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PROGRAMME OF THE REFORMATION IN THE GRAND
DUCHY OF LITHUANIA AND HOW IT WAS CARRIED
THROUGH
(ca. 1550—ca. 1650)

The Lithuanians were one of the group of Baltic peoples, which also included Samogitians, Latvians and Old Prussians (Borussians), who escaped extermination at the hand of their neighbours in the early Middle Ages.¹ What was more, they succeeded in building a vast state which came down in history as the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, even though they had until the close of the 14th century clung to their polytheistic religion and were therefore regarded as “a heathen people.” Early in history they were the object of attack from Kiev Russia, when however that latter country was plunged in a series of civil wars, resulting in partitions, and then itself fell victim to Mongol invasions, the Lithuanians on the north-eastern frontier of Kiev Russia united their country and built it up into a strong state. The name of the country is derived from the name of an ethnic group inhabiting Lithuania proper (“Aukštaitija” means “uplands”). In due course, Samogitia (“lowlands”) was incorporated into it. Their unification was effected between 1225 and 1250. It was then that Lithuanian expansion towards Kiev Russia began,² to take on full momentum in the following century, and more particularly from the moment Lithuania adhered to a state union with Poland (1385—1386).

¹ The history of the Balt peoples was presented by the Lithuanian scholar M. Gimbutas in *The Balts. Ancient Peoples and Places*, London 1963.

² H. Łowmiański's *Studia nad początkami społeczeństwa i państwa litewskiego* [*Studies on the Origins of the Lithuanian Community and State*] (vols. I—II, Wilno 1931—1932) remains unparalleled as a reference book in this respect.

The Grand Duchy of Lithuania, then formed, was given the abbreviated name "Lithuania" which persisted well into the 19th century even after the Polish-Lithuanian State had lost her statehood. Kiev-Russian land mass dominated the Lithuanian state which covered more than 900,000 square kilometres, of which Lithuania proper and Samogitia accounted for but 7 per cent. In these circumstances the Lithuanians kept their national identity owing to their distinct religion. The Christian religion was tolerated. Ruthenians were free to worship according to their Orthodox creed. Members of the Lithuanian ruling dynasty would also turn Orthodox upon assuming the posts of viceroys in the different provinces of Kiev Russia. In Lithuania proper freedom of worship was also assured to resident Roman Catholics such as merchants, artisans and war prisoners doing forced labour on farms. The Court went so far as to employ Roman Catholic clergy in state administration jobs. In the course of the 14th century a few churches were even built to cater for the Catholic clergy.³

However, the 14th century marked the end of a road for Lithuania. The "heathen" religion had finally to be abandoned in view of expansionist tendencies among Lithuania's neighbours: Muscovy was well on the way of unifying all Russian lands while the Teutonic Order, pursuing aggressive policies along the Baltic seaboard, was bent on absorbing Samogitia which separated its domains in Prussia from those in Livonia. By turning Orthodox the Lithuanians would have exposed themselves to Ruthenization, whereas conversion to Roman Catholicism would mean giving Samogitia up to the Teutonic Order. In the event, the union with Poland proved an excellent settlement as it allowed to keep the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as virtually an independent state. Of course, religion-wise it had to mean conversion to Roman Catholicism as the ruling religion. That move struck a blow in the traditional "heathen" worship (which was formally abolished in Aukštaitija in 1387 and in Samogitia only after the province had

³ M. Kosman, *Tolerancja wyznaniowa na Litwie do XVIII wieku* [*Religious Tolerance in Lithuania up to the 18th Century*], "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce," vol. XVIII, 1973, p. 97; i d e m, *Pogaństwo, chrześcijaństwo i synkretyzm na Litwie w dobie przedreformacyjnej* [*The Heathen, Christian and Syncretic Religions in Lithuania in the Pre-Reformation Era*], "Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie," 1972, No. 1 (115), pp. 109—127.

been recaptured from the hands of the Teutonic Order between 1414 and 1418) while also undermining the position of the Orthodox Church.

Lithuania converted to Christianity at a time when the reforming movements were already gaining momentum in the Roman Catholic Church. When Western Europe and Poland were engulfed by the Reformation the Catholic Church organization in the Grand Duchy was still puny and the society had only a very superficial knowledge of the tenets of the new religion. After all, that same religion had been a ruling one in Italy and France for more than a millennium, it had taken root for more than 700 years in Germany, a slightly shorter period in Bohemia, Poland and Scandinavia, much the same time as the Orthodox Church had been ruling Kiev Russia.

Therefore conflicts between the Church and the community in Lithuania were taking place in conditions completely different from those in Western Europe and also different from those in the Kingdom of Poland.⁴

The former religious cults were abolished in Lithuania's principal administrative and trading centres in 1387 when King Ladislas the Jagiellon, accompanied by Polish clergy, spent a few months in Aukštaitija. The Vilna bishopric was then set up. A second bishopric, in Miedniki, was established when the Teutonic Order was driven out of Samogitia.

In Poland and in Western Europe the Reformation arrived to find a well-established pattern of Roman Catholic parishes which was left practically intact for generations to come. Matters were different in Lithuania where up to the middle of the 16th century

⁴ Up to the state union concluded in Lublin in 1569 Poland and Lithuania were separate state entities, only linked by the common monarch or the common dynasty of the Jagiellons. Yet, even from the coronation of Ladislas the Jagiellon as King of Poland in 1386 there had been a gradual, systematic integration of the two states in the political, cultural and economic aspects. Cf. J. Bardach, *Studia z ustroju i prawa Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego XIV—XVIII w.* [*Studies on the Political System and Laws of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the 14th to the 18th Centuries*], Białystok 1970, *passim*. The historiography of the subject of the present article is discussed at length in M. Kosman, *Badania nad reformacją w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim 1919—1969* [*Studies on the Reformation in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, 1919—1969*], "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce," vol. XVI, 1971, pp. 141—164 (summary in French).

the Vilna diocese had at least 259 parishes, 27 of them established under King Ladislas the Jagiellon and his cousin Vytautas, Vice-Roy and direct ruler of the Grand Duchy (d. 1430); 24 of those parishes had been founded by the royalty, the remaining 3 by local boyars. Between 1431 and 1500 a further 103 were set up, chiefly in the estates of the boyars, and a further 129 parishes were founded in the first half of the 16th century. At that time Samogitia had barely 43 parishes, each covering an area of approximately 600 square kilometres. By way of comparison, the median area covered by a parish in Poland was slightly over 50 sq. km., in France 15 sq. km., in Spain about 30 sq. km. Samogitia was inhabited by an indigenous population so comparisons of this kind can be made in all fairness. Matters were different in Lithuania proper where the vast Vilna diocese comprised territories that were ethnically Lithuanian or ethnically Russian. In that case the median parish area of 540 sq. km. means nothing at all because Roman Catholic churches there coexisted with many Orthodox churches. In the initial phase Roman Catholic parishes were set up almost exclusively on territories that were ethnically Lithuanian,⁵ later also in the border areas populated by Kiev Russians. Around the middle of the 16th century the median parish area in Lithuania proper was 350 sq. km., in the Kiev Russian provinces it was nearly twice as big. In such conditions there could hardly be any systematic ministrations to parish work.

It will also be remembered that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was at that time much more sparsely populated than Central or Western Europe. Political stability following the union with Poland (elimination of the menace formerly posed by the Teutonic Order, consolidation of the eastern frontier) caused rapid economic development, eventually reflected in greater population figures, with the density of population by 1567 reaching 9 persons per square kilometre.

⁵ J. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu. Ustrój i uposażenie* [The Vilna Bishopric in the Middle Ages. Its Organization and Assets], Poznań 1972, pp. 72 ff.; M. Wołonczewski, *Biskupstwo żmudzkie* [The Samogitia Bishopric], translated from the Samogitian by M. Hryszkiewicz, Kraków 1898. The latest unabridged edition of this work: M. Valančius, *Raštai*, vol. II: *Zemaičiu vyskupyste*, Vilnius 1972—for listing see Table on pp. 201 ff.

The Lithuanian aristocracy under the first Jagiellon dynasts became increasingly attached to Polish and Western European civilization. The first generations of local intellectuals were being reared, susceptible to the humanist thought which had been making inroads from the West. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church was firmly opposed to any change and virtually unable to vigorously pursue missionary activities among the populace whose mentality was still largely polytheistic.

At the root of the European reformation were conflicts between the Church and the feudal society in three aspects: economic-social, political, ideological. For example, the Polish gentry was intent on weakening the position of the clergy in public life and desired to make the clergy dependent on themselves. The gentry also wanted to get back the landed estates which their forebears had bequeathed to the Church, and quite particularly revolted against the payment of tithes.

In Lithuania the economic aspect was not so remarkable. The boyars were capable of increasing their revenues from their vast estates which were still half-settled only. An agrarian reform carried through in the first half of the 16th century helped to further increase those revenues. The Catholic Church in Lithuania had no vast estates of its own and those of the Orthodox Church were outright meagre. The powerful magnates found no peers, economically speaking, even in the wealthy estates of the Vilna diocese.

Thus economic considerations were only marginal among the motives which guided Lithuanian magnates (for they were of prime importance in this context) in their conversion to Protestantism. Political considerations may have been more significant: the early bishops of Vilna, during the time of Vytautas, worked hand in glove with the boyars especially as regarded their conflicts with Poland on the issue of keeping Lithuania a distinct state entity or having it incorporated into the Polish Crown lands. Also, initially they were preoccupied with missionary work. Although eventually no political incorporation was effected, Church incorporation was: Lithuanian dioceses were made into suffragan dioceses of the Gniezno diocese in Poland. The Polish clergy prevented a distinct Lithuanian archbishopric from being established. What was more, at the Ecumenical Council in Con-

stance the archbishop of Gniezno secured for himself the title of primate of Poland, and *eo ipso* primate of subordinated Lithuania. In the first quarter of the 16th century a conflict between the magnates and the upper echelons of the clergy came to a head when in 1519 Jan, a natural son of King Sigismund I, was named as the bishop of Vilna, thenceforward to head the "Court faction" in Lithuania. It was a time of sharpening controversy between the monarch and the aristocracy; the King in several other cases, too, used his prerogatives to appoint new bishops from among his trusted followers who later helped put his political designs into life.

Matters were different with the Protestants whose church organization was open to lay influence and among whom decisions concerning church activities were made at synods. And after all, the Lithuanian community were prepared to accept a whole range of reforming arguments if only because they were so familiar with the Orthodox Church practice according to which parishes were set up regardless of what the diocesan authorities decided and in which the lay patron had a decisive say in matters concerning activities of the clergy. Further similarities included marriages of ministers in both Churches, using the vernacular during services, administering the Holy Communion to lay persons in two species, etc.

Thus many postulates of the Reformation were absolutely nothing new to the Lithuanians, and even less to the White Russians (Byelorussians). Roman Catholicism, despite its many advantages stemming from the union with Poland, in effect disrupted the unity of the state which was in the course of being integrated. Let's recall the economic-territorial aspect as an illustration of this thesis: even Grand Duke Vytautas, while giving landed estates to his boyars, pursued a purposeful course of action by granting land titles to indigenous Lithuanians throughout the length and breadth of the vast provinces of Kiev Russia, down to their easternmost limits. Hence, the interests of the boyars called not for aggravation of ethnic conflicts but rather for their moderation and elimination. The Reformation doctrine was attractive in this aspect in that it stood fairly above the two older Christian doctrines — the Roman and Eastern Orthodox which,

despite many attempts at reconciliation in the 15th century could not bring themselves to a union.

Thus we should look for reasons why the Reformation took roots easily in Lithuania not so much in any conflict with the Roman Catholic Church as in the greater attractiveness of the Protestant dogma which proved a worship of convenience to both the aristocracy and indeed the state establishment.⁶

The Lutheran doctrine made direct inroads into Samogitia from East Prussia in the 1540s. It also found followers among the German-descended townspeople of Vilna. 1553 was the watershed date when the Radziwiłł family, the most influential aristocratic house in the Grand Duchy, abandoned the Catholic Church. They set up a Protestant centre at Brest where printing presses went to work putting out a succession of propaganda pamphlets and prayer books. The centre's paramount accomplishment was the beautiful edition of the "Brest" or "Radziwiłł" Bible in 1563.

Within a relatively short time about 200 Protestant chapels were founded: partly in former Roman Catholic churches, taken over by Protestants in private estates, partly built from scratch. Incidentally, the latter phenomenon was characteristically associated with the Lithuanian reformation. Elsewhere Protestants as a rule confiscated Catholic churches rather than building up new temples. In the heyday of the Reformation in Lithuania, that is in the closing decades of the 16th century, there were more Protestant congregations than Catholic parishes in Lithuanian dioceses. However, before those communities were organized into what was called "Jednota Litewska" (Lithuanian Unity), with similar unities covering two principal Polish provinces—Little Poland and Greater Poland, the Reformed confession went through a period of internal strife, eventually leading to a division into the Calvinist "greater community" and the anti-Trinitarian "lesser community". Followers of the Lutheran doctrine had from the beginning come from among German-descended townspeople in larger towns.

⁶ M. Kosman, *Reformacja i kontrreformacja w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w świetle propagandy wyznaniowej* [Reformation and Counter-Reformation in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in Light of Religious Propaganda], Wrocław 1973, pp. 35 ff. *Ibidem*, a polemic with literature of an earlier date.

Whereas the first humanists in the Grand Duchy were definitely of the Lithuanian stock, in the era of the Reformation there was a strong influx of Poles, chiefly former clergymen, who now acted as Protestant ministers to aristocratic families. Consequently, aristocratic houses became important intellectual and cultural centres (literature, music). Protestants made it a point to set up Sunday schools for village children at all chapels.

Protestant men of letters added to the ranks of the clientèle of Lithuanian magnates whom they eulogized in book dedications and in poems. Their ambitions flattered, the aristocrats reciprocated by contributing finance to cultural pursuits. The former dual authority was definitely done away with because no Protestant minister held as much sway as the parish priest and no superintendent (a district elder minister; there were six districts in the Unity) was a match to a Roman Catholic bishop. The nobles could now exert much greater influence on Church life; the townspeople, formerly in constant conflict of an economic nature with the Catholic clergy, also found the new situation favourable.

Among the various Reformation currents which penetrated Lithuania from the West some appeared to be mutually incompatible. However, the common denominator of all was their opposition to the Church of Rome. Whereas 15th-century chroniclers in Poland had used to praise the Christian missionary pursuits of Ladislas, the first Jagiellon dynast, in Lithuania, the same King was sharply criticized by Protestant writers of a later age:

“King Ladislas of Poland had won great acclaim among the papists for having persuaded the people of the Duchy of Lithuania and of Samogitia (alternately using entreaties, threats and gifts, rather than teaching them the truth of the Word of Our Lord) to accept baptism and to bow in obedience to the Church of Rome”. Indeed, the Jagiellon King, heeding an age-old practice, presented clothing to new converts in order to win masses to the new creed. A century and a half later a Protestant intellectual subjected such an act of charity to sharp criticism, arguing that a new religion must be accepted by a rational act of will rather than through bribe. He contrasted the former method with the ways of his mighty protector, Grand Lithuanian Chancellor and Voivode of Vilna Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Black: “Much the greater

fame and more remarkable memory Your Grace will leave to posterity in that Your Grace used not clothes and sheepskin coats nor threats but diligent lectures and sermons by preachers to build the foundations of faith and a genuine glory of God Our Lord in the Duchy of Lithuania".⁷

The Reformation fought the more powerful Church of Rome as well as the considerably weaker Orthodox Church which mainly relied on support among the popular masses of Kiev Russia. Four years later Szymon Budny wrote to his coreligionists in Switzerland that the new confession was facing three abominable enemies: popish superstitions, folk idolatry (i.e. vestiges of the heathen worship still extant in Lithuania), and teachings of the Greeks (i.e. the Orthodox confession).⁸

That statement was quite candid as it was made in private correspondence. On the record spokesmen for the Reformation initially refrained from castigating the Orthodox Church. Seeing that the dogmas and liturgy in both were quite similar, they apparently counted on eventually being able to tame the "oriental confession" by peaceful means. That their designs were not unfounded was proved by the conversion to Protestantism within a short period of several hundred families of nobles in Nowogród-

⁷ Wawrzyniec [Laurentius] of Przasnysz [Discordia], *Nauka o prawdziwej i o fałszywej pokucie z Pisma Świętego i doktorowskiego wiernie zebrana* [Teachings on True and False Repentance, Faithfully Compiled Together from the Holy Scriptures and from Doctors' Writings], Brześć Litewski 1559, p. 3 of an unpaginated dedication. For more on Discordia, cf. the relevant essay in H. Barycz, *Z epoki renesansu, reformacji i baroku. Prądy — idee — ludzie — książki* [From the Epoch of the Renaissance, Reformation and Baroque. Currents—Ideas—People—Books], Warszawa 1971, pp. 275—283. Z. Ivinskis (*Die Entwicklung der Reformation in Litauen bis zum Erscheinen der Jesuiten 1569*, "Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte", vol. XII, 1967, p. 31) neglects the level of cultural development already reached by Lithuania at that time and gives an unfavourable assessment of the merits of Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Black in organizing the Reformed Church in Lithuania. He compares him to Albrecht Hohenzollern, the Prince of Prussia, forgetting that the latter acted under completely different conditions, having only to restructure and develop the religious identity of his subjects, whereas in Lithuania that identity had to be put together from scratch.

⁸ Cf. O. Halecki, *Zgoda sandomierska 1570 r.* [The Concord of Sandomierz, 1570], Warszawa 1915, p. 22. Also compare views of S. Kot (*La Réforme dans le Grand Duché de Lithuanie. Facteur d'occidentalisation culturelle*, "Bruxelles Université Libre. Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves", vol. XII, 1953, pp. 201—261).

dek voivodship (a fact mentioned by Father Piotr Skarga), that is along the ethnical frontierland between Lithuania and White Russia.

During the reign of King Sigismund Augustus it was the declared aim of not only Protestants but also Orthodox Church followers and indeed a large number of Catholics, including some bishops, to call a national oecumenical council and to proclaim the monarch as the nation's supreme religious head. It was hoped that, among other things, the vernacular would be introduced into Church services. When those hopes proved futile Calvinists tried to secure special favours with the royal court, evidence of that being the preface to a book by Andrzej Wolan, a prominent spokesman for the Reformation in Lithuania, though himself a Pole. In that preface, dedicated to King Stephen Báthory, the author took a stand against the Pope but described the King as the supreme authority on matters of faith and worship in the territories of Poland and Lithuania.⁹

It was only when Sigismund III, though respecting the principle of religious peace proclaimed during the coronation ceremony, kept religious dissidents at arm's reach that they stopped making such and similar declarations of loyalty. Their suddenly changed attitude is evident from a 1609 letter of Andrzej Wolan to Lithuanian *podczaszy* (cup-bearer to the King) Janusz Radziwiłł.¹⁰ Nonetheless the dissidents continued to insist on the need for religious peace in the country.

In the prevailing conditions of 16th-century Poland and Lithuania the Reformation can hardly be regarded as having been uniform and uniformly opposed to Roman Catholicism. Before the dissidents closed their ranks there was the aforementioned split into followers and opponents of the Holy Trinity dogma. The former staunchly refused to tolerate anti-Trinitarians who called themselves Polish Brethren or Aryans. This was no departure from the practices of the Church of Rome wherever it was

⁹ A. Wolan, *Defensio verae, orthodoxae, veterisque in ecclesia sententiae, de sacramento corporis et sanguinis Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, Łosk 1579, Preface to the King, more particularly p. 3.

¹⁰ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, "Archiwum Radziwiłłowskie", Division V, Dossier 445, No. 17755.

in the position of the ruling Church and could afford the use of coercion.

In 1556 Piotr of Goniądz, upon returning from Italy, published in Cracow a book making a strong case against the Holy Trinity dogma. Chancellor Radziwiłł (to whom Piotr was a minister) ordered the entire press run of the book bought out and destroyed except for a few copies, one of which he sent on to Philipp Melanchthon.¹¹ The German humanist praised the decision of the Lithuanian magnate. But barely a few years had passed and Radziwiłł himself started leaning towards anti-Trinitarianism. He then withheld from his own coreligionists some letters that clearly embarrassed him, some of them from none other than John Calvin.¹² After the passing away of Radziwiłł, the Lithuanian followers of the Evangelical faith urged Parliament to expel Aryans from the country. However, their motion fell through because, for tactical considerations, some of the Roman Catholic bishops opposed it.¹³

In the aforementioned declaration of allegiance to King Stephen Báthory, dated 1579, Andrzej Wolan praised Polish monarchs of times past for their steadfast observance of freedom of worship in the country which contrasted favourably with the unholy practices of most European rulers who had been hunting down religious reformers, heeding papal orders. However, he regretted that Polish royalty did not go a step further to recognize evangelicism as the only true faith. Unrestricted freedom of worship, he complained, was leading to chaos and proliferation of various religious sects.¹⁴ It was a time when Protestants still harboured some illusion that they could score a decisive victory on Roman

¹¹ *Corpus Reformatorum. Philippi Melanchthonis opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. by C. G. Bretschneider, vol. VIII, New York 1963, No. 608, Col. 858. Melanchthon kept that book for himself, cf. *ibidem*, No. 6030, Col. 797.

¹² L. Szczucki, *Marcin Czechowic (1532—1613). Studium z dziejów antytrynitaryzmu polskiego XVI wieku [Marcin Czechowic, 1532—1613. A Study in the History of Polish Anti-Trinitarianism of the 16th Century]*, Warszawa 1964, pp. 39 ff.

¹³ S. Bodniak, *Sprawa wygnania arian w r. 1566 [The Issue of the Banishment of the Aryans in 1566]*, "Reformacja w Polsce," vol. V, 1928, pp. 52 ff.

¹⁴ A. Wolan, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

Catholics or at the very least hold their own and enjoy equal rights with the latter.

Even in the latter half of the 16th century the designs of Lithuanian Protestants, working to put the Reformed confession into first place, proved unrealistic. Consequently, a series of religious agreements and alliances were concluded in Poland and Lithuania which were seen as indispensable while the Counter-Reformation was gaining momentum.

In 1570 the first Jesuits arrived in Vilna to set up a school for the children of the local gentry. Then the city became the scene of an alliance between Calvinists and Lutherans. A few months later an identical agreement, encompassing all of Poland and Lithuania, was concluded in Sandomierz, bringing together Calvinists, Lutherans and Bohemian Brethren, expelled from their country and settled in the Greater Poland province. Early in 1573, following the death of the last of the Jagiellon dynasts and an avowed proponent of religious tolerance, Sigismund Augustus, the gentry assembled in Warsaw for a General Parliament ruled that freedom of worship had to be respected in the country and that all elected kings in the future were to take an oath to that effect.¹⁵

As time went on, the religious division became increasingly profound. The anti-Trinitarians who, contrary to the other confessions, refused to accept the existence of the Holy Trinity, found themselves increasingly isolated. When Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Black had passed away in 1565 they found a new protector in Jan Kiszka, another Lithuanian magnate. His printing shop in Węgrów produced three theological dissertations in Polish, that is addressed to the indigenous gentry,¹⁶ as well as a treatise

¹⁵ S. Salmonowicz, *Geneza i treść uchwał konfederacji warszawskiej* [Origin and Contents of the Resolutions of the Warsaw Confederation], "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce," vol. XIX, 1974, pp. 20 ff.

¹⁶ Piotr of Goniądz, *O Trzech to jest o Bogu, o Synu Jego i o Duchu św. przeciwko Trójcy sabelijańskiej* [On the Trinity, i.e. on the Lord God, on His Son, and on the Holy Ghost, against the Sabelian Trinity]; idem, *O Synu Bożym, iż był przed stworzeniem świata, a iż jest przezeń wszystko uczynione, przeciw falesznym wykrętom ebijońskim* [On the Son of God, that the Same Had Lived before the Creation of the World and that He Had Created All, against False Claims Laid by Ebionites]; idem, *O ponurzeniu chrystyjańskim przeciwko chrztu nowochrześciców niedaw-*

in Latin, discussing the same issues for the benefit of European theologians.¹⁷ The author of both was Piotr of Goniądz, an ardent follower of the Anabaptist dogma.

Many illustrious minds, capable of popularizing the ideology of the Reformation, abandoned fruitful work only to become involved in complex theological disputes. Among those was Szymon Budny, the author of a translation of the Holy Scriptures and another minister to Jan Kiszka. He adhered to what was called the nonadorantist group and incurred wrath among his Aryan Brethren in Poland and Lithuania by his adamant insistence that Christ was nothing more than a son of Joseph. Thus, not only did the Reformation split up into the "greater" and "lesser" communities but within the framework of the latter there was much discord between the Poles and Lithuanians,¹⁸ and even the Lithuanian anti-Trinitarians themselves split into a number of sects.

The intellectual ferment undermined the unity of the Reformed Church. It would have been perhaps a positive process, had it fallen on a receptive and understanding ground. As things were, the gentry of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were unprepared to take part in involved dogmatic disputes, and tended to see in them a hesitant attitude and absence of a uniform programme of action. Only the Calvinists proved capable of drawing up such a programme: consequently, they were able

nym [On Christian Baptismal Immersion against the Recent Baptism of New Converts]. A new edition of those dissertations in the series "Biblioteka Pisarzy Reformacyjnych," Warszawa 1959—1962.

¹⁷ Piotr of Goniądz, *Doctrina pura et clara praecipuis Christianae religionis articulis contra Sabellianorum, Ebionitarum, Nestorianorum et aliorum Haereticorum impia et perplexa Sophismata, ex puro et expresso Dei Verbo collecta, idque secundum veterum eius illustrationem*, Węgrów 1570.

¹⁸ The term "Lithuanians" is used here in a conventional sense, denoting the territorial bounds of their activities, rather than their ethnic origins. The author has in mind Reformation leaders of alien extraction who were, nevertheless, eminently active in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: Szymon Budny hailed from Masovia, other ministers also were mainly of Polish stock; Piotr of Goniądz was from Podlasya, Jerzy Blandrata, an anti-Trinitarian ideologue, was Italian, etc. The ethnic Lithuanian stock appears among Reformation ideologues, or more precisely among the Reformed clergy, only in the 17th century. It was only during the earliest period of the Reformation that one came across indigenous humanists, such as Abraham Kulwiec and Stanisław Rapagellanus.

to put together their own Church which survived for a few centuries. The top authority was the provincial synod convened every year in Vilna. The Lithuanian province was divided into six districts: Vilna, trans-Vilna, Samogitia, Podlasya, Nowogródek and White Russia.

Only the puny group of anti-Trinitarians were consistent advocates of the freedom of worship for all confessions. The Calvinists made varying declarations on the matter up to the middle of the 17th century. Sometimes they even took under their wings the Polish Brethren, severely persecuted by the Counter-Reformation and often threatened with forced banishment from the Kingdom and Grand Duchy. The expulsion order eventually came in 1658 on the strength of a parliamentary constitution. Otherwise, there was plenty of evidence to prove that the Calvinists were uncompromising foes of the Polish Brethren, as a distinct sect in the Polish-Lithuanian state. When in the ultimate decade of the 16th century Jan Kiszka, Castellan of Samogitia, died childless and his vast estate passed into the hands of the Calvinist family of the Radziwiłł of Birże and Dubinki, the latter, in contravention of the Kiszka last will, chased Aryan ministers out of the estate and ordered all subjects to abandon the anti-Trinitarian doctrine and to join the Church of Calvin. Aryan influence was particularly strong among the gentry of Nowogródek voivodship. Accordingly, the Calvinist Unity was constantly on the alert to fend off that influence. Both sides printed a lot of propaganda materials. Among those put out by the Reformed Evangelical (Calvinist) Church pride of place went to the monumental book by Wojciech Salinarius, Vilna superintendent, written mainly with a view to equipping own clergy with doctrinal arguments. It was titled *Cenzura albo roz-
sądek na confesją ludzi tych, którzy pospolitym nazwiskiem rze-
czeni bywają Ariany a w rzeczy samej są Socinistami: naśladować
we wszystkim przewrotnej opiniej Fausta Socina Włocha* [*Censure
or Common Sense in the Confession of Those Popularly Called
Aryans but Who in Actual Fact Are Socinians, Following the
Perverse Teachings of the Italian Faustus Socinus*] and printed in Oszmiana Murowana, 1615. The author perceived considerable similarity between the Aryan dogma and the worships of the

Turks, Tartars and Jews, all of them relegated to the "heathen group".¹⁹ Similar views had been expressed at a somewhat earlier date by Father Piotr Skarga, a Jesuit and a leading writer and spokesman for the Counter-Reformation in Poland.

In 1618 the anti-Trinitarian centre at Nowogródek was ordered closed down. That date can be accepted as the termination of official activities of the "lesser" Reformed community in the Grand Duchy. A few Aryan groups remained but had to pursue their activities clandestinely and were constantly exposed to persecution from Roman Catholics or Calvinists. The latter were intent on insulating their own subjects against the anti-Trinitarian doctrine. Field hetman Krzysztof Radziwiłł presented the following alternative to Jan Okielewicz, who was his clerk in Kiejdany but combined that function with ministering to the Aryan congregation there: give up one of the two functions at will.²⁰

The two communities — "greater" and "lesser" — fared differently in the different parts of the Polish-Lithuanian state. The Lithuanian Unity became consolidated in the latter half of the 16th century whereas Calvinists in Little Poland were in a state of demise. On the other hand, the Polish Brethren in Little Poland were quite active well into the first half of the 17th century whereas their coreligionists in Lithuania were, as has been pointed out, all but knocked out of public life.

Two more problems now merit attention. First, the issue of freedom of worship or religious coercion; second, the social programme of the Reformation.

Until present scholars have disagreed on whether the Warsaw Confederation guaranteed freedom of worship to all inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian State or to the noble class alone. The puzzle was not unravelled by a special conference of scholars, held at the beginning of 1973 on the 400th anniversary of the

¹⁹ For more details, cf. M. Kosman, *Reformacja i kontrreformacja...*, pp. 208 ff.

²⁰ The official document cites I. Lukšaitė, *Lietuvių kalba reformaciniane judejime XVII a.* [*The Lithuanian Language in the Reformation Movement on the 17th Century*], "Acta Historica Lithuanica," vol. V, Vilnius 1970, p. 67.

Warsaw Confederation.²¹ However, evidence from the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania indicates as follows:

1. In an age of increasing religious intolerance, when triumphant Roman Catholicism in the 17th century appeared to be bent on destroying the accomplishment of the Warsaw Confederation, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was something of an oasis of religious freedom. Not only was the Calvinist Unity left intact (the reasons why it was are explained later in this article) but indeed it offered refuge to religious dissidents escaping persecutions in the Kingdom of Poland.²²

2. Lithuanian law guaranteed freedoms to the gentry. The same Radziwiłłs, who forbade preaching anti-Trinitarian dogma to their village serfs, took under their wings Polish gentry of anti-Trinitarian confession. There was only one condition: their Aryan persuasion was to remain their private matter, not to be preached or discussed in public.

3. In Crown cities, especially Vilna, where there was a strong Eastern Orthodox Church element side by side with the Lutherans and Calvinists, a fierce struggle was waged throughout the 17th century for maintaining religious tolerance. While Catholics forced many dissidents to attend Roman Catholic service, many other dissidents bought themselves out of that duty. Eventually, well-to-do burghers freely attended their own services while systematically paying fines for failing to attend Catholic mass. The less well-off had no such option open. Thus religious tolerance had a remarkable class bias, even more pronounced with regard to peasantry.²³

4. The situation in rural regions was different. There was there, for all intents and purposes, the practice of forced worship in line with the principle *cuius regio eius religio*.—There is a

²¹ The materials of that session were published in vol. XIX of "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce", 1974.

²² This thesis was put forward by this author in the article *Tolerancja wyznaniowa na Litwie do XVIII wieku*, p. 122, seeing the origins of religious tolerance even in old pagan times when polytheistic and monotheistic cults coexisted side by side.

²³ M. Kosman, *Konflikty wyznaniowe w Wilnie (schyłek XVI—XVII wiek)* [*Religious Conflicts in Vilna (Close of the 16th and the 17th Century)*], "Kwartalnik Historyczny," vol. LXXIX, 1972, p. 10.

consensus of opinion among scholars studying relations in Lithuania²⁴: the gentry did not intend to forgo the opportunity of subordinating to themselves such an important element of village life as the local level of Church administration. Indeed, the local parish performed a number of functions outside the religious cult, and in the estates of rich gentry it was as a rule the centre of the domain. As the nobles themselves were deeply shocked by the constant falling out of Reformation intellectuals amongst themselves, and as their involved Christological deliberations tended to put off both the gentry and even the magnates, little wonder that the ruling class was loath to see the intellectual ferment spilling over to affect the serfs. And after all, the latter were unprepared to accept religious arguments one way or the other, and no amount of doctrinal tussle could appeal to them.

The Counter-Reformation made an effective and successful onslaught on Protestant positions which had formerly belonged to the Church of Rome. Hence, 17th-century religious tolerance towards peasant masses must be conceived in the following manner: the serfs were offered freedom of choosing between, on the one hand, the Roman Catholic confession and, on the other, the Calvinist or Lutheran faith if the proprietor of the village himself was a Calvinist or Lutheran. Both among Catholics and Protestants in Lithuania church attendance among serfs was exacted in a somewhat lax manner: all peasants and their families could hardly be expected to attend mass on each holiday. Parishes were vast, the roads during the spring thaw were practically impassable, and during the summer and autumn season there was a tremendous load of field work to do. Therefore a representative system was resorted to: the village administrator picked every tenth serf to attend the Sunday mass, with the duty

²⁴ For more on that, cf. M. Kosman, *Drogi zaniku pogaństwa u Baltów* [The Ways of the Wane of Polytheism among the Balts], Wrocław 1976, where a number of pertinent examples are cited. Also more recently, S. Tworek *Przymus wyznaniowy na terenie Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w XVI—XVII w.* [Religious Coercion in the Territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 16th and 17th Centuries], "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce," vol. XIX, 1974, pp. 161 ff., who concludes (p. 164): "[...] the freedom of worship was (up to a time) a freedom for the feudal class, one more class privilege. The confession of the subjects was decided [...] by their master". The author had in mind Lithuanian Calvinists.

sometimes delegated further down. That state of affairs persisted well into the 19th century.

In Poland proper, in the 3rd quarter of the 16th century, the Polish Brethren put forward a programme of radical social reforms. They called on the gentry to give up private property, to live off manual work rather than from exploiting others; they criticized the judiciary system, more particularly attacking courts vested with *ius gladii*, and spread pacifist slogans. All those projects were clearly incompatible with the prevailing social system and therefore unacceptable for the feudal class. Nor were they realistic, as the fundamental duty of the gentry unto the State was to defend its frontiers, arms in hand. Hence, during the century or so of their activity, the Polish Brethren of Little Poland modified their social programme a little, bringing it closer to the position of the noble class while not budging an inch from established ideological tenets.²⁵

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania a similar attitude was taken by Piotr of Goniądz who quite conspicuously let himself be seen sporting a wooden sabre at his side. But his was a pretty isolated example. The Aryans in Lithuania could ill-afford spreading a pacifist ideology in a situation in which its eastern frontier (unlike that of Little Poland) was constantly threatened by the burgeoning State of Muscovy and the northern frontier in Livonia was frequently on fire.

The social radicalism of Piotr of Goniądz was attacked, on Jan Kiszka's behest, by Szymon Budny in his work entitled *O urzędzie miecza używającym* (*On the Office Vested with Ius Gladii*) (1583). The book reflected the attitude of the anti-Trinitarian gentry community in Lithuania and was firmly set in contemporary realia. The author deplored any revolt against superiors and argued that no vicious word might be uttered against the King and the authorities in general. Almost in passing, he also went on record against excessive oppression of the serfs by their masters, appealing to the latter's conscience. However, he did not even remotely approve of voices urging the abolition of serfdom

²⁵ J. Tazbir, *Miejsce Rakowa w ruchu arińskim* [*The Place of Raków in the Aryan Movement*], in: *Wokół dziejów i tradycji arianizmu*, a collective work edited by L. Szczucki, Warszawa 1971, p. 46.

in estates belonging to Polish Brethren. It was his opinion that the simple folk, who included far too many revolting characters forever bent on destroying the social order, did not deserve freedom. Thus, on social matters the Aryans of Lithuania were not at variance with the Roman Catholics, Calvinists and Lutherans. Lithuania was profoundly conservative in its attitudes and offered no chance for libertarians who in Little Poland or Greater Poland could freely preach their ideas, though with precious little effect, to be sure. After all, 16th-century Lithuanian law gave the stamp of legal sanction to slavery which was totally unknown in Poland of that age.²⁶

The Aryans of Lithuania had become increasingly isolated even before their teaching centres in Nowogródek voivodship were ordered closed down in the 1610s. Their dogma differed from that of the local Calvinists, their social views from those professed by their coreligionists in Poland. There was an uproar in Lithuania between 1563 and 1566 when radical Aryan ministers in Vilna adamantly, albeit in the true evangelical spirit, addressed magnates as brothers.²⁷

Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Black pressed forward with ardent religious propagandist activities from 1553 onwards when he set up in Brest a print shop catering to Lithuanian and Polish Reformed communities. Within a brief period the shop produced several pamphlets for the Reformed ministers working with the simple people. The "lesser" catechism commented the 5th Commandment quite unambiguously: "We are to fear God Our Lord and to love Him so that towards our parents, masters and superior offices we also should harbour respect, love, fear and obedience in pious matters". A similar comment went with the 10th Commandment: the serfs and servants should faithfully and diligently stand by their masters.²⁸

The Counter-Reformation, too, professed much the same views

²⁶ S. Budny, *O urzędzie miecza używającym* [On the Office Exercising Ius Gladii], Warszawa 1932, *passim*. For more on Budny's views, see M. Kosman, *Reformacja...*, pp. 81 ff.

²⁷ S. Kot, *Ausbruch und Niedergang des Täuferturns in Wilna 1563—1566*, "Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte", vol. XLIX, 1958, p. 226.

²⁸ *Katechizm brzeski 1553/54 r.* [The Brest Catechism 1553/54], edited and prefaced by F. Pułaski, Warszawa 1908, pp. 3, 5.

on social issues and approved of the prevailing order of things. True, clergymen preached and writers wrote in pamphlets about the need for more compassion and less cruelty towards the serfs. Nonetheless, both advised peasants to obey their masters. Students of the history of the Roman Catholic Church frankly admit today that the clergy gave no thought to sticking out against the nobles and in their own estates "exacted no lesser burdens and taxes".²⁹

After a period of initial inactivity in the face of the Reformation tide the Catholics started a counterattack in the third quarter of the 16th century. The Catholic bishops of Lithuania were at first surprised by the scale and speed of the inroads made by the Protestant creed. Initially, the Reformed Church spread its influence mainly to magnate estates, under the Radziwiłłs at Brest and Nieśwież in White Russia and under the Kiszkas at Węgrów in Podlasia. After a period of consolidation it moved its centre to Vilna where the authorities of the Lithuanian Unity founded their headquarters next door to the bishop's chapter.

It has already been stated in this article that the landed gentry initially rose against the Church of Rome not because of any sharp conflict of interests but because they stood to gain more from the Reformation for their own estates and for the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Above all they could tolerate no longer the cultural doldrums and attached great hopes to the Reformation in that respect.

The question whether they were eventually disappointed must be answered at once in the affirmative and in the negative. Attacks from revolted clergy and from the dissident gentry caused the Church to fight back in defense of its vested interests. A fierce struggle began to win over supports to either confession and the principle of free competition once again passed the test of life. The erstwhile monopoly Church, the Church of Rome, found that the only way out of the situation was by promoting internal evolution. Such evolution was inaugurated on a European scale

²⁹ Cf. K. Drzymała, *Praca jezuitów polskich nad ludnością wiejską w pierwszym stuleciu osiedlenia się zakonu w Rzeczypospolitej* [*The Work of Polish Jesuits among the Village People during the First Century Following the Arrival of the Jesuitic Order in the Polish-Lithuanian State*], "Nasza Przyszłość," vol. XX, 1964, p. 54.

by the Oecumenical Council in Trent, and the Jesuit Order shortly became a powerful, excellently wielded weapon and tool of revival in papacy's hands. Practically from its very inception the Jesuit Order was the centre of much hope from Polish bishops who left no stone unturned in their quest to have Jesuitic schools in their dioceses. In 1569 the Jesuits were brought to Vilna where they immediately made arrangements for setting up a secondary school which by 1579 had already grown into a school of higher learning.³⁰

The Calvinists worked hard to block the idea of a Catholic academy in Vilna where they had their own middle-level school which they had vainly tried to elevate to academy level. With their opposition to no avail, they eventually began sending their own sons to the Catholic school: in 1578 one-third of the total of 700 enrolled students were the sons of Calvinists and Aryans. So that the parents were not put off, the dissident students were exempted from attending Catholic services but still they were obliged to listen to sermons and religious lectures. Little wonder that Protestant ministers and dissident writers deplored such practices, criticized parents, pointed out the imminent dangers of apostasy, while Church councils ordered children to be recalled from dissident schools on pain of severe penalties. All such orders notwithstanding, the gentry kept sending their sons to schools "in Vilna, to the Jesuits, because they teach children well."³¹

Such a situation was quite conceivable in a country in which, on the one hand, the tradition of religious tolerance was firmly established and, on the other, religious controversies did not run deep. In fact, theological disputes among the clergy did not bother the rest of the community very much. After all, even part of the clergymen themselves remained indifferent to the disputes.

³⁰ The history of the Jesuit academy in the capital city of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was described on the basis of a thorough analysis of archive materials of the Societas Iesu by L. Piechnik, *Początki Akademii Wileńskiej (1569—1600)* [*Origins of the Vilna Academy, 1569—1600*], "Nasza Przeszłość," vol. XL, 1973 (offprint: Kraków 1973, pp. 5—173).

³¹ Quoted after J. Tazbir, *Arianie i katolicy* [*Aryans and Catholics*], Warszawa 1971, p. 175. The text is from the last will of the Orthodox gentleman Wasyl Zahorowski, castellan of Braclaw in Volhynia. The will was written down in 1577.

In Vilna, the first such disputes occurred following the arrival of the Jesuits. They were concerned exclusively with the Catholic versus the Protestant dogma. The first such famous dispute took place on 11th September 1570 between Stanisław Warszewicki and Andrzej Wolan. They argued on the issue of the Eucharist and when the dust settled either combatant claimed victory. The last well-publicized religious debate was held in the capital city of the Grand Duchy in 1599 and was concerned with the sway of the papacy over the Christians. It was attended by Calvinist ministers who arrived for the occasion from Poland. Also in that event each side claimed victory. The disputes, and their arguable results, were presented forthwith in printed form, the pamphlets conceived as a powerful propaganda tool designed to win new supporters among the gentry.³²

The Jesuits were expert at using attractive propaganda tools to curry favour with the gentry, though on the other hand they initially ran into distrust shown by the latter towards aliens: after all, initially most Jesuits were of foreign stock. Nor was the Jesuits' arrival greeted with enthusiasm by the local clergy, especially the diocesan authorities who eyed with suspicion the first steps of the new and already powerful order. Also, old established orders accepted the *Societas Iesu* only reluctantly, seeing in it unwanted competition. Nonetheless, in the latter half of the 16th century the Jesuits became the vanguard of the

³² Three accounts merit some attention: *Opisanie dysputacyjej nowogródzkiej, którą miał X. Marcin Śmiglecki S. J. z Janem Licyniuszem ministrem nowokrzczeńskim o przedwiecznym bóstwie syna Bożego 24 i 25 januarii, w roku 1594*. Wydane przez X. Wojciecha Zajączkowskiego [A Description of the Nowogródek Dispute between Father Marcin Śmiglecki, S. J., and Jan Licyniusz, a Minister of the New Baptismal Rite, Concerning the Primordial Deity of the Son of God, 24th and 25th January, 1594. Published by Father Wojciech Zajączkowski], Vilna 1594; *Dysputacja wileńska, którą miał X. Marcin Śmiglecki S. J. z ministrami ewangelickimi o jednej widomej głowie Kościoła Bożego* [The Vilna Dispute between Father Marcin Śmiglecki, S. J., and Evangelical Ministers, Concerning the One Apparent Head of the Church of God], Vilna 1599; *Disputatio Novogrodiensis cum Mart[in]o Smiglecio Iesuita habita*, in: *Dysputacyj braci polskich katalog [A Catalogue of Polish Brethren's Disputes]*, ed. by S. Kot, "Reformacja w Polsce," vol. IX/X, 1937—1939, p. 461. Polemical writers would also use ridicule to discredit their adversaries in disputes, e.g. Marcin of Klecko, *Proca na ministry i na wszystkie heretyki* [A Slingshot against Ministers and against All Heretics], Kraków 1607, p. 3. For more on this subject, cf. M. Kosman, *Reformacja...*, p. 196 ff.

Counter-Reformation movement, set up a number of schools throughout the Polish-Lithuanian State, particularly at the seats of magnate families (Nieśwież) and established urban centres: Pińsk in Polesya, Polotsk, Kroże in Samogitia.

The fundamental postulate voiced by magnates and the gentry had thus been met: the Church was again performing the educational function which it had been ordained to perform. The Calvinists were not to be thwarted in their drive: they redoubled their efforts to set up their schools, too. Their efforts were crowned with success in two towns: Kiejdany and Słuck, where two new secondary schools were added to the more established one already existing in Vilna. The provincial synod of 1625 ordered the setting up of the two schools (the former catering to the Lithuanian districts: Vilna, trans-Vilna and Samogitia; the other for the White Russia and Podlasya districts) in the estates of the Radziwiłł family, which was no coincidence at all. Vilna, the established centre of the Calvinist Church in Lithuania, was under constant onslaught by Roman Catholics and its Calvinist church was twice destroyed at the turn of the 17th century. The order of the synod said that the absence of Protestant schools was causing apostasy among evangelical youths; that even those who were not changing their confession could hardly, in the absence of proper instruction, serve as best they could the Lord God, the King and the State; that others yet, in the absence of local schools, had at great cost and danger to their health and life to seek education abroad.³³

Incidentally, those going abroad were not so much the sons of the gentry (true, the sons of the Calvinist aristocracy, just as most heirs to considerable fortunes in the Polish-Lithuanian State, did spend a few years each on quite expensive study tours abroad, but that was a different matter) as young clerics. It was for those youthful candidates for Protestant ministers that the decision was made to set up a separate secondary school catering to the entire Little Poland and Lithuania provinces. Arrangements were already being made to set it up at Zabłudów, a Radziwiłł estate

³³ *Monumenta Reformationis Polonicae et Lithuanicae*, series IV, fasc. 2: *Akta synodów prowincjonalnych Jednoty Litewskiej 1611—1625* [Documents of the Provincial Synods of the Lithuanian Unity, 1611—1625], Wilno 1915, pp. 92 ff.

in Podlasya. The outbreak of the wars with Muscovy and then Sweden crossed all designs.

As the cause of the Counter-Reformation was gaining the upper hand arguments concerning different interpretations of the Holy Bible rated increasingly less importance. Now, charges and countercharges were increasingly superficial and the authors mainly desired to ridicule their ideological opponents and win an easy popularity among the gentry community. The crowning argument started to be that the dissidents were undermining good old established tradition, customs and laws.

The reformed ministers became the first object of attack. Catholics resorted to an argument which used to be a cherished weapon of the Reformation in the former half of the 16th century: immoral living of the clergy. The same weapon was now turned on the Protestant ministers whose habits were subjected to critical and quite revealing examination. An additional argument, designed to discredit the ministers in the eyes of the gentry, was that the ministers were mostly of plebeian stock and were introducing peasant manners to their Church.³⁴

As the Protestants, two generations before, attacked the principle of celibacy among the clergy, so the Catholics in the early decades of the 17th century argued that marriage had a decisively detrimental effect on the pastoral work of the ministers. They ridiculed the ministers' family life and its conflict of interests with ecclesiastical matters, with ministers' wives, according to the Catholics, meddling with matters which were none of their business. They also made much of quarrels among the Protestants, playing up genuine stories of conflict out of all proportion to their actual importance and, for good measure, thinking up some that had never happened. The Vilna Jesuits picked as their favourite object of attacks the less militant and peaceful Lutherans rather than more sanguine Calvinists who never left a challenge unanswered.³⁵ Lutherans were mostly of German stock and as such more easily exposed to the gentry's xenophobia.

³⁴ Marcin of Klecko, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

³⁵ A number of works in that vein were reprinted by Z. Nowak, *Kontrreformacyjna satyra obyczajowa w Polsce XVII wieku [The Counter-Reformation Satire of Customs and Morals in 17th Century Poland]*, Gdańsk 1968.

Here we come to the essential issue of traditionalism. Neither of the warring factions was ready to admit it was going to introduce any innovations. In fact, the word "innovation" used by Catholics to denote Protestant ideology was conceived in a deprecatory and disdainful sense. Hence the Counter-Reformation professed the view that the Church of Rome had from the onset of Christianity up to contemporary times been unaltered, being based on the Holy Scriptures and teachings of the Apostles. The same was claimed by the Evangelical Church, presenting itself as being the only one in total harmony with the unadulterated version of the Bible. The same claim was laid by the Orthodox Church,³⁶ which described as traitors those of its flock who acceded to the Uniate Church, united with Rome in 1596. The Protestants linked up not only to early Christianity but also to the early period of the Christian religion following its introduction to Polish territories. Thus, they argued, baptism was not accepted, as official historians would have it, from the hands of the "Roman" clergy in 966: it was accepted a century before that from the hands of Constantine and Methodius, in its original Slavonic version.³⁷ What was more, despite their inimical attitude to the cult of the saints, they praised such purely Slavonic figures as St. Wojciech (Adalbertus) and Stanisław, charging the papacy with wilful omission of these names in Catholic calendars.³⁸

³⁶ This article does not take into account the vast polemics between different confessions following the conclusion by the Catholics and part of the Orthodox faithful of a union in Brest in 1596, a move countered by the Calvinists with the signing in Vilna in 1599 of an agreement on cooperation with the other wing of the Orthodox Church, bitterly opposed to the union with the Church of Rome. In reality, however, it was more of an armistice than peace, and even as an armistice it was observed mainly by the feudal lords, not the synod clergy. A distinction must be made between liberal magnates (cf. J. T a z b i r, *Arianie i katolicy...*, essay entitled *Katolicy obrońcy tolerancji* [*Catholic Advocates of Tolerance*] and obstinate ecclesiastical ideologues. In the 17th century Catholics used to say that whereas the Church of Rome had its dissidents in the Evangelical confessions the Greek Orthodox Church had its dissidents in Orthodox dis-Uniates.

³⁷ J. T a z b i r, *Słowiańskie źródła reformacji w oświetleniu polemiki wyznaniowej* [*Slavonic Sources of the Reformation in Light of Religious Polemics*], in: *Z polskich studiów slawistycznych*, Series 3: Historia, Warszawa 1968, p. 103.

³⁸ M. K o s m a n, *Drogi zaniku pogaństwa u Baltów...*, p. 179.

In that manner 17th-century Counter-Reformation appealed to the gentry's national pride and played on the distrust of aliens, in that particular case of Italian papacy. Nor can we omit one more significant aspect of the issue: religious and political writers in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were in that manner turning to the history of Poland for substantiation of their theses, thereby eminently contributing to the process of creating a common history for the two principal parts of the Polish-Lithuanian State.

Baroque Roman Catholicism appealed to sentiment more than to reason. An important role in that respect was performed by plays staged at Jesuit schools, which drew crowds from among dissidents as well as Catholics. The rich décor of the Catholic churches created an air of opulence and success. The influencing of the flock was made easier by a simplification of the image of God and celestial life. Involved theological elucubrations were discarded for the benefit of a more everyday image of eternal life in which the difficult image of the Holy Trinity was gradually replaced by the Holy Family and augmented by a cohort of saints which grew every year. Now everything in heaven was reminiscent of the Polish-Lithuanian State and its ruling class—the gentry; so the chancellor would now take with him to heaven his grand seal of the realm, the hetman was accompanied with his mace, soldiers served in regiments of leading magnate families, Christ made a rich palace of his heavenly office.³⁹

While Protestants continued to give a more intellectual attention to the religion they preached, they too could not remain unaffected by the new climate. Their image of the heaven also became more lively, their sermons abounded in lessons useful in the daily life of their congregations.⁴⁰ Unlike their coreligionists in Western Europe, they did not completely repudiate the Saints and accepted the cult of the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ. Such

³⁹ For a general characterization of that phenomenon, cf. J. Tazbir, *Rzeczpospolita i świat [The Polish-Lithuanian State and the World]*, Warszawa 1971, pp. 99 ff. Details on relations in the Grand Duchy are to be found in M. Kosman, *Litewskie kazania pogrzebowe z pierwszej połowy XVII wieku [Funerary Sermons in Lithuania in the First Half of the 17th Century]*, "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce," vol. XVII, 1972, pp. 106—108.

⁴⁰ A case in point was *Postylla* by Samuel Dambrowski (1620—1621) and Andrzej Schönflissius.

at least was the practice observed by the Reformed Evangelists and Polish Lutheran congregations in the Grand Duchy. German congregations were more orthodox and uncompromising in their Protestant dogma. The Polish-Lithuanian Protestants were amenable to a peaceful settlement of religious conflicts and professed the need for unification of all Christian creeds. Their eminent representatives in Vilna were Andrzej Schönflissius and Adam Gdaczusz, both preachers of the Polish Lutheran congregation and able writers.

Let us remark that in those religious polemics, when all arguments would habitually be used to discredit the adversary, the Catholics did not exhaust their entire arsenal of evidence against Protestants. While condemning and ridiculing ministers they argued quite plausibly that the Protestant Churches actually traded down: from their former Catholic clergy, which they considered as bad, to their new ministers who were described as patently worse. But, while making much ado about essentially minor quarrels between two Lutheran ministers in Vilna around the middle of the 17th century, the same Catholic propagandists inexplicably chose to pass in silence over the excesses of such Calvinist ministers who, like Jan Drzewiecki in Rosienie, grossly oppressed local serfs and did not even hesitate to commit virtual crimes against them.⁴¹ That issue would border on whether or not social justice was to be enforced, and that evidently was a delicate matter which might have very broad implications.

The following stages are perceptible in the development of the Reformation movement in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania:

1. From about the middle of the 16th century up to 1569 was the period of the new confession being definitely on the offensive, with the differences between the various wings of the Protestant Church being crystallized in the face of a nigh completely inactive Catholic Church.

2. From 1569 to the closing years of the 16th century—the period of confrontation between an increasingly consolidated

⁴¹ For more on Drzewiecki, cf. S. T w o r e k, *Materiały do dziejów kalwinizmu w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w XVII wieku [Materials to the History of Calvinism in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 17th Century]*, "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce," vol. XIV, 1969, pp. 207 ff.

Counter-Reformation, on the one hand, and the warring Calvinist and anti-Trinitarian Churches, on the other.

3. The 17th century—the period of the Counter-Reformation being definitely on the offensive, and the Calvinist Church being rolled back from positions it had previously won from the Church of Rome. The apparent caesura is put by many on the sixth decade of the century, marked by the great war with Sweden. On close examination it becomes obvious that the entire 17th century was a period of decline for the Protestant community in Lithuania. While the community managed to survive in its original organization pattern (the provincial synod with six districts), it did lose a vast majority of its chapels. Around the middle of that century more than a hundred were still active in Lithuania, whereas in Little Poland only sixty had remained from the historic high figure of 250 in 1591, and in Greater Poland barely 21 remained from the original number of 80 in 1591.⁴²

The question will now be asked: why did the Evangelical Church in Lithuania and White Russia manage to survive the concerted onslaught of the Counter-Reformation? The most general explanation is that most of the surviving chapels were in territories which had up to the 16th century been quite inadequately Christianized in the first place. Consequently, for the peasants attending those chapels Calvinism was a religion of their fathers and Lithuanian law did not deny it. A more detailed discussion of this problem would go beyond the intended framework of the present article.

A peculiar feature of Lithuania and Samogitia was that the Reformation there started by virtually converting to Christianity the indigenous, still basically polytheistical people, or spread to lands barely colonized in the 16th century. The standing rivalry between the Catholic and Protestant clergy resulted in greater attention paid to the education and ethical standards of the clergy as well as to new forms of work with the congregations.

When, in the post-Trent period, the Church of Rome came for-

⁴² H. Merczyng, *Zbory i senatorowie protestanccy w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej* [*Protestant Chapels and Senators in the Former Polish-Lithuanian State*], Warszawa 1904, p. 17.

ward with a new ecclesiastical programme of action many aristocrats, who had previously abandoned it, reverted to the Catholic creed. It soon turned out that Catholicism remained by far the most important confession in the Polish-Lithuanian State. Contrary to the opinion of some scholars, the Reformation did not arrest the development of the network of Catholic parishes;⁴³ quite on the contrary, it actually contributed to its further expansion. This is a possible explanation of the fact that the Grand Duchy had fewer monasteries than Poland in which the number of parishes reached saturation point, whereas Lithuania still felt the need for more parishes. That is why nearly 60 per cent of all monasteries, founded in the Polish-Lithuanian State between 1550 and 1650, were founded in ethnically Polish territories, slightly over 20 per cent in the formerly Kiev Russian territories now belonging to Poland, and about the same proportion in all of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.⁴⁴

The era of the great confrontation between Protestantism and Catholicism was very important in the history of the Grand Duchy. It brought a marked expansion of education and rise of literature, it saw a deepening of the ideological integration of the Polish-Lithuanian State. Religious relations exerted a beneficial influence on the country's economic development, especially with regard to its urbanization: immigrant artisans and merchants, fleeing religious persecution abroad, were admitted and securely set up in towns, the material groundwork was prepared to cater to the needs of youths studying at Jesuitic and Calvinist schools. This latter aspect helped in the development and prospering of such towns as Kiejdany, Nieśwież, Lubcz, Oszmiana Murowana, Kleck and Kojdanów.

Both Catholics and Protestants, when addressing themselves to the indigenous Lithuanian people, used the vernacular in church services, a fact of invaluable significance in the shaping of Lithu-

⁴³ Cf. J. Kurczewski, *Biskupstwo wileńskie* [Vilna Bishopric], Wilno 1912, p. 177.

⁴⁴ T. Łepkowski, *Poglądy na jedno- i wieloetniczność narodu polskiego w I połowie XIX w.* [Opinions on the Single or Multiethnic Character of the Polish Nation in the First Half of the 19th Century], in: *Swojskość i cudzoziemszczyzna w dziejach kultury polskiej*, collective work, Warszawa 1973, p. 235.

anian literature. Thanks to that development the Lithuanians kept their national identity, which unfortunately was not the case with some other Balt peoples. However, it should be kept in mind that the sense of national identity moulded in that early age was quite peculiar in that, by the 19th century, the inhabitants of those parts regarded themselves as "Polish and Lithuanian, all in one".

(Translated by Jerzy Jastrzębowski)