the measuring and division of their lands.<sup>1</sup>

However, regardless of continuing trouble in the countryside, the economic power of southwestern Lithuania's landed peasantry remained intact. In 1877, a survey reported that the well-to-do peasants(those with over thirty morgi of land) held 53% of the land in Suwałki gubernia within their hands; this was twice as much as in any other gubernia in the Kingdom. Table 13 below shows the breakdown of peasant land ownership in Suwałki gubernia in 1877.

TABLE 13

LANDOWNING PATTERN OF PEASANT HOUSE-HOLDS IN SUWAŁKI GUBERNIA IN 1877<sup>2</sup>

Holding Size (in morgi)	Number of Owners	Percentage of All Owners	Land Owned (in morgi)	Percentage of Land Owned
Less than 20	23,876	44.9%	233,763	19.1%
20-29	13,419	25.2%	330,666	27.1%
30-50	13,029	24.6%	484,882	39.7%
Over 50	2,810	5.3%	172,031	14.1%
Totals	53,134	100.0%	1,221,342	100.0%

<sup>1</sup> Helena Brodowska, Ruch chłopski po uwłaszczeniu w Królestwie Polskim 1864-1904 (Warsaw, 1967), pp. 66, 324-326.

<sup>2</sup> Based on A. Jefremenko, "Lietuvos valstiečių skaidymasis po reformos," in Lietuvos vastiečiai, 231; cf. Groniowski, "Wyniki," 113.

If we include the middle peasants, then we can see that the "genuinely" landed households controlled over 80% of the land. Compared to 1859, the percentage of households with thirty or more morgi of land shrank somewhat in terms of percentage; however, in absolute numbers, this class of peasants remained approximately the same in size throughout the 19th century. On the other hand, the number of smallholders doubled. In general, during the first decades after the reform of 1864, the total land possessed by the well-to-do peasantry did not increase that much, at least as far as we can tell. Meanwhile, the lower middle peasantry suffered an eclipse.<sup>1</sup> At the turn of the 20th century, the number of smallholders in Suwałki gubernia decreased rapidly because of emigration, mainly to America.<sup>2</sup> In any case, one conclusion is inescapable: the social stratification of the village, at least in southwestern Lithuania, had largely taken form already before 1864.

Yet while the percentage of the well-to-do peasantry did not rise appreciably in the Užnemunė region after the 1864 reform, its economic power and social prestige did. This was especially noticeable in the field of education. The wealthy peasantry expended its funds not only in buying up land and livestock, but also in educating their sons. Thus, this peasantry became the "producers" of a native intelligentsia. This was southwestern Lithuania's most important contribution to the Lithuanian national movement in the 19th century.

The economic conditions that enabled Trans-Niemen Lithuania's peasantry to achieve their relative prosperity have been examined in this study: the

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<sup>1</sup> Inglot, Historia chłopów polskich, II, 414-415.

<sup>2</sup> Kaczyńska, "Gubernia suwalska," 307.

early beginnings of the land consolidation process and separation into individual homesteads; natural conditions, such as good land in some areas of the Trans-Niemen region; the abolition of personal serfdom in 1807; the tradition of keeping peasant holdings intact without repartitioning the land; and, compared with the rest of Lithuania, a well-developed grain and flax export industry.<sup>1</sup> Yet, without an intelligentsia, no conscious national movement of any significance was possible. Before 1870, such an intelligentsia, with few exceptions, was largely lacking, so that it can be said, without too much exaggeration, that "there was no conscious Lithuanian nation in those years, there were only Lithuanian-speaking people(peasants)."<sup>2</sup>

How exactly did the prosperous peasantry of southwestern Lithuania produce the nationalist intelligentsia of the 19th century? One simple economic reason was foremost: every parish in the Trans-Niemen region had at least several rich peasant households which could afford to release a son from the holding and pay the necessary tuition costs. Most peasants hoped that their sons would enter the priesthood; after all, religious education was the only kind that traditional peasant society valued. However, many peasant sons refused to enter the priesthood, despite intense parental pressure(some fathers even disowned their children); on occasion, these rebels went on to Moscow, Warsaw and St. Petersburg, finished the universities there, and then entered the professions. Jonas Basanavičius(1851-1927) and Vincas Kudirka(1858-1899), the

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<sup>1</sup> Albinas Rimka, Lietuvių tautos atgimimo socialiniai pagrindai ir 'Auszros-Varpo' gadynės(1883-93) socialekonominių raštų, Vytauto Didžiojo Universiteto Teisių Fakulteto Darbai, Vol. 6, Bk. 3(Kaunas, 1932), pp. 228-229

<sup>2</sup> Rimka, Lietuvių tautos, p. 231.

two leading Lithuanian nationalists of the 19th century, were such "rebels." Both were graduates of the Marijampolė secondary school; both finished universities, Basanavičius in Moscow, Kudirka in Warsaw.<sup>1</sup> Other "dropouts" from the seminary completed elementary or secondary education only; they became teachers, pharmacists, gmina officials, or simply "educated" peasants. This "lower" intelligentsia, though lacking a higher education, was critically important to the Lithuanian national movement. They became the first readers and distributors of Lithuania's illegal periodical literature which began to pour into the countryside from East Prussia, beginning with the first Lithuanian secular periodical, Auszra(Dawn), in 1883.<sup>2</sup>

Naturally, a good number of the educated peasant youth did enter the priesthood. Here too, they contributed to the Lithuanian national movement. Young seminarians, like other educated young Lithuanians, became avid readers of the national press. The priests of the younger generation began to demand more rights for the Lithuanian language.<sup>3</sup> This led to bitter quarrels with pro-Polish pastors and the nobility, both of whom viewed the church and rectory as the legitimate bastions of Polish culture and influence in the countryside. Most of the Polonized Church hierarchy in Lithuania resolutely opposed the Lithuanian movement. However, the hierarchy was helpless to quell the rising tide of nation-

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<sup>1</sup> Basanavičius' account of his part in this "fathers and sons" controversy is in Basanavičius, Rinktiniai raštai, p. 22. Kudirka's more traumatic experience is related in Vincas Kudirka, Raštai, ed. Juozas Gabrys, II(Tilsit, 1909), 213.

<sup>2</sup> Rimka, Lietuvių tautos, pp. 25-27, 230.

<sup>3</sup> See Totoraitis, Sūduvos-Suvalkijos, pp. 625-631 on the educational activities of Martynas Sidaravičius, pastor of Sudargai(Marijampolė district).

alism among the younger Lithuanian clergy. In fact, nowhere was the defeat of Polish influence more obvious than in the increasing use of the Lithuanian language in the Church. When, in 1906, Lithuanian curates complained to the diocesan administrator of their pastors' tyrannical behavior, they wrote their petitions in Lithuanian--the formerly despised peasant idiom.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, a strong Catholic Lithuanian press emerged in the late 19th century and joined the other underground Lithuanian publications of the time.

Thus, a young Lithuanian educated elite of peasant origin emerged during the second half of the 19th century. Southwestern Lithuania gave birth to a greater number of this youth than any other region (see map on p. 493). An analysis of 130 leading patriotic intelligentsia at the turn of the century reveals that 60% came from the Trans-Niemen region; 52% from the Marijampolė secondary school alone.<sup>2</sup> A listing of the members of the Lithuanian Students' Association at the University of Moscow between 1886 and 1893 indicates that 70% came from the Kingdom of Poland, 60% from Marijampolė district.<sup>3</sup>

At first, these Lithuanian peasant students faced an identity crisis:

The intelligentsia found itself in a strange predicament. The older, Polish-educated class felt superior to it . . . [therefore], the village intelligentsia disliked the Poles and avoided them. They [the Lithuanian students] made some unsuccessful attempts to ally themselves with the Russians, but the general climate of the times was not conducive to this. However, there

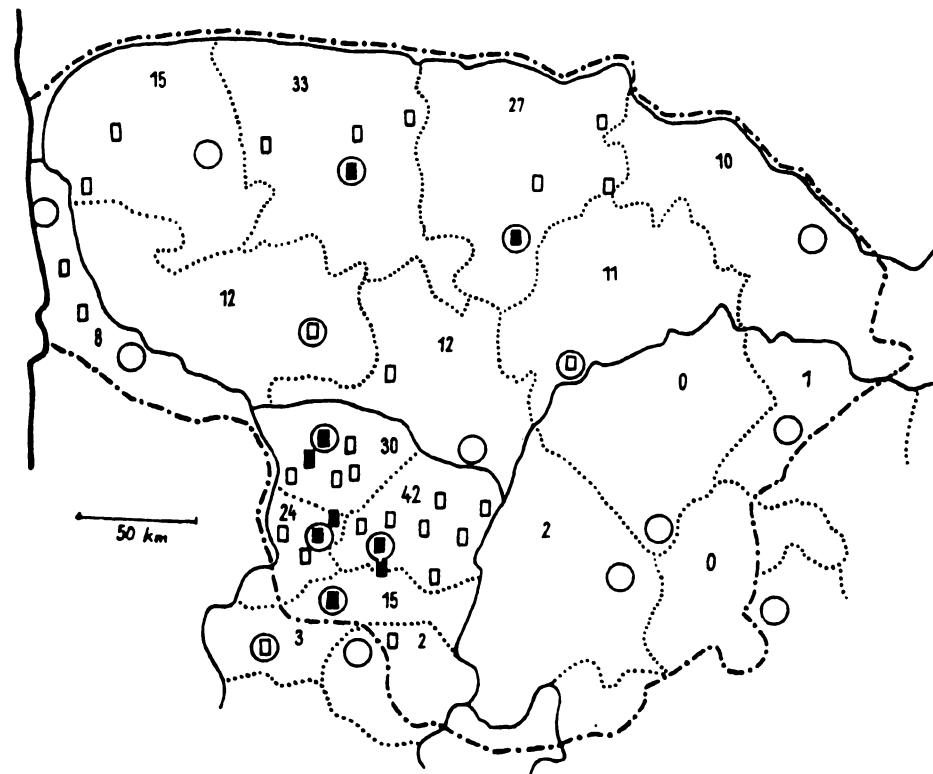
<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. B, 276: Akta Kuryalne, Wiłkowyszki Curates' Deposition of September 13, 1906; Władysławów Curates to Diocesan Administrator Antanavičius [undated], k. 179, 182, 195.

<sup>2</sup> Miroslav Hroch, Die Vorkämpfer der nationalen Bewegung bei den kleinen Völkern Europas: eine vergleichende Analyse zur gesellschaftlichen Schichtung der patriotischen Gruppen, Acta Universitatis Carolinae Philosophica et Historica, XXIV(Prague, 1968), p. 70.

<sup>3</sup> Kazys Grinius, Atsiminimai ir mintys, I(Tübingen, 1947), 60.

THE BIRTHPLACES OF THE LITHUANIAN INTELLIGENTSIA  
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, ACCORDING TO MIROSLAV  
HROCH'S STUDY OF 'LEADING' LITHUANIAN PATRIOTS

- ◻ Birthplace of Between 2 to 5 'Leading' Patriots
- Birthplace of More than 5 'Leading' Patriots
- District Capitals
- 12 Number of Patriots Born Within a District
- Present Boundary of the Lithuanian SSR
- Gubernia Boundaries in the 19th Century
- ..... District Boundaries (After 1867)



remained a third alternative for the Lithuanian students: to base their identity on the Lithuanian-speaking countryside.<sup>1</sup>

The period of disorientation described above lasted a relatively short time; when the first truly nationalistic periodical, Auszra, appeared in 1883, the Lithuanian intelligentsia's direction was already set: it rejected both a Polish and Russian orientation. The "third alternative" had been chosen.

Aside from the social and economic power of the peasantry, there was another, somewhat more controversial, factor that helped the Lithuanian movement to develop quickly in the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts. It was here that the Russian government made some concessions to the Lithuanian population, hoping by this to draw it away from the Poles.<sup>2</sup> For some years after the reform of 1864, Lithuanian was taught in the elementary schools. In addition, the Lithuanian language was taught in the secondary schools of Marijampolė and Suwałki. In 1872, the government established a teacher training institute in Veiveriai, exclusively for Lithuanians.<sup>3</sup> These higher institutions taught the native language throughout the Tsarist period, even when Lithuanian publications in the Latin alphabet were banned.

In view of this Russian "favoritism" to the Lithuanians, some Poles came to accuse the Lithuanian national movement of a pro-Russian bias; a few even convinced themselves that Lithuanian nationalism was, to a

<sup>1</sup> Stasys Matulaitis, Lietuvių tautos istorija (Kaunas, 1923), p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> M[ikhail] N. Katkov, 1863 god, II (Moscow, 1887), 839-840.

<sup>3</sup> Römer, Litwa, pp. 7-8; cf. Wielhorski, Litwa etnograficzna, p. 150.

considerable degree, a creature of Russian policy.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the Lithuanian struggle against the Russian press ban continued in full force throughout the pre-1904 period. Because of its proximity to the Prussian border, through which smugglers brought in the illegal nationalist press, southwestern Lithuania became a center of anti-Russian resistance. A wave of police searches and arrests struck this region in 1896, greatly increasing tensions between the peasantry and Russian authorities.<sup>2</sup> The villagers' real feelings toward the Russians became apparent in 1905, when anti-Russian violence erupted throughout Lithuania, especially in the Trans-Niemen region.

Despite the fact that both Poles and Lithuanians faced a common Russian enemy, Polish-Lithuanian relations worsened dramatically during the late 19th century. The Polish landowning and urban classes were taken aback by the assertiveness of the Lithuanian intelligentsia and peasantry. With few exceptions, the Lithuanian appeal to the country's Polonized gentry and nobility to "get back to their roots" and join the peasants' national movement met with scorn. In 1902, Aleksander Meyszto-wicz penned a virulent public response to the Lithuanians entitled Przenigdy(Never). This appropriately titled article was enthusiastically endorsed by Lithuania's Poles and marked a kind of formal break between the two nationalities.<sup>3</sup> Memoirs and literature recorded much of this social and national antagonism, especially the shock of genteel Polish

<sup>1</sup> For example, see Aleksander Brückner, "Polacy i Litwini: język i literatura," in Polska i Litwa w dziedzowym stosunku(Warsaw, 1914), 343-392.

<sup>2</sup> Kudirka, Raštai, II, 332-333.

<sup>3</sup> See Čeginskas, "Die Polonisierung," 38-42; cf. Wielhorski, Litwa etnograficzna, pp. 152-154; Lietuvių enciklopedija, XVIII, 245.

society at the uncouth "peasant" intelligentsia which refused to accept either the language or the customs of the salon. In southwestern Lithuania, bloody language riots erupted at the turn of the century. Along the southern, nationally mixed edge of the Trans-Niemen region(for example, at Beržniki), Polish and Lithuanian peasants rioted over which language to use in church services.<sup>1</sup> In Kalvarija, the Polish townspeople fought the parish's Lithuanian peasantry over the same issue, echoing the traditional national antagonism between town and village.<sup>2</sup>

Nowhere was the Polish-Lithuanian conflict more heated on the popular level than in the Kingdom. The Polish element was numerically weakest in Trans-Niemen Lithuania; thus, Polish influence appeared disproportionate and the Lithuanians felt more assertive in defending their linguistic rights. In addition, the Lithuanian element was economically strong here.<sup>3</sup> On the whole, the Polish element of the eastern borderlands of the old Commonwealth(Lithuania, Belorussia and the Ukraine) failed to understand the social nature of the new peasant nationalism, nor did it comprehend why the native intelligentsia could no longer accept the leading role of Polish culture in their countries.<sup>4</sup> It was only natural that the Polish aristocracy resisted the new peasant-based movements; its

<sup>1</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 28: Beržniki, Peasants of Beržniki to Diocesan Administrator Antanavičius, November 4, 1903.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Ł., Ser. A, 184: Kalwaria, Diocesan Administrator Antanavičius to Pastor of Kalwaria Parish, May 5, 1906.

<sup>3</sup> Władysław Wielhorski, "Warunki rozwoju świadomości narodowej Litwinów i powstania współczesnego państwa litewskiego(1861-1920)," in Powszechny Zjazd Historyków Polskich. Pamietnik VI. Referaty, Vol. I(Lwów, 1935), 128-130.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Brückner, "Polacy i Litwini," 343 ff.

fears were fully justified when the 1922 land reform of the Lithuanian government largely destroyed the manorial agrarian system and, with it, the influence of the Polish upper classes.

Statistics indicate that, while the percentage of the population identifying itself as Lithuanian shrank in most parts of Lithuania during the second half of the 19th century, the Trans-Niemen region remained the "strongest" from a national point of view.

TABLE 14

PERCENTAGE OF THE LITHUANIAN POPULATION IN THE THREE LITHUANIAN GUBERNIA'S IN 1861 AND 1897<sup>1</sup>

Gubernia	Percentage of Lithuanians in 1861	Percentage of Lithuanians in 1897
Vilnius	62.5%	23.7%
Kaunas	84.0%	66.0%
Suwałki <sup>2</sup>	84.0%	72.0%

These figures should be understood in their proper context. The massive pressure of both Belorussian and Polish linguistic influence continued to push back the Lithuanian element in the east (Vilnius gubernia) during the second half of the 19th century. This was the culmination of a centuries-old historical process. In Kaunas gubernia, the Polish element was only 9.4% in 1897; the other 23% of the non-Lithuanian population consisted of Jews, Belorussians, Russians and

<sup>1</sup> Based on Ochmański, Litewski ruch, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> The percentages here are for the five Lithuanian districts only (Kalvarija, Marijampolė, Sejny, Naumiestis [Władysławów], Vilkaviškis). The other nationalities in these districts included: Jews, 9.6%; Poles, 8.1%; Belorussians and Russians, 3.6%; Germans and others, 6.5%.

Germans.<sup>1</sup> In Trans-Niemen Lithuania, part of the Lithuanian shrinkage between 1861 and 1897 was due to the inexorable, though slow, movement of Polish influence northward along the Suwałki, Sejny and Beržniki line. In the core Lithuanian areas to the north, the national ratio changed little. It must also be remembered that the classification of nationalities was a tricky business. The very rapid Lithuanianization of much of the Polish population after World War I suggests that the Polonization of some of Lithuania's inhabitants, as reflected in 19th century figures, was very superficial.

However, in the eastern regions of Russian Lithuania, a significant part of the Lithuanian peasantry was assimilated into the Polish and Belorussian nationalities by the turn of the 20th century. Again, it should be stressed that this does not contradict the fact that the Lithuanian national movement, or national "awakening," grew rapidly at the same time in the west. It was simply that two historical movements overlapped. The assimilation process of many centuries was still strong in the east, although slowly coming to a halt. On the other hand, the national consciousness of much of the Lithuanian population grew and matured at the same time. Trans-Niemen Lithuania's role in the latter process was critical; in the words of one Polish commentator, the region became the "Piedmont of the Lithuanian national rebirth."<sup>2</sup>

#### The Lithuanian National Movement and Its Social Basis: Typology and Comparison.

Basically, the Lithuanian national movement matured in the four

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<sup>1</sup> See Ochmański, Ruch litewski, p. 61. <sup>2</sup> Wielhorski, "Warunki," 129.

decades between the Insurrection of 1863-1864 and the Revolution of 1905. During this time, it passed through three stages: (1) the resistance of the peasant masses to Russification and the press ban under the leadership of Bishop Valančius, c. 1865-1880; (2) the emergence of a secular intelligentsia and the development of political and ideological orientations within the national movement, c. 1880-1895; (3) the emergence of national goals, such as political autonomy, and the organization of political parties, c. 1895-1905. This last period ended with the legalization of the Lithuanian press in the Latin alphabet(1904) and the convocation of the Lithuanian National Assembly at Vilnius(1905).<sup>1</sup> In general, Samogitia served as the geographic center of the Lithuanian national movement until about 1870; afterwards, the Trans-Niemen region became more important. As mentioned above, this was the result of geographical proximity to East Prussia, the economic power of the region's peasantry, and the Russian government's policy of allowing the teaching of Lithuanian in secondary schools and the teacher's seminary(Veiveriai).<sup>2</sup>

The Lithuanian intelligentsia saw its national movement as one of revival, awakening and rebirth. It could thus be described, to a certain extent, as revivalist, that is, one which had to rebuild not only the "historical tradition, but also . . . [the] social structure." Such a rebuilding was necessary because the people, "having lost their leading

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ochmański, Litewski ruch, pp. 198-199 and R[imantas] Vēbra, "Lietuvių nacionalinio judėjimo periodizavimo klausimu," in Problemos, No. 2(1968), 86 ff.

<sup>2</sup> L. Martov, ed., 1894-1895 revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v Rossii v doklakh ministra Murav'eva(St. Petersburg, 1907), p. 48; cf. Grinius, "Keletas dokumentų," 382 ff.

classes . . . find themselves reduced socially and intellectually to the level of the lower social strata."<sup>1</sup> Obviously, if the Lithuanian-speaking populace were to have a greater impact in society, it would have to produce educated men of stature in the professions, trades and industry; in other words, if they were to become a modern nation, the Lithuanians needed representation in social classes other than that of the peasantry. Lithuanians had to become a "multi-class," rather than a "single class" nation.

The Lithuanians built up their non-peasant social classes with the educational "investment" of the well-to-do peasantry in their sons. This investment was made in an economically backward and non-industrial rural environment. Here it is important to keep two concepts distinct: economic backwardness and stagnation(i.e. lack of industrial development), and impoverishment. Elżbieta Kaczyńska, a careful student of the northeastern regions of Congress Poland wrote that "economic backwardness does not have to signify poverty in the consumer sense."<sup>2</sup> Nowhere was this more true than in southwestern Lithuania, industrially the least developed region of the Polish Kingdom. However, the wealthy Lithuanian peasantry were rich in the kinds of goods and commodities that mattered within their admittedly backward economy: land, livestock and money. In the 19th century, they were fortunate in the economic conditions that defined the villagers' work: relatively low corvée obligations and a relatively high rate of money renting. Industrialization and urbanization were virtually irrelevant to the Lithuanian national movement as causative

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<sup>1</sup> Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, "Nationalist Movements: an Attempt at a Comparative Typology," in Comparative Studies in Society and History, VII(January, 1965), 228.

<sup>2</sup> Kaczyńska, Społeczeństwo, p. 258.

factors. This is not to say that economic and social change was unimportant, only that it occurred within an exclusively agrarian framework.

A significant number of Lithuanians "left" the peasant class after 1870, when university educated villagers, even though in very modest numbers at first, moved to the towns, joined the professions and trades, and became the nucleus of a Lithuanian middle class. Naturally, the pre-1864 peasant fathers, who financed their sons' education during the 1870s and afterwards, produced this intelligentsia and middle class quite unintentionally. Some more traditionally minded Lithuanian peasants were themselves confused, even dumbfounded, by the more "daring" innovations of some of the young nationalist students, such as speaking the language of the "peasants" in towns publicly, even unashamedly. However, and perhaps more important, other villagers reacted by emulating the behavior of the new generation.

This last aspect, the interaction between the "leaders" of a national movement and those being led, points up one of the major differences between the Lithuanian cultural movement of the first half of the 19th century and the national "awakening" of later years. This difference corresponds to Miroslav Hroch's "A" and "B" phases of the national movements of Europe's small peoples. According to Hroch, in phase "A" a group of intellectuals and scholars devotedly study the language, culture and history of the small, repressed peoples. However, these scholars "remain without wider influence in society and, normally, do not seek patriotic agitation of the masses." The romantic movement of the Samogitian gentry was an example of phase "A." The second phase, or phase "B," is a quite different one: the native intelligentsia agitates the masses,

excites their national consciousness, and accomplishes a "national awakening" in every sense of this phrase. This study has examined much of the social and economic history of the class which provided the basis for the switch from phase "A" to phase "B."

With the possible exception of Simanas Daukantas, very few of the native Lithuanian intelligentsia before the 1860s can be included in the "B" phase. The writer Antanas Tatarė is hard to place even in the early "A" period; his educational activities were largely religious, and he evidenced little interest in Lithuanian culture for its own sake. On the other hand, Akelaitis is clearly within a kind of late "A" development. His defense of the Lithuanian language in contemporary society resembled the activities of later nationalists, but his inability to break with the Polish political orientation prevented him from actively propagating a sense of separate national consciousness among the people. It took another generation of post-1864 peasant-oriented intelligentsia to gradually relinquish the Polish tie and intensify the struggle against both Polonization and Russification. At first prevalent only among medicine, law and theology students, national consciousness began to penetrate all classes of society when these same students entered professional occupations and joined the middle class.<sup>1</sup>

A national movement can be described simply as the collective action of nationally conscious individuals seeking some common national aims. National consciousness, as Karl Deutsch explains, can only develop if there is a basic "cohesion and distinctiveness" within a people, and if

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<sup>1</sup> Hroch, Vorkämpfer, pp. 71-73. Thus, in 1880-1885, students made up 42.5% in Hroch's crosssection of some "patriots," but by 1890 this proportion was only 4.5%. For a brief explanation of the "A" and "B" phases of nationalism see Hroch, Vorkämpfer, pp. 24-25.

these qualities acquire "at least a minimum of importance in the lives of individuals."<sup>1</sup> Clearly, the peasantry of Trans-Niemen Lithuania had such cohesion and distinctiveness. The intelligentsia, which emerged from this peasantry engaged in a genuine national "awakening," meaning that "men became aware of their own situation in a process of social and political change, and began to act in the light of this awareness."<sup>2</sup> This awakening could be gradual, for example, the refusal of some children of the gentry to speak Polish; or violent, such as the language riots of the late 19th century. It could also be intensely emotional, even mystical, such as the celebrated conversion of Vincas Kudirka to the Lithuanian movement in 1883.<sup>3</sup>

Radicalization of the Lithuanian peasantry on the language issue was the clearest indication of the effect that the national movement was having on the general populace. At mid-century, many Lithuanians still maintained a sense of inferiority about their language. Many of those who valued their speech did so out of a sense of loyalty to their ancestors, perhaps from a sense of xenophobia, or for practical reasons of communication. In any case, by the turn of the 20th century, the peasantry's demand for language rights became insistent. This was evident in the language riots involving Poles and Lithuanians in the Užnemunė region at the turn of the century. Even more dramatic evidence of peasant militancy on the language issue occurred during the violent anti-

<sup>1</sup> Karl Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), pp. 173-174.

<sup>2</sup> Deutsch, Nationalism, p. 165

<sup>3</sup> See Kudirka, Rastai, II, 213-214.

Russian agrarian disturbances in Suwałki gubernia in 1905-1906.<sup>1</sup>

More important, by the turn of the century, the Lithuanian peasants began to see that the national language need no longer be a language of just a single social class. They realized that their sons who were doctors, lawyers, pharmacists and priests, as well as urban industrial workers, spoke Lithuanian, many even with pride. Thus, language became a bond linking different social classes and helping to fuse these classes into a nation without, of course, eliminating the very real differences and conflicts between them(for example, the conflict between the landed and landless peasantry). This process was slow and halting at first. Often it led to tensions between those who preferred the new ways, and others who still clung, at least in public, to the traditional language of social prestige in Lithuania: Polish.<sup>2</sup> Yet the movement towards linguistic parity eventually became irreversible as the Lithuanian intelligentsia openly demanded that the language and culture of the majority of Lithuania's population become that of the country and society at large. This goal was realized during the period of Lithuanian national independence(1918-1940), when land reform eliminated the Polish landed aristocracy as a significant political and social element in Lithuania.

It is, perhaps, easier to evaluate the general role of the Lithuanian well-to-do peasantry in the formation of a national elite in comparison

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<sup>1</sup> See Stanisław Kalabinski and Feliks Tych, eds., Walki chłopów Królestwa Polskiego w rewolucji 1905-1907(Warsaw, 1958-1961), I, 761 ff.; II, 749 ff.; III, 533 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Tėvynės Sargas, January, 1897, 20.

with other national movements in eastern Europe. Within the Russian Empire, the other Baltic peoples also had national movements which relied almost exclusively on the peasant class, because the most prestigious and powerful segment of society, the Baltic German landowning nobility, was ethnically alien to the native populace. In Finland, the native population was for centuries under Swedish domination; here again, the national movement was inspired by the "lower" classes. The Ukrainians of eastern Galicia were similar in some respects to the Lithuanians in the development of their own national movement; among the emerging peasant intelligentsia of the Ukrainians, anti-landowning class attitudes coalesced with anti-Polish feeling. Like southwestern Lithuania, eastern Galicia produced a disproportionate share of patriotic intelligentsia for the Ukrainian national movement. The Bulgarian and Serbian national movements, at least before the middle of the 19th century, depended largely on the people from whom sprang the native lower clergy, important stimulators of nationalism among the peasantry. Also, the history of the Lithuanian national movement at the turn of the century and later parallels, to a considerable degree, the emergence of a bourgeois national elite of peasant origin in the Czech lands.<sup>1</sup>

And yet there is the example of the Belorussians, an almost exclusively peasant people of the 19th century, who failed to develop a strong national movement. The Belorussians did not have a numerous well-to-do peasant class strong enough to give birth to a confident intelligentsia. Furthermore, the Belorussian language was very similar to both Polish and Russian,

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<sup>1</sup> Peter F. Sugar, "External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism," in Nationalism in Eastern Europe, eds. Peter F. Sugar and Ivo J. Lederer (Seattle, 1973), 46-48, 52-53.

a fact that made the Belorussians more vulnerable to assimilation.

However, there is another factor of great importance which partly explains the failure of the Belorussian national movement and the success of the Lithuanian one: peasant literacy. The Belorussian literacy rate was low. On the other hand, literacy in the native language was relatively high in western Lithuania, particularly among the landed peasantry. Combined with a low level of literacy in Russian and Polish,<sup>1</sup> this factor largely insulated western Lithuania's peasantry from assimilation into the Slavic peoples around them. In Latvia and Estonia, both of which had strong national movements, literacy in the native language was spectacular by 19th century standards: over 90% by the beginning of the 20th century.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, such a literacy rate made nationalist literature more available to the masses. There is no doubt that, as a result of a relatively high peasant literacy rate, clandestine Lithuanian publications were widespread by the end of the 19th century. At the very least, a million volumes of various illegal books and periodicals must have reached Lithuania, mainly from Prussia and the United States, during the forty years(1864-1904) of the ban on Lithuanian publications in the Latin alphabet.<sup>3</sup> By 1907, after the ban had been lifted, Lithuanian periodicals already comprised the largest group(44%) of total periodicals in all languages in Kaunas

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<sup>1</sup> K[onstantin] Gukovski, ed., Pamiatnaia knizhka kovenskoi gubernii za 1896 god(Kovno, 1897), pp. 142-143.

<sup>2</sup> I. Saal, ed., Istoriia Estonskoi SSSR, II(Tallinn, 1966), 258; cf. Alfreds Bilmanis, A History of Latvia(Princeton, 1951), p. 248.

<sup>3</sup> J[uozas] Žiugžda, ed., Revoliutsiia 1905-1907 gg. v Litve(Vilnius, 1961), p. 52. Between 1891 and 1903, border police confiscated at least 200,000 volumes of illegal Lithuanian publications. Assuming that the majority of literature got through, one million is a conservative estimate for the 1864-1904 period.

gubernia.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the Lithuanian national movement gained momentum rapidly after about 1870, particularly in the years preceding World War I. In their enthusiasm and sense of newly acquired identity, some Lithuanians forgot that their national movement had been made possible only through the patient struggles of earlier generations who had clung stubbornly to the language of their ancestors, and who had waged a persevering battle against the oppressive manorial system of alien landowners. It was the peasants, particularly the villagers of southwestern Lithuania, who had prepared the soil for the rapid growth and maturation of Lithuanian national consciousness in the late 19th century.

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<sup>1</sup> Mykolas Biržiška, "Laikraščių prasiplatinimas Kauno gubernijoje 1888-1910," in the author's Iš mūsy kultūros ir literatūros istorijos (Kaunas, 1938), 262.

**APPENDIXES  
AND  
BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## APPENDIX I

The document quoted below is a letter from the Lithuanian parishioners of Pajevonys parish to Bishop-Designate Ignacy Czyżewski, requesting that a Lithuanian-speaking pastor be assigned to their parish and enumerating the difficulties of dealing with a priest unable to speak their language. It is written in a popular polemical style and is one of the very first documents reflecting the Lithuanian peasants' concern with language rights. The document, dated July 10, 1820, is from the Diocesan Archive of Łomża [Ser. A, Catalogue No. 379, Pojewoń]. The translation from the Polish is mine.

### TEXT:

To the Honorable Bishop Nominee of Augustów Diocese<sup>1</sup>--A Petition from the Parishioners of Pojewoń[Pajevonys], written on the tenth day of July, the year 1820, at Pojewoń:

Reverend Pastor: We understand that the Honorable Miłkowski, a Canon of Augustów Diocese, is leaving the flock entrusted to him. Although we keep up our hope that we will not be left without spiritual guidance, we fear that the authorities will give us a deaf [pastor]; that is, one without [a knowledge of] the Lithuanian language. It is rumored, so to speak, that this is what will be. What use is such a pastor to us, one whom the flock does not especially trust, nor who can understand his flock; [a priest] who cannot show himself either in the pulpit or the confessional? We can say that we have experienced this misfortune over dozens of years, for this is not the first pastor we have had whom barely a thousandth of the parish can understand. Oh, how difficult when it is not the pastor

<sup>1</sup> Czyżewski was officially consecrated bishop of the Sejny-Augustów diocese on August 6, 1820, but he actually ran the diocese since his nomination to the post by the Tsar in October, 1819(Jemielity, Diecezja, p. 32).

but his hireling who rules!<sup>1</sup> Thank God when he [the pastor] hits on a good one, which is rare.

Here's what happens from all this: the children become disobedient; the hired help disagreeable; the married couples quarrelsome; the neighbors troublesome. And the reason for all this is that [the parishioners] receive no reinforcement from the mouth of their own pastor. Now this does not originate from his [i.e. the pastor's] sloth or neglect, but from his inability on account of his ignorance of [our] language, which is detested everywhere, but native to us. May the Honorable Pastor [Bishop] deign to turn his attention to this [petition], and for all time recognize that our request is most just and should receive satisfaction; otherwise, the complaint spoken by the Prophet to the Pastor will reach His ears from our mouths.<sup>2</sup>

If this request will receive a favorable result, we would add a second one. If he agrees, we would like to have [as pastor] Father Rugiewicz, the curate who has lived in this church [i.e. parish] for several years, and whose conduct and services have won our hearts. Awaiting a decision, we add our respects to [you], the Pastor, in the name of the whole parish.

Józef Romanowski XXX, J. Shimkis XXX, Petryka XXX, Reynikiewicz XXX,  
 Bradunas XXX, Tyszkiewicz XXX, Symanowicz XXX, Żelwis XXX, Głowacki XXX,  
 Kazimierz Radziewicz<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An apparent reference to the curate of the parish.

<sup>2</sup> The peasants seem to imply here that they would go over the bishop's head.

<sup>3</sup> The "XXX's" indicate that the respective petitioner was illiterate. Similarity of handwriting in the signature and text indicate authorship by Kazimierz Radziewicz.

## APPENDIX II

## THE RURAL DISPOSSESSED: THE STORY OF AGATA PAUKSZTYS

This unique document relates a peasant couple's trials and tribulations as told by the wife in the form of a deposition to a local official on July 1, 1834. Agata Pauksztys' story relates, in very human terms, the woes of life in the countryside of the rural "dispossessed;" it reveals some of the harsher sides of life in the countryside. The tale begins with Agata Pauksztys' account of how the widow met her second husband, Józef Pauksztys, a deserter. The document is from the Diocesan Archive of Łomża[Ser. A, Catalogue No. 469, Sapieżyszki].

## TEXT:

I knew Jozef Pauksztys even before my marriage to Kazimierz Piksylingis. At the time, he was drafted into the Polish army. About Pentecost of this year, I went to the forest for mushrooms and came across Józef Pauksztys, whom at first I didn't recognize. But he recognized me immediately, calling out to me: 'Agata, where are you going?' I approached him and asked: 'Where have you been since the time of the draft? I haven't seen you anywhere.' He then informed me that, after the fall of Warsaw,<sup>1</sup> he returned to his family, but his sister had already taken over his holding in the village of Gordzie[Lith. Gardžiai] and didn't want to take him into the farm, especially since former soldiers were being called up by the Military Delegation.<sup>2</sup> For this reason [Pauksztys explained]: 'I went to the Russian Empire and there spent time in different places for two years. Only when they wanted to draft me [there] did I return to the Polish Kingdom. Fearing to show myself to the peasants, I wandered in the forests, failing to find any means of livelihood.' I felt sorry for him and proposed to [Pauksztys] that he engage in distilling tar in the woods,

<sup>1</sup> A reference to the fall of Warsaw in October, 1831.

<sup>2</sup> A Polish Military Delegation drafted men into the army.

while I undertook to be his friend in providing him with his needs and food. Thus, after this conversation, I provided him with the necessities of life, and in such a way, while I supplied him with food and provisions, we decided to enter into matrimony. But when it proved difficult to find friends, I persuaded Borkowski, a servant of Stanisław Mackiewicz, to go to Sapiežyszki[Lith. Zapyškis] together with my future husband who was still living in the forest; not finding the pastor himself, I entreated Father Rynkiewicz, the curate there, to perform the wedding for us. I gave [the names of] Antonia and Szymon Jęczar as witnesses, although they were not present at the signing of the marriage contract. There were no people participating in the wedding other than Józef Pauksztys, Father Rynkiewicz and myself. After completing the marriage contract, we didn't wait around very long and, after paying Father Rynkiewicz for his troubles, set out as quickly as possible for the forest . . . with the intention of distilling tar there, and making a living from that. On the second day [after the wedding], I returned to Rifleman Stanisław Mackiewicz, where the children from my first marriage lived. From there, I constantly supplied my husband with food, either from his sister and others, or by begging. One day, not long after our wedding, my husband, unable to wait any longer for food, approached the homestead of Stanisław Mackiewicz, where he was arrested near the forest by Headman Kowalewicz. Afterwards, as [my husband] was being transported to Mariampol[Lith. Marijampolė], I followed him all the way to the village of Gryszkabuda[Lith. Griškabūdis], and there I noticed that my husband had money, for he had received twenty thalers from his sister due him from [his] half of the holding in Gordzie village. So I asked him to give me a few złoty from that amount to support

the children . . . With disdain, he gave me three złoty from this sum and said: 'You're happy at my misfortune and want to deprive me of my last grosz [penny].' Of course, I told him that I wasn't happy and said: 'I hope that the generous government will deign to release you from your induction to the army, and in this way you can help me support the orphaned children.' He then demanded that, from the three złoty given me, I order him some vodka--one złoty and 15 groszy worth. After drinking it, and when my husband and the guards were well in their cups, he left with them without saying good-bye. I then returned with my children.

I will mention here that in the tavern at Gryszkabuda village, I found a certain woman, unkown to me, who in my presence spoke to my husband: 'Józef, don't you know me? I'm your sister,<sup>1</sup> and of close family.' My husband turned to her and said: 'You might be my sister, but our family in these parts is large. I don't know you, but, in any case, sit down with us and have fun!' It was the first time I saw her, and I don't know her name or where she is from.

Afterwards, my husband was taken from Mariampol. On the second or third day [after this], I met my husband in the forest and asked him how he got free, but he didn't answer. He only asked me to bring him food in the forest . . . When the [military] delegate arrived with soldiers at Stanisław Mackiewicz's, I was nearby in the forest with my husband, but since the hour was late no one was able to spot us. However, now I'll try to persuade him to give himself up since he was instigated not to appear before the Draft Committee as a former soldier only on account of

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<sup>1</sup> Peasants often referred to even distant cousins as "brothers" and "sisters."

the persuasions of vile people [who were jealous], because he possessed a farm holding. For this reason, and in consideration of [my] orphaned children, I hope that the government will, perhaps, graciously deign to release [my husband] from military service.

Read, accepted and signed by Agata Pauksztysowa XXX      July 1, 1834.

## APPENDIX III

A. CURRENCY

Basically, two types of currency circulated in Trans-Niemen Lithuania during the first half of the 19th century: Polish (and Prussian) thalers, Polish złoty and groszy; and then the Russian currency in rubles and kopecks introduced in 1841.<sup>1</sup>

Polish                    1 Polish thaler = 8 Polish złoty

1 Polish złoty = 30 groszy

Russian                    1 silver ruble = 6.66 Polish złoty = 100 kopecks

1 kopeck = approx. 2 groszy

B. WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

The system of weights and measures in the Kingdom of Poland was never effectively standardized in the 19th century. Lithuanian peasants tended to use the traditional Lithuanian measures, while official government statistics invariably utilized the "New Polish" system which was introduced in 1818, but gained general acceptance very slowly. Russian measures were supposed to be used after 1841, but were rarely employed in practice.

Land Area Measurements

Lithuanian                    1 włoka = approx. 30 morgi = approx. 21.36 hectares<sup>2</sup>

1 morga = .712 hectares = 1.75 acres

New Polish                    1 włoka = 30 morgi = 16.796 hectares

1 morga = .5596 hectares

<sup>1</sup> The Lithuanian Grand Duchy ceased minting its own distinctive coins in 1707, after which the currency was the same for both the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

<sup>2</sup> The Lithuanian włoka varied in size between 30 and 33 morgi; here it is assumed that the average włoka consisted of 30 morgi.

Land Area Measurements(continued)

Russian      1 desiatina = 1.092 hectares

Measurements of Length

1 New Polish mila = 8,534 meters = 8.5 kilometers

1 Russian verst = approx. 1.066 kilometers

Solids and Liquids

1 New Polish garniec = 4 liters

1 New Polish korzec = 32 garncy = 76 kilograms = 128 liters

**APPENDIX IV**  
**INDEX OF TOWNS AND CITIES**

**A. LITHUANIAN AND POLISH VERSIONS OF LOCALITIES IN TRANS-NIEMEN LITHUANIA.**

The index below lists the Lithuanian and Polish versions of place names used in this study. In addition to the names, I have listed the district the town or village belonged to before 1867, as well as the present-day jurisdiction of these localities. "Lith" here refers to the area within the present boundaries of the Lithuanian SSR. The present official version of the locality's name is underlined.

<u>Lithuanian</u>	<u>Polish</u>	<u>Pre-1867 District</u>	<u>Present Jurisdiction</u>
<u>Balbieriškis</u>	Bałwierzyszki	Marijampolė	Lith
<u>Bartininkai</u>	Bartniki	Marijampolė	Lith
<u>Beržininkai</u>	<u>Beržniki</u>	Sejny	Poland
<u>Daukšiai</u>	Dauksze	Marijampolė	Lith
<u>Straigiai</u>	Dębówka	Kalvarija	Lith
<u>Pilypavas</u>	<u>Filipów</u>	Sejny	Poland
<u>Gardžiai</u>	Gordzie	Marijampolė	Lith
<u>Gelgaudiškis</u>	Giełgudyszki	Marijampolė	Lith
<u>Gižai</u>	Giže	Kalvarija	Lith
<u>Gražiskiai</u>	<u>Gražyszki</u>	Kalvarija	Lith
<u>Griškabūdis</u>	Gryszkabuda	Marijampolė	Lith
<u>Gudeliai</u>	Gudele	Marijampolė	Lith
<u>Ilguva</u>	Iłgowo	Marijampolė	Lith
<u>Kalvarija</u>	Kalwaria	Kalvarija	Lith
<u>Kalesninkai</u>	Koleśniki	Kalvarija	Lith
<u>Kiduliai</u>	Kidule	Marijampolė	Lith
<u>Keturvalakiai</u>	Kieturwłoki	Kalvarija	Lith

<u>Lithuanian</u>	<u>Polish</u>	<u>Pre-1867 District</u>	<u>Present Jurisdiction</u>
<u>Krakopolis</u>	<u>Krakopol</u>	Sejny	Poland
<u>Kunigiškiai</u>	Kunigiszki	Marijampolē	Lith
<u>Lankeliškiai</u>	Łankieliszki	Marijampolē	Lith
<u>Lazdijai</u>	Łozdzieje	Sejny	Lith
<u>Leipūnai</u>	Lejpuny	Sejny	Lith
<u>Liškiava</u>	Liszków	Sejny	Lith
<u>Liubavas</u>	Lubów	Kalvariija	Lith
<u>Liudvinavas</u>	Ludwinów	Kalvariija	Lith
<u>Lūkšiai</u>	Łuksze	Marijampolē	Lith
<u>Marijampolē</u> ; [since 1956: <u>Kapsukas</u> ]	Mariampol	Marijampolē	Lith
<u>Meteliai</u>	Metele	Sejny	Lith
<u>Miroslavas</u>	Mirosław	Sejny	Lith
<u>Nemajūnai</u>	Niemajuny	Sejny	Lith
<u>Nemunaičiai</u>	Niemonajcie	Sejny	Lith
<u>Naumiestis</u> ; [since 1934: <u>Kudirkos Nau- miestis</u> ]	Władysławów	Marijampolē	Lith
<u>Pajevony</u>	Pojewoń	Kalvariija	Lith
<u>Pakuonis</u>	Pokojnie	Marijampolē	Lith
<u>Panemunė</u>	Poniemoń	Marijampolē	Lith
<u>Pilviškiai</u>	Pilwiszki	Marijampolē	Lith
<u>Punskas</u>	<u>Puńsk</u>	Sejny	Poland
<u>Rumbonys</u>	Rumbowicze	Kalvariija	Lith
<u>Šakiai</u>	Szaki	Marijampolē	Lith
<u>Seinai</u>	<u>Sejny</u>	Sejny	Poland

<u>Lithuanian</u>	<u>Polish</u>	<u>Pre-1867 District</u>	<u>Present Jurisdiction</u>
<u>Seirijai</u>	Sereje	Sejny	Lith
<u>Simnas</u>	Simno	Kalvarija	Lith
<u>Sintautai</u>	Syntowty	Marijampolē	Lith
<u>Skriaudžiai</u>	Skrawdzie	Marijampolē	Lith
<u>Slavikai</u>	Słowiki	Marijampolē	Lith
<u>Sudargas</u>	Sudargi	Marijampolē	Lith
<u>Šventežeris</u>	Święto-Jeziory	Sejny	Lith
<u>Udrija</u>	Udria	Kalvarija	Lith
<u>Veisiejai</u>	Wiejsieje	Sejny	Lith
<u>Vilkaviškis</u>	Wiłkowiszki	Kalvarija	Lith
<u>Virbalis</u>	Wierzbółów	Kalvarija	Lith
<u>Vištytis</u>	Wisztyniec	Kalvarija	Lith
<u>Vyžainiai</u>	Wiżajni	Sejny	Poland
<u>Zapyškis</u>	Sapiežyszki	Marijampolē	Lith
<u>Zypliai</u>	Zyle	Marijampolē	Lith

B. LOCALITIES OUTSIDE TRANS-NIEMEN LITHUANIA

<u>Lithuanian</u>	<u>Polish</u>	<u>Russian</u>	<u>German</u>	<u>Present Jurisdiction</u>
Gardinas	Grodno	Grodno	Grodno	Belorussian SSR
Gumbinė	Gumbine	Gusev	Gumbinnen	RSFSR
Įsrutis	Isroyć	Cherniakhovsk	Insterburg	RSFSR
Karalaucius	Królewiec	Kaliningrad	Königsberg	RSFSR
Kaunas	Kowno	Kovno	Kowno	Lith
Klaipėda	Kłajpeda	Klaipeda	Memel	Lith
Šiauliai	Szawle	Shauliai	Schaullen	Lith

<u>Lithuanian</u>	<u>Polish</u>	<u>Russian</u>	<u>German</u>	<u>Present Jurisdiction</u>
Širvinta	Szrywinta	Kutuzovo	Schirwindt	RSFSR
Tilžė	Tylže	Sovetsk	Tilsit	RSFSR
Vilnius	Wilno	Vilna	Wilna	Lith

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### I. ARCHIVAL SOURCES

The archival sources below have been classified by archive and collection. Within each collection, I have listed the catalogue number of each folio, its title, and when possible, the time span covered.

#### A. ARCHIWUM GŁÓWNE AKT DAWNYCH [THE MAIN ARCHIVE OF OLD DOCUMENTS]. WARSAW.

(1) Kommissya Rządowa Spraw Wewnętrznych [The State Commission for Internal Affairs]

<u>Catalogue or Volume Number</u>	<u>Folio Title</u>
7-13	<u>Propinacja po miastach Królestwa Polskiego</u> [The Liquor Monopoly in the Towns of the Kingdom of Poland], 1839-1867.
13-16	<u>Propinacja</u> [The Liquor Monopoly], 1810-1867.
97	<u>Osiedlanie Żydów na gruntach i folwarkach miejskich w Królestwie Polskim</u> [The Settlement of the Jews on Urban Farms and Lands in the Kingdom of Poland].
98	<u>Oczyszczanie włościan dóbr miejskich</u> [The Introduction of Money Rents on Urban Estates].
99	<u>Oderwanie grunta miejskie i do przyległych wsi przyłączane</u> [The Lands Detached from Towns and Attached to Villages].
145-155	<u>Szkoły po miastach</u> [The Schools in the Towns].
155-165	<u>Targi i jarmarki po miastach w Królestwie Polskim</u> [Markets and Fairs in the Towns of the Kingdom of Poland].
198-204	<u>Zamiana miast na wsie</u> [The Transformation of Towns to Villages].
256b.	<u>Miasta Gubernyi Augustowskiewy</u> [The Towns of Augustów Gubernia].

<u>Catalogue or Volume Number</u>	<u>Folio Title</u>
4764	<u>Raporty Dozorca Miastów [sic] Województwa Augustowskiego</u> [The Reports of the Supervisor of Towns of Augustów Province], 1818-1820.
4771	<u>Targi i jarmarki po miastach w Gubernii Augustowskiej</u> [Markets and Fairs in the Towns of Augustów Gubernia], 1845-1849.
4994-4996	<u>Miasto Puńsk</u> [The Town of Puńsk], 1811-1824.
6598	<u>Osiadanie Żydów na gruntach ornych</u> [The Settlement of Jews on Arable Lands].
6652-6662	<u>Księgi ludności w Królestwie Polskim</u> [The Population Registers in the Kingdom of Poland].
6663	<u>Nieprawne zapisanie do ksiąg ludności</u> [Erroneous Entries into the Population Registers].
6665-6666	<u>Przesiedlenie się</u> [Resettlement].
6669	<u>Przesiedlenie się włościan do Rosji</u> [The Resettlement of Peasants to Russia].
6679	<u>Wynoszenie się mieszkańców tutejszkrajowych do Ameryki</u> [The Emigration of Local Inhabitants to America].
6698	<u>Przesiedlenia w Gubernii Augustowskiej</u> [Resettlements in Augustów Province], 1838-1863.
6706	<u>Rozciążność prawa propinacyjnego w Królestwie Polskim</u> [The Extent of the Liquor Monopoly Rights in the Kingdom of Poland].
6716	<u>Wyszynk trunków--Województwo Augustowskie</u> [The Distilling of Liquor--Augustów Province].
6869	<u>Różne zażalenia w Gubernii Augustowskiej</u> [Various Complaints in Augustów Gubernia].
6942	<u>Spostrzeżenia Najjaśnego Pana nad rapportami gubernatorów cywilnych</u> [The Remarks of the Most Exalted Monarch on the Reports of the Civilian Governors], 1843-1844.
6994	<u>Zdawanie raportów z czynności za rok 1842</u> [Accounts of the Reports of Activity for the Year 1842].

<u>Catalogue or Volume Number</u>	<u>Folio Title</u>
7034	<u>Magazyny zapasowe po Wsiach lub Parafiach</u> [Reserve Magazines in Villages or Parishes].
7047-7048	<u>Zaprowadzenie sypek gminnych zbożowych po wsiach w Królestwie Polskim</u> [The Establishment of Grain Stores in the Gmina's in the Villages of the Kingdom of Poland].
7059	<u>Zaradzenie niedostatków żywności w roku 1845</u> [The Alleviation of the Lack of Foodstuffs in the Year 1845].
7063	<u>Zaradzenie niedostatków żywności w roku 1845</u> [The Alleviation of the Lack of Foodstuffs in the Year 1845].
7158	<u>Cudzoziemcy zamieszkali w Gubernii Augustowskiey</u> [Foreigners Residing in Augustów Gubernia], 1847-1855.
7211-7229	<u>Opieka nad robotnikami</u> [Protection for the Workers], 1846-1865.
7229	<u>Osoby zatrzymane bez legitimacji w Gubernii Augustowskiey</u> [Persons Detained Without Identification Papers in Augustów Gubernia], 1846-1855.
7261	<u>Rumownicy po lasach mieszkający</u> [Squatters Living in Forests].
7303	<u>Różne urządzenia policyjne w Gubernii Augustowskiey</u> [Various Police Regulations in Augustów Gubernia].
7333	<u>Zabezpieczenie porządku publicznego</u> [Protection of the Public Order].
7356	<u>Zarządzenia policyi z wypadków 1861</u> [Police Dispositions from the Events of 1861].
7416	<u>Rozboje i zabójstwa w Gubernii Augustowskiey</u> [Robberies and Murders in Augustów Gubernia].
7418-7423	<u>Włóczęstwo w Gubernii Augustowskiey</u> [Vagrancy in Augustów Gubernia], 1845-1866.
7422	<u>Środki zapobieżenia włóczęstwa</u> [Means of Averting Vagrancy].
7609	<u>Korrespondencya o pogorzelach w Gubernii Augustowskiey</u> [Correspondence Concerning Victims of Fires in Augustów Gubernia].

Catalogue or  
Volume Number

Folio Title

7904      Emigracya z Gubernii Augustowskiey [Emigration from Augustów Gubernia].

(2) Centralne Władze Wyznań [Central Religious Authorities].

213      Oczynszowanie włościan w dobrach duchownych ogólne  
           [The Transfer of Peasants to Money Rents on Church Estates].

1340      Gminy Ewangelicko-Augustowskiego Wyznania w Mariampolu  
           [The Gmina's of the Evangelicals of the Augsburg Creed in Mariampolé].

1401      Sekta Mukrami [sic] w Województwie Augustowskim [The Mukry Sect in Augustów Province], 1824.

(3) Akta Rady Stanu [Documents of the Council of State].

4-5      1817

B. ARCHIWUM DIECEZJALNE W ŁOMŻY [THE DIOCESAN ARCHIVE OF ŁOMŻA]. ŁOMŻA.

(1) Series A: Parish Collections

Catalogue Number

Folio Title (Parish Name)

16      Balwierzyszki [Balbieriškis], 1831-1898

17      Balwierzyszki, 1838.

24      Bartniki [Bartininkai], 1801-1839.

27      Beržniki, 1804-1844.

28      Beržniki, 1819-1910.

110      Gize [Gizai].

111      Gize, 1802-1839.

129      Gražyszki [Gražiškiai], 1801-1873.

184      Kalwaria [Kalvarija], 1819-1909.

<u>Catalogue Number</u>	<u>Folio Title (Parish Name)</u>
219	<u>Kraśna</u> , 1819-1903.
241A	<u>Liszków</u> [Liškiava], 1800-1829.
295	<u>Łozdzieje</u> [Lazdijai], 1805-1874.
378	<u>Pojewoní</u> [Pajevonys], 1799-1846.
379	<u>Pojewoní</u> [Pajevonys], 1829-1911
380	<u>Pokoynie</u> [Pakuonis], 1819-1899.
387	<u>Poniemoní Frentzela</u> [Panemuné], 1818-1880.
418	<u>Puńsk</u> , 1796-1842.
469	<u>Sapieżyszki</u> [Zapyškis], 1798-1852.
476	<u>Sereje</u> [Seirijai].
525	<u>Święto-Jeziory</u> [Šventežeris], 1818-1903.
563	<u>Udria</u> [Udrija], 1819-1910.
593	<u>Wiłkowiszki</u> [Vilkaviškis]: <u>Akta Kaplic</u>
613	<u>Władysławów</u> [Kudirkos Naumiestis], 1807-1883.

(2) Series B: Chancellory Documents

181	<u>Akta Kancellaryi Kuryalney Bisk. Augustowskiego t. s. Dekanatu Kalwaryjskiego</u> [Documents of the Curial Chancellory of the Bishop of Augustów Concerning the Kalwaria Deaconate], 1831-1855.
188	<u>Wykaz Ogólny z Całego Dekanatu Sapieżyskiego</u> [General Register of the Entire Sapieżyski Deaconate], 1837.
276	<u>Akta Kuryalne Dyecezyi Augustowskiey t. s. Jura Stolae</u> [Documents of the Augustów Diocese Concerning <u>Jura Stolae</u> ], 1819-1906.
528	<u>Przeniesienia Targów po Miastach z dni Świątecznych na powszednie</u> [The Transfer of Markets in Towns from Holydays to Weekdays].

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