

belonging to a 'secret society'; out of the number nearly fifty were convicted and sentenced, some of them to three months' imprisonment. The dark and dangerous purpose of this criminal confederacy was 'the study of the Polish language, literature, and history'. A still more heinous offence, in the eyes of the Court, was that the society was intended 'to promote the revival of Polish national feeling'.¹ The boys were sent to prison, to be instructed in the virtues of civilization—to learn, in the Kaiser's words, 'freedom in thought and activity'. Even this privilege was not considered sufficient. According to Professor Buzek's account, the boys, besides being imprisoned, were expelled from their schools—some of them, indeed, precluded from all the higher schools in Prussia. Their crime was manifestly greater than that of the German schoolboys who formed secret drinking societies, and who before that time had been disciplined only by the school authorities.²

The boys had not yet served their sentences when certain Poles were guilty of another and an equally odious crime. The Germans had, in the second half of the nineteenth century, abolished teaching in Polish. Attendance at school is compulsory; and Polish children therefore had to read and learn everything in German. Only by the most heroic efforts could their parents find time to teach them Polish writing; but they contrived to do so, in spite of all obstacles. Religious instruction was the only subject which could be taught in Polish in the schools—and that only here and there,³ not by any

¹ *The Times*, September 11, 1901, p. 3, col. d; September 14, 1901, p. 6, col. c. Note that in 1815 the King of Prussia in his proclamation assured the Poles that 'they need not give up their nationality'.

² Buzek, p. 487. ³ *The Times*, October 30, p. 5, 1906, col. d.