

vient tools of the Russian aristocracy. The large landholders, moreover, are a powerful political factor. They hold a number of medieval political privileges and are the sole rulers in the provincial Diets. The Baltic nobility is on a level with its brother in Prussia, it belongs to the cast of overlords who thrive only in an atmosphere of brutal suppression.

But we must not be too unjust to the Baltic nobility—after all it is not much worse than the Baltic-German bourgeoisie, which also has become in the decades that have passed, thoroughly reactionary and conservative. The German bourgeoisie has always shown a remarkable affinity with the Russian bureaucracy.

The masses of the people are staggering under a double yoke, that of the junkers and that of the Russian bureaucracy. The former are the exploiters, the latter the political and national oppressors. And here it should be remembered that the German nobleman was frequently a Russian official as well, and active in both capacities.

The Letts and the Esthonians, particularly the latter, have developed culturally very rapidly in the last two decades. Political and social questions play an important part in their existence. A spirit of democracy has taken complete possession of these nations and as the foundation of this democracy was the movement of the modern proletariat, the Lettish Social-Democracy has become the spokesman of the Lettish people in the fullest sense of that term.

The important work done by the Lettish Social-Democracy in the Revolution of 1905 is well known; and not less notorious is the shameful role that was played by the Baltic nobility in the counter-revolution. Never has a national group so degraded itself as did these German Balts, never has a small people deserved greater honor, shown more remarkable bravery and fidelity to its principles than did the Lettish Socialists.

The punitive expeditions of Rennenkamp and Co. alone shot 1200 Letts without trial or investigation, and thousands were exiled for their political faith. To be "freed" by such scoundrels and their ilk in Germany is bitter indeed.

Nothing lies further from the Letts than the desire for a union with Germany; industrially and politically they belong to Russia, to the Free Russia, which they have helped to build up and to create, to the Russia for which they have bled and suffered.

The statement of the German chancellor that Courland and Lithuania will be granted self-government will nowhere meet with serious consideration. The Baltic Provinces are necessary for the political strengthening of the conservative junker element, and for the imperialistic interests of capital, and they will be blessed with a system of self-government closely resembling that of the former kingdom of Hannover and the grandduchy of Brunswick. They are to become vassal states—not even of Germany—but of Prussia.

This makes the fulfillment of the demands made by the Letts of the Russian government impossible at the very outset. On the contrary, the very oppression against the Letts so vehemently protested in Russia, will come, in an aggravated form, under German "self-government."

In the Revolution of 1905 that was forcibly crushed by the German Baltic junkers and the Russian bureaucrats the Letts demanded:

1. Abolition of the privileges of the Baltic nobility.
2. Abolition of forcible rule and oppression at the hands of the Russian bureaucracy.
3. Introduction of democracy in all social-political institutions.
4. National equality and political self-government within the Russian nation.

After the world war broke out the Letts again reiterated these demands, national freedom, national equality and self-government being even more prominently emphasized than before. The Lettish people have never sought the solution of their national problem in a separation from Russia, but in its democratization. Their struggle has always been directed against Russian reaction, not against Russia as a state. Nowhere have the Lettish people advocated separation from Russia, at no time has it raised its voice in favor of German annexation. Every statement to the