The origins of the Revolution of 1905 in Russian Poland can be traced back to developments in the final phase of an earlier but far different upheaval, the January Insurrection of 1863–1864. As tsarist Russia suppressed this last of a series of challenges by the Polish nobility, or szlachta, to its hegemony in central Poland, it set in motion forces that were to reshape Polish society and redefine Polish politics for decades to come. The January Insurrection was therefore an authentic historical watershed, the culminating point of the turbulent romantic era of Polish history and the point of departure for a new period, the contours of which would not be clearly visible until some forty years later.

The insurrection that erupted in January 1863 resulted from frustration and disappointment with the limited concessions offered the Kingdom of Poland by Alexander II shortly after he succeeded to the Russian and Polish thrones in 1855. Since the suppression of the November Insurrection of 1830–1831, the Kingdom had suffered the "iron rule" of Nicholas I and his viceroy in Warsaw, Gen. Ivan F. Paskevich. The Kingdom’s autonomous status within the Russian Empire, supposedly guaranteed by agreements reached at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, had been reduced to a legal fiction. In effect, the country was ruled by military decree for almost a quarter of a century. Then came the disastrous defeats of the Crimean War, also inherited by Alexander from his father, which convinced the new tsar that limited reforms were necessary in Poland to avoid a prospective uprising. Consequently, Alexander issued an amnesty for Poles exiled to Siberia in 1831, reopened institutions of higher learning, and restored the right of assembly to permit participation of the Polish elite in the statewide debate on planned reforms, especially peasant emancipation.
Unfortunately, Alexander's relaxations, designed to secure greater stability and loyalty to the throne in the Kingdom, had the opposite effect. Legally recognized organizations with moderate yet undisguisedly political aims, such as the Agricultural Society and the Warsaw City Delegation, emerged, emboldening radicals to form conspiratorial circles and organize patriotic street demonstrations. To contain the growing political unrest and restore discipline, the tsar in 1861 turned to the aristocrat Aleksander Wiełopolski, an arrogant and determined "realist" who believed he could manage the crisis by continuing to hold out the carrot of reform while selectively applying the stick of repression. As head of the country's civil administration, Wielopolski imposed martial law, forced the disbanding of the Agricultural Society and the City Delegation, and undertook a series of preventive arrests. Finally, on January 14, 1863, Wielopolski announced the draft of thirty thousand young men into the military service in an effort to force the opposition out into the open.

Instead, that opposition retreated to the underground, where it formed an insurrectionary government and launched a guerrilla war that harassed the Russian army for sixteen months. As the insurrection quickly spilled over to Lithuania and Byelorussia, the eastern borderlands of the partition Polish Commonwealth, both sides sought to win the support of the peasantry by offering more favorable terms of emancipation. In this single most important social issue of the insurrection, the tsar had the last word. Aided by a massive bureaucracy that could implement his escalating promises to the peasants, Alexander outbid an insurrectionary government forced to operate in the shadows and whose authority was limited to territory that it never held for more than a few days at a time. With the emancipation decrees of March 2, 1864, the autocracy effectively took the wind out of the sails of the insurrection and left it without a popular base of support. The denouement came five weeks later, with the capture of Romuald Traugutt, the last "dictator" of the insurrectionary government. Organized Polish resistance came to an end.¹

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¹ From the vast literature on the January Insurrection, see R. F. Leslie, Reform and Insurrection in Russian Poland (London, 1963); Stefan Kieniewicz, Powstanie styczniowe (Warsaw, 1972); and Franciszka Romotowska, Rząd narodowy Polski w latach 1863–1864 (Warsaw, 1978).
of the pre-January period now gave way to harsh retaliation for Polish “ingratitude.” Especially targeted for retribution were the gentry and the Catholic clergy, perceived by the Russian authorities as the leading social forces behind the rebellion. More than six hundred persons of predominantly gentry origin were sent to the gallows. Tens of thousands were exiled to Siberia, where a significant proportion served out hard-labor terms. Some ten thousand others escaped similar punishment by fleeing the country. Economic deprivation went hand in hand with political revenge. The government confiscated 1,660 estates in the Kingdom and 1,794 estates in Lithuania from the Polish gentry. Another eight hundred estates, belonging to property owners considered politically unreliable, were forcibly sold at auction. Moreover, to maintain post-insurrectionary Russian armies of occupation, contributions totaling thirty-four million rubles were levied on those gentry who remained on the land. One historian estimates that 250,000 lives were affected by the various measures of repression. Together they dealt a devastating blow to the traditional Polish elite.

The Roman Catholic Church was simply terrorized into submission. Some members of the hierarchy were kidnapped and held hostage in the depths of Russia; others were forcibly removed from their ecclesiastical offices. By 1870, not one Polish bishop in the entire Kingdom remained in his diocese, and, for several years thereafter, the episcopate ceased to function. In the meantime, hundreds of lower clergy joined their gentry countrymen in tsarist prisons, Siberian exile, and forced emigration. The autocracy also found a pretext to end its limited toleration of the Uniate (or Greek Catholic) Church in the Kingdom’s eastern provinces. For centuries, the Uniate faithful had been considered by the autocracy as religious renegades from the officially recognized Orthodox Church and were largely persecuted out of existence in the Ukraine and Byelorussia. In 1839, Nicholas I severed all contact between the Uniate Church and the Vatican as a first step toward introducing that persecution into the “autonomous” Kingdom. Now, in 1875, the Uniates who remained in the Chehn and Podlasie regions of the Kingdom were disenfranchised, and hundreds of thousands were “reconverted” to Orthodoxy by coercive means. Any hopes for political or moral assistance from Rome were dashed in 1882 when a modus vivendi was reached between the Russian government and the Vatican. Abandoned by Leo XIII to the mercies of the Russian caesar and fearing

further deprivations, the Polish church went into a decades-long hibernation.4

Meanwhile, the legal fiction of the Kingdom’s autonomous status was dropped. As an immediate consequence of the failed insurrection, thousands of Poles were purged from the civil administration and replaced by Russians. All separate administrative institutions that had survived the reign of Nicholas I were then quickly eliminated. With the death of Count Berg in 1874, the office of viceroy was discontinued and replaced with that of the Warsaw governor-general, which was invested with broad civil and military authority over the administration of the Kingdom’s ten gubernii, or provinces.5 Shortly thereafter, “Vistulaland” supplanted the “Kingdom of Poland” in Russian bureaucratic parlance as the country’s official designation.

Until 1914, Russian Poland was ruled under a system of exceptional, emergency legislation, beginning with the declaration of martial law by Wielopolski in 1861. Emergency rule allowed the autocracy to deny the Kingdom the advantages of recent Russian legal reforms, such as elected justices of the peace and trial by jury for criminal cases, as well as such reforms of local government as the establishment of elected city councils and zemstvo assemblies in the countryside. At the same time, the Warsaw governor-general was empowered to issue binding decrees affecting state security and to levy a variety of administrative penalties if those decrees were violated. The Warsaw governor-general could also arbitrarily transfer the trial of civilians to military courts and order deportations to Siberia without the verdict of any court. Separate Polish scientific, cultural, economic, and philanthropic organizations could not be formed without his express permission, which in turn had to be confirmed by St. Petersburg. Moreover, the political press was absolutely prohibited (with the exception of government-sponsored newspapers), and nonpolitical publications were forced to submit to strict preventive censorship.6

In the gubernii, governors served as the highest administrative authority

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4. For more on the post-January repressions as they affected the Roman Catholic Church, see Ryszard Bender, Społeczne inicjatywy chrześcijańskie w Królestwie Polskim, 1905–1918 (Lublin, 1978), pp. 29–41.
5. Russian-style gubernii had already been introduced into the Kingdom under Nicholas I and were named after provincial administrative centers, in this case, Kalisz, Piotrków, Warsaw, Łomża, Płock, Radom, Kielce, Siedlce, Lublin, and Suwałki.
Map of the Kingdom of Poland in 1897
and together with their executive organs supervised the work of provincial-level departments. The provinces, in turn, were divided into Russian-style wuezdy, or counties, headed by nachal'niki (chiefs) appointed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but subordinate to the governors. Despite provisions in the emancipation decrees for self-governing institutions in Polish villages and communes, the county nachal'niki regularly intervened and exercised a decisive influence in their affairs. Magistrates, headed by appointed mayors, governed the cities under the supervision of the provincial governors.

A massive and overlapping police bureaucracy ran parallel with the civil-military apparatus. Beginning in 1866, offices of the gendarmes were organized at the provincial and county levels, subordinate to the central office of the Warsaw Regional Gendarmes, which, in turn, was headed by the special deputy to the Warsaw governor-general for police affairs. The unique institution of the Land Guard was also introduced into the Kingdom at this time, charged primarily with preserving law and order in the Polish countryside. The Land Guards were headed by captains who, from their headquarters in the county seats, supervised units in various precincts. In provincial capitals, the chief of police also doubled as head of the county Land Guard. Police forces in major urban areas such as Warsaw and Łódź were entrusted to superintendents of police, whose powers rivaled those of the provincial governors. Beyond the regular police, some two hundred agents of the reorganized secret police, the notorious Okhrana, functioned as the “eyes and ears” of the autocracy in the Kingdom, alert to any sign of independent activity, whether political or nonpolitical. If this were not enough to keep the Kingdom subdued, 240,000 soldiers occupied the country.

The retributive measures of Alexander II’s reign, though they eliminated separate Polish institutions and completely incorporated the Kingdom into the empire, did not yet imply the systematic russification of the population. That became official state policy only during the reign of his successor, Alexander III (1881–1894). With the appointment of Iosif Gurko as Warsaw governor-general in 1883, the Kingdom was subjected to a dozen years of intense “denationalization” by which the Russian bureaucracy strove to divest the Poles of their national character. Through a series of arbitrary decrees, the Polish language was eliminated from all levels of administration and the courts; even the “self-governing” institutions in the villages

7. On the establishment of the Okhrana after the assassination of Alexander II in 1881 and its activities in Russian Poland, see Elżbieta Kaczyńska and Dariusz Drewniak, Ochrana: Carska policja polityczna (Warsaw, 1993).
and communes were not spared. At the same time, Poles were completely purged from the upper and middle administrative ranks. Henceforth, they would be permitted to serve only in the lower levels of the postal and railroad bureaucracies. Moreover, all legally registered associations, including the Roman Catholic Church, were now required to conduct internal correspondence in the Russian language, making it easier for the police to keep tabs on them. Of course, all business with the state authorities had to be transacted in Russian. Polish street and building signs came down and were replaced by Russian-language equivalents. The names of towns were also changed; for example, Puławy in Lublin Province became Novo-Aleksandria. In short, when the nightmare of Gurko’s tenure as Warsaw governor-general came to an end in 1894, the only places where Polish remained a public language were a few state-owned theaters in Warsaw.8

The russifiers took principal aim, however, at the Kingdom’s separate educational institutions. Already in 1867 a tsarist edict liquidated all traces of autonomy in the educational system as Russians took over the administration of the schools. Two years later, the Warsaw Main School, a Polish institution of higher learning earlier conceded by Alexander II, was transformed into an imperial Russian university and its faculty purged. Fluency in Russian became necessary for admission, a criterion that openly discriminated against Polish applicants. Also beginning in 1869, public secondary schools were required to use Russian as the language of instruction for all subjects with the exception of religion. Polish could be studied as an elective “foreign language” in gymnasias that had received permission from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but only up to the sixth form. Even then, Russian was employed as the language of instruction. To implement these policies, teachers were recruited from Russia with the aid of substantial bonuses and other incentives. According to official expectations, once a sufficient number of Russians were hired, the employment of Polish teachers in the state-run secondary schools would be terminated.9

The task of consolidating and extending the russified school system fell to Aleksandr Apukhtin, curator of the Warsaw School District during the Gurko era. Before Apukhtin’s appointment, public elementary schools were considerably less affected by the “denationalization” measures. Compulsory study of Russian had been introduced, as had textbooks that eliminated references to “Poland.” Otherwise, the authorities concentrated on the teachers seminaries where Russian replaced Polish as the language of in-

struction. Under Apukhtin, however, Russian became the instructional lan-
guage for all subjects in the elementary schools with the exception of
Polish grammar and religious studies. New teachers were hired, moreover,
according to political rather than pedagogic criteria. The same criteria de-
termined advancement and bonuses. Heads of provincial and city school
directorates, for example, had at their disposal discretionary funds that they
used to reward the most loyal agents of russification.10

Apukhtin also sought to fill in the few cracks of Polishness that remained
in the system of public secondary education. He began his tenure with
another purge, this time of Russian teachers suspected of harboring sym-
pathies for the Poles. And though he was unable to root out Polish language
and religious studies from the gymnasium, he did succeed in organizing
Orthodox chapels and choirs in the secondary schools. Apukhtin also
planted political informers in the schools to “maintain student discipline.”
To increase police supervision of the students’ extracurricular activities, he
introduced both mandatory uniforms and on-campus residency require-
ments.

Apukhtin’s final “achievement” was to bring the education of Catholic
clergy into the orbit of the russified state system. By the 1880s the training
of clergy in the seminaries came to include compulsory study of Russian
and the use of Russian for the instruction of history.11 In the private schools
(largely confined to the secondary level), russification never advanced as
far as in the state schools. Nevertheless, their curricula were made subject
to the approval of the state authorities. In addition, access to Russian in-
itutions of higher learning for graduates of private secondary schools
required passing examinations identical to those necessary for matriculation
at the state-run boys’ gymnasia. A similar curriculum was therefore
adopted in the private schools, with Russian as the primary language of
instruction. Private secondary schools for girls possessed more latitude to
use the native language, but only because their graduates—like their coun-
terparts in the state-run girls’ gymnasium—were denied access to higher
education.12

The Gurko-Apukhtin era in the Kingdom, especially when coupled with
simultaneous efforts at germanization in Prussian Poland, constitutes one

10. Eugenia Podgórska, Szkolnictwo elementarne w Łodzi w latach 1808–1914 (Łódź, 1966),
pp. 67–91.
12. Staszyński, Polityka oświatowa, pp. 187–193. For more on women’s educational op-
portunities in Russian Poland before 1905, see Adam Winiarz, “Kształcenie i wychowanie
dziewcząt w Księstwie Warszawskim i Królestwie Polskim, 1807–1905,” in Kobieta i edu-
of the bleaker periods of Polish history. To a much greater extent than its German counterpart, however, the ubiquitous machinery of Russian government in the Kingdom possessed significant defects that, although they did not make life any more tolerable, did permit the Poles considerable room to maneuver. Particularly at the lower levels of the Russian bureaucracy, corruption was rife and officials could easily be bribed to bend the rules. This was particularly the case among the poorly paid and understaffed police forces in both urban and rural areas. The Russian authorities were also notoriously capricious. Although their permission was required for almost everything, frequently the decision of one official could be ignored by turning with the same request to another of the same rank. Higher-ranking bureaucrats commonly overturned decisions of subordinates, a practice that encouraged appeals. Finally, with the passing of Gurko and Apukhtin from the scene in the mid-1890s, the perspectives of the central government in St. Petersburg and those of the provincial government in the Kingdom began to diverge significantly. In other words, Russian government in the Kingdom was hardly monolithic.

The Russian bureaucracy was also insufficiently financed to fulfill the tasks imposed on it. Despite the russification of the country’s educational system, for example, there were too few schools and pedagogic personnel at all levels to carry out the official policy of mass “denationalization.” The autocracy simply lacked the resources to achieve such an end. The public elementary school system was woefully underfunded and failed to keep pace with population growth. By the turn of the century, only 18 percent of the Kingdom’s school-aged children received primary education. The state-run secondary schools were better funded, but their small number (fifty-four in the entire Kingdom in 1904), high tuition, and difficult entrance examinations effectively confined enrollment to the children of a narrow elite. In 1900, only a fraction of a percent of the total population had attended a state secondary school. Neither the few legally registered private schools nor an underground network of “secret schools” could hope to fill such a huge gap left by the state. Hence, the end result of Russian educational policies was not increased literacy in Russian among the general population but high rates of general illiteracy (69.5 percent of the total population, according to the census of 1897).14

14. Estimation of literacy in Russian Poland, however, is extremely problematic. The literacy rates based on the 1897 census, and repeated in much of the literature, should be revised upward, in that they include children under the age of ten, a significant cohort of the population. The census also discounted literacy in Yiddish and Hebrew, which disqualified a significant proportion of Jews. Finally, admitting literacy in Polish may have been considered
In short, when the Gurko-Apukhtin era came to a close, the Russian bureaucracy had failed to transform the population of the Kingdom into docile, loyal subjects of the tsar. Rather, the Kingdom was undergoverned, especially at the local level, where state authority came into direct contact with society. This undergovernance hindered the effective implementation of policy and promoted among the general population an impression of contradiction and ineptitude. At the same time, the very pretensions of tsarist government in the Kingdom, too underfinanced and inadequately staffed to inspire fear and respect, nevertheless managed to create a sizable gulf between the Russian governing class and the society over which it ruled, a gulf that could not be bridged by the minor relaxations and tiny concessions offered in subsequent years. How large that gulf actually was, however, became apparent a decade later, during the Revolution of 1905.

The Impact of Agrarian Reform

The emancipation of the peasantry in Russian Poland, although in its final version at significant variance with the autocracy’s original intentions, was the single most important reform carried out by the imperial bureaucracy in the post-January period. Forced by the insurrection into a bidding war for peasant support—not only in the Kingdom but also in adjacent Lithuanian, Byelorussian, and Ukrainian provinces—the autocracy began making good on its promises even before the insurgents had been completely suppressed. The tsar and his advisers believed that quick implementation of the favorable terms offered the peasants would win them over permanently to their Russian benefactors. At the same time, the Russian authorities were determined to punish the Polish gentry for its leading role in the revolt, and a generous emancipation settlement would seriously undermine the economic base of the country’s traditional elite. Motivated by immediate political calculations and a general desire for revenge, the emancipation nevertheless had unforeseen social, economic, and political consequences that created a quite different set of problems for Russian rule in the Kingdom.

The decrees of March 2, 1864, immediately liquidated all peasant obli-

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by many respondents to be synonymous with admitting involvement in an illegal activity.
For a discussion of literacy in Russian Poland, see Egon Vielrose, “Szacunek analfabetyzmu w zaborze rosyjskim,” Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski 9 (1976): 3–16. I also thank Stephen D. Corssin for sharing with me his unpublished manuscript “Levels of Literacy among Poles and Jews in Late Nineteenth-Century Warsaw.”
gations to the manor. In contrast to the rest of the Russian Empire, there was no transitional phase of "temporary obligation." Further, the peasants in the "western provinces" and the "Vistulaland" received as freeholds the lands they used, together with holdings "illegally" enclosed by the nobility since 1846. As fully recognized landowners, they were also granted individual titles to their property free of charge as a gift of the tsar. The Russian muzhik, again by contrast, made redemption payments stretched out over forty-nine years while being denied individual property rights. Instead, title to "peasant land" in Russia after the emancipation was held collectively by peasant communes. Polish peasant proprietors paid a hefty land tax, double that prevailing for Russian peasants, but not exceeding two-thirds of the former rent or ransom. Financially, too, they came out ahead of their Russian counterparts.

The landless peasantry in the Kingdom, on the other hand, derived little benefit from the emancipation other than their immediate personal freedom. The majority remained without land while a minority, not exceeding 140,000 peasants, were granted small plots averaging about three morgs (four acres), too little to sustain their new proprietors over the long term.\(^\text{15}\) The expectation that the national domains would be divided among the landless went largely unrealized. Only 27 percent of the crown lands, for example, passed into peasant hands, while 60 percent was granted in entail to Russian dignitaries.\(^\text{16}\) The great latifundia of the titled aristocracy, the most logical source of land for the landless, were left relatively untouched as a reward for that group's continued loyalty to the tsar during the insurrection. Actual peasant landholding therefore increased only marginally (between 5 and 8 percent) after the emancipation, and at least 220,000 peasants remained propertyless.\(^\text{17}\)

In the end, the emancipation left 56.5 percent of the Kingdom's arable land in the hands of the Polish nobility, even after the confiscation of considerable gentry property.\(^\text{18}\) The great latifundia, as already mentioned, were little affected. The Russian officials who staffed the local liquidation committees and carried out the reform rewarded the political loyalty of the owners of large estates by making favorable determinations concerning the value of lost labor and rents for the purpose of subsequent compensation. The great landowners, moreover, possessed the necessary capital to adjust

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to the new postemancipation conditions. Not only could they afford to bribe corrupt officials and defend themselves against peasant claims in lengthy court litigation, but they could also switch more easily from compulsory to hired labor and were able to invest in mechanical sowers, reapers, and threshers as those became available. The subsequent increase in productivity on the latifundia more than offset the impact of higher land taxes. Not surprisingly, the latifundia owners continued to stand in the forefront of economic life in the Polish countryside.

The smaller gentry estates, however, particularly those that had relied on serf labor, were devastated by the emancipation settlement. The same Russian bureaucrats who rewarded latifundia owners for their political loyalty during the insurrection punished rank-and-file gentry for their collective "treason" by making arbitrary undervaluations of gentry losses in labor and rents. Subsequent indemnification arrangements therefore left most of the gentry in a worse financial situation than before the agrarian reforms. In addition, the method of indemnification was carefully calculated to bring profit to the Russian regime. Compensation took the form of negotiable bonds carrying a 4 percent rate of interest and an amortization period of forty-two years. The bonds, the value of which quickly depreciated, were financed by the new and relatively high land taxes imposed primarily on peasant proprietors. In the end, the authorities would collect 110 million rubles through land taxes while paying only 64 million rubles in compensation to noble landlords.19

As a whole, the gentry lacked sufficient capital to absorb the losses incurred, let alone to adapt to new conditions. Many had to accede to peasant claims on disputed land or went bankrupt fighting such claims in court. Escalating demands by Russian bureaucrats for bribes also took their toll. The imposition of high land taxes, the new cost of hiring farm laborers, and the inability to compete with the large estates all eventually led to the outright sale and parceling of gentry property.

The resulting exodus of the gentry from the land was a slow, gradual process in the first two postemancipation decades. Then, with the collapse of local grain prices by 50 to 60 percent in the 1880s, as cheap American and Russian grain became available to European markets, gentry departures became a mass phenomenon. By 1890, noble landholding had declined to 47 percent of the total tilled area, representing a loss of nearly two million acres since the emancipation. During the same period, total peasant landowning rose by 8.1 percent, although the sale and parceling of gentry land

accounted for only a small part of the increase. Lacking access to state credit institutions until the 1890s, the peasantry gained little immediate advantage from the gentry’s economic plight. Instead, urban merchants and industrialists proved the main purchasers of gentry property.

A more important source for the increase of peasant landownings in the first twenty-five years after the emancipation was the liquidation of traditional easement rights, or “servitudes,” for which the peasantry received compensation in land. The emancipation decrees of 1864 specified that servitudes would remain in force only temporarily, that is, until the government assessed their value and adopted regulations to fix the means of their conversion. This provisional arrangement, affecting private estates only, left 65 percent of the peasants with grazing rights, 55 percent with fuel rights, 39 percent with timber rights, and 21.5 percent with gathering rights. In state forests and crown lands, by contrast, the servitudes were entirely and immediately abolished, but only a small percentage of peasants were compensated in the form of land transfers.

Although the 1864 decrees anticipated the conversion of all easement rights on private estates, the authorities soon recognized that the servitudes issue, already a source of contention between village and manor, served Russian interests by maintaining a state of friction in the Polish countryside. Consequently, the authorities did nothing to accelerate a final solution to the problem. In 1872 the government decided that the conversion of easement rights would best be left to agreements privately negotiated between the former lords and the villages and subsequently ratified by the appropriate state authorities. This solution allowed Russian officials to act ostensibly as mediators, although in reality they frequently considered opposing claims in accordance with the respective bribes or delayed cases that held the potential for substantial personal profit. The process of conversion was therefore excruciatingly slow, and it exacerbated existing conflicts. Between 1864 and 1912, approximately two-thirds of all peasant farms underwent some changes in servitudes, for which they were compensated with land in varying amounts. Despite such partial liquidation of servitudes, a similar percentage of peasant farms continued to retain some form of easement rights up to World War I. Even where conversion had occurred, the peasants were frequently dissatisfied and ignored the

22. Groniowski, Kwestia agrarna w Królestwie Polskim, p. 142.
results, prompting widespread “illegal” trespassing and sporadic outbursts of resistance to state intervention.24 Hence, the conflict over servitudes, while mobilizing the peasants against the manor, could and did rebound against the authorities as well.

Another part of the agrarian reform which departed even more significantly from original intentions related to local government. Before the January Insurrection, administration on the communal level had been entrusted to a wójt (mayor) who served simultaneously as a paid agent of the local landlord. With the emancipation decrees, this system was abolished and replaced by a two-tiered administration designed to end the nobility’s domination of local affairs. At the lower level of the gromada (community or “small commune”), an assembly composed exclusively of peasants elected a sotys (elder) who carried out those resolutions of the assembly confirmed by the authorities. At the higher level, several gromady constituted a gmina (“large commune”). In addition to the peasants, the gmina assembly included owners of adjoining estates and other nonpeasant settlements. The gmina assembly, in turn, elected the wójt, the pisarz (a clerk who saw to the day-to-day administration of communal affairs), and two plenipotentiaries. At both the gromada and gmina levels, landless peasants and smallholders possessing less than 1.5 and 3 morgs respectively were excluded from participation in the assemblies.

These institutions of self-government in the Polish countryside, initially designed to empower the peasantry at the expense of the manors, were gradually transformed into instruments of the ruling bureaucracy. Centralization and merger of gminy provided one means to this end. Of the 3,083 gminy in existence in 1864, only 1,287 remained forty years later.25 The contraction of gminy made it easier for centrally appointed county officials to interfere in local affairs. By the 1880s the nachal’niki were regularly rejecting the results of local elections, suspending elected officials from their duties, declaring assembly resolutions invalid, and through the timely presence of the county Land Guard at assembly meetings, applying pressure on the peasants to act in a way prescribed by the Russian bureaucracy, especially in matters of taxation.26 During the Gurko-Apukhtin era, county chiefs also acquired the power to appoint the communal pisarz, turning a previously elected official into yet another agent of the bureaucracy in the

Polish countryside. Most debilitating, however, was the introduction of Russian as the official language of local ‘self-government’ as well as the language of instruction at village schools funded by the gminy. By the 1890s, self-government had come to mean the rural community’s rubber-stamping of resolutions drawn up by an alien bureaucracy in a language incomprehensible to the villagers. Not surprisingly, peasant participation in meetings of communal assemblies declined precipitously, especially among members of the postemancipation generation.27

Despite the shortcomings of the agrarian reforms, most Polish peasants experienced an immediate improvement in their standard of living in the first decade after the emancipation. A continuing rise in grain prices throughout the 1870s contributed to their relative prosperity, while better nutrition through increased consumption lowered mortality rates.28 Peasant

27. Brodowska, Ruch chłopski, pp. 136–140.
farmers were not induced by the favorable conditions, however, to introduce more intensive methods of land cultivation. In 1877, peasant farms of less than twenty hectares (approximately fifty acres) accounted for 80 percent of all peasant property holdings. Such small plots discouraged the use of mechanical threshers, seeders, and reapers. Moreover, only a fraction of the peasant farms used iron ploughs, and iron harrows remained practically unknown up to World War I. As a result, total grain production and average yields increased only marginally. In this regard, the Kingdom even lagged behind neighboring Galicia under Austrian rule, considered by many to be the most poverty-stricken, “backward” corner of Europe.

Grain production also failed to keep pace with rapid population growth, a process that had begun in the 1870s. In 1860, the Kingdom of Poland had an estimated 4.8 million inhabitants. According to official censuses taken in 1897 and 1907, the population increased to 9.2 and 11.5 million inhabitants respectively. As a result, the output of grain per inhabitant actually declined so that by the beginning of the twentieth century the Kingdom had become a net importer of grain for the first time in its history.

The demographic explosion, in turn, placed enormous pressures on the land. Principally through subdivision, the number of peasant holdings increased from 593,000 in 1870 to 717,000 in 1899, and the average size of peasant holdings declined. By 1907, almost 90 percent of all peasant landowners possessed farms of five hectares (12.4 acres) or less. At the same time, the landless population doubled. In 1891 the Warsaw Statistical Committee estimated that there were 827,000 landless peasants (together with families), or 13.2 percent of the rural population, compared with 590,000 in 1864. By 1901, that number had grown to 1,220,333, or 18.1 percent of all rural inhabitants.

The great estates and, to a considerably lesser extent, the larger peasant farms could provide employment for only part of the rapidly expanding rural proletariat and semiproletariat. Moreover, as a readily available source of cheap labor, farm workers received abysmally low wages, which were

31. Łukasiewicz, “Drogi,” p. 44.
32. Kieniewicz, Emancipation of the Polish Peasantry, p. 189.
paid both in money and in kind. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the average annual monetary wage of an ordynariusz (a full-time farm worker) was twenty-two rubles, supplemented by 10.8 bushels of grain. Full-time farm workers were also granted a small amount of land (averaging one-third of an acre) in order to grow potatoes, the principal staple in their diet, and usually the right to raise a cow, a hog, a few goats, and chickens at their employer’s expense. Occasionally, a farm worker also received specified amounts of wood and salt as part of his wage. The total value of the average annual earnings of a farm worker in money and kind has been estimated at 157 rubles, which fell well below the average annual wage of 240 rubles paid in industry.34 Of course not all landless peasants could find full-time employment in the countryside, especially when faced with the competition of peasant smallholders seeking seasonal, part-time employment.

The already-mentioned collapse of local grain prices in the 1880s, which drove many gentry proprietors from the land, had a less dramatic but still significant impact on the peasantry and contributed to the general impoverishment of the Polish countryside. Peasant farm income declined, and the previously impressive growth of peasant consumption slowed considerably. Fortunately, the agricultural depression produced no famines, but market conditions discouraged peasant farmers from expanding grain production even through traditional, extensive methods. Moreover, the growth of the hog population stagnated, and the cattle population actually declined.35 After 1896, grain prices stabilized and then began to rise, but it would take years for peasant agriculture to recover from the crisis.

In the meantime, hundreds of thousands had already left the land. Some went to Prussia’s Polish provinces in search of employment, only to be expelled by Bismarck in 1885. They returned with the relaxation of immigration policies after 1890, so that by 1914, some 400,000 “seasonal” farmhands from the Kingdom were employed by German agriculture.36 Between 1890 and 1904, another 127,000 emigrated permanently from the Kingdom to new homes in the Ruhr industrial region of Germany, Canada, Brazil, and above all, the United States.37 Most important, however, they were lured by the expectation of higher wages and social mobility to the

34. Ibid., pp. 69–75.
35. On the crisis afflicting Polish agriculture in the 1880s and 1890s, see Juliusz Łukasiewicz, Kryzys agrarny na ziemiach polskich w końcu XIX wieku (Warsaw, 1968).
36. Kieniewicz, Emancipation of the Polish Peasantry, p. 193. According to Kieniewicz, these “seasonal” farmhands worked ten to eleven months a year.
37. Borkowski, Chłopi polscy w dobie kapitalizmu, p. 44.
dynamically expanding industrial centers of the Kingdom itself, sparking an internal migration of unprecedented proportions which was to change the social, economic, cultural, and political complexion of the country.

**Industrialization and Urbanization**

The industrial revolution, as it spread eastward, came to the Kingdom of Poland in the second half of the nineteenth century, transforming the country—at least temporarily—into the most economically advanced region of the Russian state. Until the late 1890s, the total value of industrial production in the Kingdom actually exceeded that of the rest of the Russian Empire. Stimulated initially by railroad construction and the expansion of the domestic market, and subsequently by sales in a much larger Russian market, industrialization of the Kingdom progressed through two distinct stages in the relatively short period of fifty years. In many ways, the Kingdom’s industrial revolution with its accompanying social and demographic transformations followed the classic English model; in others, local conditions and geographic factors imbued these processes with peculiarly Polish characteristics.

The starting point of the Kingdom’s industrial revolution is subject to debate. The most recent consensus focuses on the year 1850, when the lifting of tariff barriers between the Kingdom and the empire eased the access of Polish industry to potentially lucrative Russian markets. Of course, industrial enterprises existed in the Kingdom already in the first half of the nineteenth century, and in mining and metallurgy many were owned and operated by the state. In the absence of cheap transportation and sufficient local demand, however, a considerable number of these undertakings—and particularly those under state management—proved unprofitable and were abandoned or allowed to stagnate. Railroad construction, which began in the 1850s, soon facilitated the movement of raw materials and finished goods, while the favorable economic conditions in agriculture and the demographic increase after the emancipation of the peasantry led to a dramatic expansion of the domestic market. The first industries to tap that market, food processing and textiles, were also the first to be transformed through mechanization and the adoption of the factory system of industrial organization. By 1864 almost all the country’s sugar refineries had converted from wind and water power to steam, and,

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by 1875, the cotton-spinning industry was completely mechanized. Owing to state neglect and inadequate investment, mining and metallurgy were the last industries to experience technological modernization. The sale of concessions in the form of long-term leases to foreign investors, coupled with the imposition of protective tariffs on imported coal and pig iron in the 1870s, led to the emergence of a modern heavy-industrial base in the Kingdom by 1890.39

In the first phase of the Kingdom’s industrial revolution, up to around 1880, the main catalysts of economic change were the development and expansion of local markets, the growth of per capita domestic consumption, and native capital accumulation and investment. The Kingdom’s incorporation into the Russian customs system became significant only later; until 1880, the country’s trade with western Europe remained more important than its trade with the Russian Empire.40 At that point, the eastward movement of Polish industrial goods began, led by textiles. This reorientation of Polish industry from production for domestic consumption to production for “export” was spurred by the seemingly limitless possibilities for profits in the huge Russian market. Once that market emerged and began to expand, Polish industry, at least initially, faced little competition in its efforts to capture it. Until the 1890s, Russia’s semiprotectionist trade policies favored the more advanced Polish industries as well as infant Russian industries not yet able to satisfy consumer demand. Simultaneously, the agrarian crisis of the 1880s and 1890s dramatically slowed the growth of domestic consumption in the Kingdom and prompted a search for new sales markets. As a result, the Kingdom’s trade with Russia increased evenfold in the period 1880–1910.41 Driven primarily by “exports” until the late 1890s, this trade led to a lasting dependence of certain industries on Russian sales. By 1900, 75 percent of the production of the Kingdom’s textile industry was sold on “eastern” markets.42 In addition, the Kingdom exported large quantities of pig iron, steel, sugar, paper, and agricultural machines to Russia in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

Stimulated primarily by sales on Russian markets in the period 1880–1900, Polish industry experienced a second phase of modernization and expansion. Steam turbines, then electric generators continued to transform

41. Ibid., p. 151.
the energy base. Joint-stock companies dominated by foreign capital gradually replaced individual native ownership of the larger enterprises, and this conversion was accompanied by the creation of informal cartels, particularly in the mining and textile industries. Production became more concentrated, although not on the scale that subsequently prevailed in Russia. Nevertheless, in the Kingdom’s metallurgical industry, the three largest firms employed 63 percent of the labor force and produced 64 percent of the country’s pig iron and 68 percent of the country’s steel.43 In the textile industry, great firms employing over a thousand workers accounted for over half of the total value of production and an equal percentage of the labor force.44 At the same time, production processes became more concentrated in individual factories, reducing the reliance of the textile industry, for instance, on cottage labor at certain stages in the production cycle.

Following the classic British model, the textile industry played a dominant role in the Kingdom’s industrial revolution. Concentrated in the Łódź region of Piotrków Province, with important subcenters in the Warsaw-Żyrardów and Częstochowa-Sosnowiec regions, the textile industry at the turn of the century employed over half (121,481 workers) of the entire factory labor force and accounted for 44 percent of the total value of industrial production.45 Textiles also led Polish industry’s offensive on Russian markets and absorbed the largest share of capital investment. The prosperity of the textile industry was therefore of crucial importance to the country’s economic health, and in Łódź and other parts of Piotrków Province, it affected almost every inhabitant. Extremely vulnerable to changing market conditions, the Kingdom’s textile industry experienced periodic crises that led to sharp declines in sales, factory closings, and high rates of unemployment. Although the general trend was one of dramatic expansion (between 1879 and 1913, the value of textile production increased fivefold, and employment fourfold), the first years of the twentieth century were characterized by depression and contraction.46

“Heavy industry,” a term that embraces the mining, mineral, metal, and metallurgical industries, comprised the second-most-important sector in the Kingdom’s industrial economy at the turn of the century. It was also the most rapidly expanding one. Of only minimal significance in 1880, heavy

industry accounted for 27.9 percent of all industrial enterprises and employed 32.8 percent of the industrial labor force by 1911.\textsuperscript{47} The Dąbrowa Basin, a geophysical extension of [Prussian] Upper Silesia into the Będzin region of southern Piotrków Province, became the principal center of the mining and metallurgical industries, beginning with the purchase by French capital of four coal mines and the Huta Bankowa steel mill from the Russian state in the late 1870s. Aided by the further influx of foreign, mainly German, capital as well as by Russian protective tariffs, the Dąbrowa Basin by 1890 produced over half the country’s pig iron and steel and almost all its coal and zinc.\textsuperscript{48} At the same time, Warsaw became a major center of the Kingdom’s metal industry, employing 18,000 workers (or 43 percent of the city’s industrial labor force) in the first years of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{49} Compared to textiles, heavy industry was considerably less vulnerable to general economic crises, which tended to slow rather than halt its further expansion. For most of the period under consideration, the rapid growth of heavy industry outstripped the influx of new workers. The coal industry, for instance, suffered a perpetual labor shortage.\textsuperscript{50}

Food processing, mainly distilling, brewing, milling, and especially, sugar beet-refining, was the Kingdom’s third-most-important industrial sector. The oldest and most traditional of the country’s industries, food processing was closely tied to the agrarian economy and dominated by small factories on manorial estates up to approximately 1870. Many of these plants collapsed after the emancipation of the peasantry and the loss of servile labor; between 1855 and 1897, the number of distilleries and breweries was cut in half, the number of sugar refineries by 20 percent.\textsuperscript{51} As the significance of landed capital in the food industry lessened, merchant and bank capital grew in importance, primarily through the formation of joint-stock companies. Expansion of the industry occurred largely as a result of investments in new technologies and substantial growth in labor productivity. Between 1870 and 1914, sugar and beer production increased eightfold, and alcohol production grew fourfold. Over the same period, however, employment increased by only 40 percent, from 19.3 to 26.6 thousand workers.\textsuperscript{52} Unlike textiles and heavy industry, the food processing

\textsuperscript{47} Pietrzak-Pawlowska, “Przewrót,” pp. 81–82.
\textsuperscript{49} Anna Żarnowska, \textit{Robotnicy Warszawy na przełomie XIX i XX wieku} (Warsaw, 1985), p. 18.
\textsuperscript{50} Ziemba, \textit{Kształtowanie się proletariatu Dąbrowskiego}, pp. 39–41.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., pp. 288–290.
industry was not geographically concentrated. Distilleries, for example, were scattered throughout the Polish countryside, whereas breweries tended to be located in urban areas. The food processing industry could therefore be as important to the economy of Warsaw, where it was the third-most-important source of industrial employment, as it was to rural Siedlce Province, where the Elżbietów sugar beet manufacturing plant was the largest industrial enterprise, employing 367 workers in 1904.53

In line with patterns elsewhere in Europe, industrialization in the Kingdom was accompanied by urbanization. Between 1865 and 1897, the urban population increased by 131.3 percent compared with a 77.2 percent demographic increase for the country as a whole. In 1865, one out of every five inhabitants of the Kingdom lived in a city or larger town; in 1897, one out of every four; in 1913, one out of every three. Urbanization was particularly pronounced on the west bank of the Vistula River, where 80 percent of the urban population resided. Piotrków Province, for example, experienced a 376 percent increase in urban population between 1865 and 1897. By contrast, the proportion of urban inhabitants to total population actually declined in Siedlce Province on the Vistula’s east bank. Nevertheless, by 1897, thirty-two cities in the Kingdom had more than ten thousand inhabitants, with Warsaw and Łódź accounting for half of the country’s total urban population.

The cities and towns were also primarily responsible for the multinational character of Russian Poland. Although the Polish element dominated the countryside and constituted almost three-quarters of the total population, only 48.2 percent of the urban population was Polish in 1897. Nevertheless, as a result of wage migration from the villages, the Polish element was primarily responsible for the demographic increase in urban areas. This growth occurred primarily at the expense of the Jews, who in 1865 accounted for 47.1 percent of the urban population. Although steadily declining as a percentage of total urban population, Jews still were 38.6 percent of all urban dwellers in 1897 (compared with a 13.7 percent share of the Kingdom’s total population). Like the Jews, the German and Russian elements of the population were primarily urban ones, accounting for 6 and 4 percent of the urban population, respectively. The former provided a significant proportion of the capital and skilled labor required by industrialization, especially in the textile industry, while the latter group was made up largely of state officials and their families. The census category of “others” in the urban population would have included French, Czechs,

English, Estonians, Ukrainians, and Lithuanians, although the latter two groups were predominantly rural in character, concentrated in the easternmost counties of the Kingdom. In 1904 the population of Warsaw, the Kingdom’s largest city, stood at more than three-quarters of a million inhabitants, having increased more than three times in less than forty years. The most dynamic growth rates were recorded in the period 1895–1900, when the city’s population increased by over 150,000. Natural increase and migration shared equally in stimulating the city’s demographic growth, although in the most dynamic years before the turn of century, the latter accounted for 65.3 percent of the increase in population. According to the census of 1897, 47.7 percent of the city’s inhabitants were born outside of Warsaw. In the suburbs, where most of the city’s larger industrial plants and a sizable proportion of the working-class population were located, that figure stood at 56.1 percent. In comparison with Łódź or the industrial settlements of the Będzin region in the Dąbrowa Basin, migrants to Warsaw came from farther afield; nevertheless, the surrounding Warsaw Province provided the main source, followed by the adjacent counties of Plock and Siedlce provinces. According to official statistics, 44.4 percent of Warsaw’s population was “professionally active” (a term that does not embrace family members helping in small artisanal shops, a practice quite common among Warsaw’s Jews, who were one-third of the population). Of the city’s “professionally active” inhabitants, 36 percent relied on industry and artisanal trades as the main source of income, 19.3 percent on commerce, 12.8 percent on domestic and personal services, 9.9 percent on administration and the free professions, 6.6 percent on day labor, 6.5 percent on transportation and communications, and 4.7 percent on “unearned income.”

The growth of Łódź, the Kingdom’s second-largest city and center of its textile industry, was even more phenomenal. Little more than a sleepy hamlet at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Łódź counted 33,000 inhabitants by 1865 and 314,000 by 1897. In contrast to Warsaw, Łódź had a large German minority (18 percent of the population in 1897), which played a crucial role in transforming the city into the country’s most im-

54. For the best overall treatment of the Kingdom’s urbanization, see Maria Nietyksza, Rozwój miast i aglomeracji miejsko-przemysłowych w Królestwie Polskim, 1865–1914 (Warsaw, 1986); see also Ryszard Kołodziejczyk, Miasta, mieszkaństwo, burżuazja w Polsce w XIX wieku (Warsaw, 1979).

portant industrial center. The city’s great textile barons were predominantly of German origin, and Germans were strongly represented among factory technicians and foremen. Nevertheless, that minority was rapidly losing ground to Poles (48.3 percent), many of whom had recently arrived from the countryside, as well as to Jews (31.4 percent), whose numbers had increased both naturally and as a result of migration from the empire’s western provinces.56

Łódź was a classically proletarian city; in numbers of industrial workers it was third in the Russian Empire, behind Moscow and St. Petersburg, on the eve of the 1905 revolution. According to data compiled by the Factory Inspectorate, 76,500 workers were employed by 547 factories, the vast majority in the textile industry. Another 6,000 cottage workers, classified among 23,000 independent artisans in official statistics, also derived their income from the textile industry. Among the city’s textile workers, women formed nearly half the labor force, and the employment of minor children was commonplace until the late 1880s. The city was continually overwhelmed by the onslaught of new migrants from the countryside; well over half of the city’s inhabitants in the 1890s were first-generation residents, and the proportion was considerably higher in the unincorporated industrial suburbs of Widzew and Bałuty.57 Not surprisingly, the growth of institutions such as schools, hospitals, and libraries did not keep pace with population growth, prompting one scholar to refer to Łódź as “the most [culturally] backward city in the Russian state.”58

Urbanization in the Będzin area of the Dąbrowa Basin, the Kingdom’s third major industrial region, was peculiar in that there were no major concentrations of population similar to Warsaw or Łódź. Nevertheless, the population of Sosnowiec, the largest city in the region, increased from nine thousand in 1886 to fifty-seven thousand in 1904.59 Other centers of urban population, although still treated as rural communes in official statistics, included Dąbrowa, Czeladź, and Zawiercie, not to mention the county seat of Będzin. The region as a whole experienced a fivefold increase in population between 1867 and 1912, with the peak period falling in the last five years of the nineteenth century. In comparison with Warsaw and Łódź, the Polish element was far more dominant in the Dąbrowa Basin, constituting over 86.5 percent of the total population.60 Like Łódź, the Dąbrowa

56. Kołodziejczyk, Miasta, p. 79; Korzec, Walki rewolucyjne, p. 31.
59. Kołodziejczyk, Miasta, p. 70.
60. Nietyksza, Rozwój miast, p. 304.
Basin was characterized by the numerical dominance of its working-class population (56.8 percent of total inhabitants in 1897). Yet there was much greater occupational diversity among that population; 27.3 percent of the regional labor force was employed by the mining industry, 17.9 percent by the metal and metallurgical industries, 10.4 percent by the textile industry. Although the organization of educational, cultural, and health-care institutions in the Dąbrowa Basin left much to be desired, the situation was much better than in Łódź. In 1897, 48 percent of the adult population of the Dąbrowa Basin could read and write compared with a less than 40 percent literacy rate in Łódź.61

As impressive as the Kingdom’s industrialization and urbanization were statistically, they must be viewed in their proper context. To be sure, the total value of industrial production exceeded that of agriculture by the turn of the century. Two-thirds of the population nevertheless continued to live in the countryside, and agriculture remained the major source of income for a majority of the Kingdom’s inhabitants. Within industry itself, modern

methods and machines existed side by side with antiquated equipment and more traditional production processes. The transportation of coal directly from the mines, for instance, was based exclusively on human labor and draft animals until World War I. In the textile industry, the abundance of cheap labor and the persistence of the cottage system hindered the introduction of technological innovations, which in turn contributed to a period of stagnation in the first years of the twentieth century.

Similarly, urbanization, which proceeded quite dramatically in the country’s western provinces, had only a minimal impact east of the Vistula. Moreover, a substantial portion of the urban population retained social and economic ties to the countryside. In cities like Łódź, adaptation to changing conditions was perhaps more difficult for native urban dwellers continually overwhelmed by peasant migrants than it was for the migrants themselves.

In reality, the Kingdom could be considered “advanced” only in the context of the tremendous backwardness of the entire Russian Empire; compared with western Europe, the Kingdom continued to lag far behind. What is more, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the Kingdom’s industry was losing the privileged place in the very Russian sales markets that had stimulated its expansion the previous twenty years. Already in the
1890s, during Sergei Witte’s tenure as minister of finance, the Kingdom was subjected to discriminatory policies in taxation, state investment, and rail freight rates in order to protect Russian industries from Polish competition. At the same time, the technological gap between Polish and Russian industry began to close, depriving the former of its competitive edge in the eastern markets. Consequently, exports to Russia of Polish manufactured goods, particularly of the textile and metallurgical industries, declined appreciably in the first years of the twentieth century, while imports of Russian industrial products increased. By 1910, for example, pig iron from the Donets Basin had captured 42.8 percent of the Kingdom’s market, symbolizing a dramatic shift in the terms of trade.62

Partial modernization, uneven development, and overreliance on Russian markets thus characterized the Kingdom’s industrial economy just before the 1905 revolution. Not surprisingly, that economy had just entered a state of crisis and adjustment to new market conditions created by Russian industrialization. Economic stagnation rather than expansion was the rule in the first decade of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, the transformational processes of the previous fifty years had already made deep imprints on Polish society, and the long-term trends were irreversible. For better or worse, the Kingdom of Poland had entered the modern industrial age. A

large but not entirely stabilized class of industrial workers had emerged, constituting about 10 percent of the country’s population. Even more than the emancipated peasantry, the factory proletariat was destined to become the new focal point of Polish political strategies.

The Changing Nature of Polish Politics

In the forty years between the collapse of the January Insurrection and the first rumblings of the 1905 revolution, Polish political thought retained many of the divisions and much of the diversity that had characterized it since the partitions of the eighteenth century. Although some scholars prefer to reduce that diversity to a few easily manageable categories for didactic purposes, actual historical experience reveals many conflicting and converging political tendencies. More important than categories and labels, however, is the social and economic setting in which political thought is formulated. In the Kingdom of Poland at the end of the nineteenth century, peasant emancipation and industrialization revolutionized the context of Polish politics and created conditions favorable to the formulation and adoption of ideologies that anticipated the rise of modern mass movements.

The collapse of the January Insurrection, followed by the dramatic shift in the European balance of power in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War and German unification, brought a definite end to the romantic era of Polish history. Russian retribution removed the szlachta as the dominant force in Polish politics, thereby eliminating the principal social base of the insurrectionary tradition. Shortly thereafter, Prussia’s victory over France dashed any lingering hope for assistance from the West. The “Polish question,” once at the center of European diplomacy, now disappeared into oblivion. Not surprisingly, demoralization and resignation spread among the politically conscious and active strata of Polish society. At home, conspiracies were denounced as suicidal, the insurrectionary past condemned. Abroad, Władysław Czartoryski closed the “Polish Embassy” at the Hotel Lambert in Paris, the center of efforts for over thirty years to gain diplomatic support for the cause of Polish independence.

Such a political climate gave rise to the philosophy known as “Triple

63 See particularly Adam Bromke, Poland’s Politics: Idealism versus Realism (Cambridge, Mass., 1967). Jerzy Jedlicki’s Jakiej cywilizacji Polacy potrzebują: Studia z dziejów idei i wyobraźni XIX wieku (Warsaw, 1988) is the most reliable guide to the complexity and diversity of Polish political thought for the entire period of the partitions. More specific to the period embraced by my book are Wilhelm Feldman, Dzieje polskiej myśli politycznej, 1864–1914 (Warsaw, 1933), and Wereszycki, Historia polityczna Polski.
Loyalism." Too frequently, Triple Loyalism has been characterized as an abject political prostration at the feet of the three empires that had partitioned Poland. Actually, it was a rather sophisticated program that considered loyal behavior toward the partitioning governments as the necessary, if evil, condition for the continued cultural existence and material progress of Polish lands. Its practitioners, moreover, were not of one mind. For ultramontane conservative periodicals like the Kraków-based Czas (Time) or Dziennik Poznański (The Poznań Daily) in Prussian Poland, Triple Loyalism meant not only resignation from the "hopeless" cause of Polish independence but also entrusting the preservation of the existing social order to Europe's conservative monarchies. By contrast the young Kraków conservatives who made up the Stańczyk group, though opposed to the spirit of Polish irredentism, were nevertheless considerably more accommodating to social and economic change.64

In Russian Poland, right-wing loyalism found a natural representative in the figure of Zygmunt Wielopolski, son of the luckless Aleksander Wie­lopolski, and, as elsewhere on Polish lands, the aristocracy provided its principal constituency. By appealing to the goodwill of the tsar, by seeking a common ground with Russian conservatives based on Pan-Slavism, and by supporting the Russian government's struggle against the revolutionary movement, Wielopolski hoped to gain equal rights for the tsar's Polish subjects and a more decentralized political structure for the Kingdom. Viewed in the light of the tragic aftermath of the January Insurrection and its effect on the collective instinct for self-preservation, Wielopolski's modest program offered a "realistic" alternative to total political apathy and quietism. After Leo XIII's concordat with the Russian government in 1883, Wielopolski's program won the tacit support of the reinstated Polish episcopate and became the basis for an informal clerical-conservative alliance.

Kraj (The Country), a social and literary weekly published in St. Petersburg and associated primarily with the figures of Włodzimierz Spasowicz and Erazm Piltz, represented a somewhat more moderate strain of loyalism. Like Wielopolski, Kraj's political program emphasized conciliation with Russia, but more in terms of the Russian intelligentsia than the tsarist government. Indeed Kraj openly criticized that government, particularly its policies of russification. Kraj, too, was influenced by Pan-Slavic currents and acknowledged the hegemonic role of Russia in the Slavic movement. Yet in contrast to Wielopolski and his adherents, its editors polemicized

64. For an interesting discussion of the Stańczyk group of Kraków conservatives, see Marcin Król's introduction to Stańczycy: Antologia myśli społecznej i politycznej konserwatystów krakowskich (Warsaw, 1985), pp. 5–37.
with conservative Russian Pan-Slavists who accused the Poles of betraying Slavic interests. Finally, *Kraj* was much more emphatic in its promotion of economic and cultural "organic work" as the principal means of assuring the continued existence of the Polish nation. As censorship was much less severe in St. Petersburg than in Warsaw, *Kraj* was able to attract and publish many of the most important Polish authors of the day, including Henryk Sienkiewicz and Eliza Orzeszkowa, making it for a time the most informative and widely read periodical in Russian Poland.

The problem with loyalism and conciliation in Russian Poland, whether of the clerical-conservative or more progressive variety represented by *Kraj*, was that the concessions and goodwill necessary to their minimal political viability were not forthcoming from the Russian side. The Gurko-Apukhtin era of systematic russification could not but undermine Wielopolski's efforts to legitimate Russian rule in Polish eyes, while the majority of educated Russians remained distrustful of even the most moderately formulated Polish policies, always suspecting them as covers for Polish separatism. Unable to demonstrate any concrete political dividends as a result of their policies, the loyalists and conciliationists in Russian Poland failed to attract more than a narrow upper-class following. As for the rank-and-file nobility, or what was left of it after 1864, this potential constituency of conservative politics found it difficult to find common ground with a Russian government that had long abrogated its traditional rights and privileges and had purposefully reduced its property.

Despite these obstacles, loyalism and conciliation were given one last chance with the death of Alexander III in 1894, his succession by Nicholas II, and the departure of Gurko and Apukhtin from the Kingdom. Nicholas's visit to Warsaw in 1897 and the tsar's permission for the unveiling of a monument dedicated to Adam Mickiewicz, the great bard of Polish romanticism, briefly raised the hopes of Polish conservatism for substantive changes in Russian policy. These hopes were dashed within a year, however, by the disclosure and publication of a secret memorial of the new Warsaw governor-general, Prince Imeretinskii, in which Gurko's "liberal successor" ridiculed the political impotence of the Polish conservatives. More damaging to the loyalist-conciliationist camp was the continuation and, in some cases, extension of the denationalization measures of the preceding era.

The decline and gradual disappearance of the Polish szlachta, the tra-

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65. On *Kraj*, see particularly Zenon Kmiecik, "Kraj" za czasów redaktorstwa Erazma Pil-{
66. Wandycz, *Lands of Partitioned Poland*, p. 280. In the first years of the twentieth century, for example, the provincial Russian bureaucracy made an unsuccessful effort to eliminate Polish as a permitted language for the instruction of religion.
Triumphal Gate and street decorations on the occasion of the visit of Tsar Nicholas II to Warsaw, 1897. (Muzeum Niepodległości 22412)

ditional social base for all political activity, whether conservative or revolutionary, made it increasingly unlikely for that group to play an influential, let alone leading, role in any case. Driven from the land by Russian policies and adverse economic conditions, many bankrupt noblemen migrated to the cities in the 1880s. According to the imperial census of 1897, two-thirds of those officially classified as gentry lived in cities, where they made up the majority of recruits for a newly emerging urban intelligentsia.67 Indeed, this first generation of intelligentsia of noble descent coincided roughly with the first generation of industrial workers of peasant background; both came to the cities in search of work. Some displaced gentry found employment in the lower levels of the state administration, particularly the postal and rail bureaucracies. Others were able to turn to the private sector or to the free professions, and a narrow stratum—the “creative intelligentsia”—earned a living from cultural pursuits or journalism. It was among this intelligentsia, in its first generation career-minded and apolitical, that the liberal philosophy of Warsaw positivism with its emphasis on “organic work” found its principal audience.68

Compared to Triple Loyalism, the positivism of August Comte as it applied to Polish conditions was considerably more forward-looking. Harking back to the traditions of the Polish Enlightenment, Warsaw positivism based itself on a firm belief in reason, science, material progress, and education as keys to the nation’s future. Reformist in outlook, but politically passive, Warsaw positivism rejected both political loyalty and insurrectionary irredentism. Instead, positivism called on the “enlightened classes” to participate in “organic work” that aimed at quietly transforming a traditional society into a modern one as the only means of preserving the national existence. Arguing that the only field for Polish “conquests” was in the advance of civilization, Aleksander Świętochowski, Warsaw positivism’s leading exponent, wrote, “If a supreme omnipotent force offered us a choice between 500,000 soldiers and the same number of knowledgeable people, we would take the latter.”

Superficially apolitical, in practice positivism could not be separated from politics. The positivists’ designation of the nascent Polish bourgeoisie as the leading class in the nation’s future, as well as their critique of the nobility’s role in the nation’s past, invited attacks from traditional conservatives. The ultramontane clergy, for its part, accused the positivists of loosening social bonds as a result of their liberal positions on divorce, the emancipation of women, and Jewish assimilation. Positivism’s espousal of materialism, modernism, and secular education also brought on a strong clerical reaction.

In time, however, the principal challenge to positivism came from the left of the political spectrum, particularly from the emerging nationalist and socialist movements, which derided Świętochowski and the Warsaw positivists for their apolitical reformism in the face of belligerent russification. Like conservative loyalism, positivism was undermined by the uncompromising nature of Russian policies, which in the latter case rendered meaningful “organic work” next to impossible. The fact that the Kingdom’s emerging entrepreneurial bourgeoisie in the last decades of the nineteenth century was largely non-Polish and partially absentee, a varied group more interested in maximizing profits than in playing the philanthropic and cultural role assigned to it by the positivists, further played into the hands of liberalism’s leftist opponents. Finally, the coming of age in the late 1880s and early 1890s, of a second, more politically impatient generation.

70. On the political exchange between the Warsaw positivists and their conservative opponents, see Andrzej Jaszczyk, Spór pozytywistów z konserwatystami o przyszłość Polski, 1870–1903 (Warsaw, 1986).
of the intelligentsia devoid of personal memories of the tragedy that accompanied the ill-fated January Insurrection, also led to a search for more activist solutions. Given these circumstances, the intelligentsia in Russian Poland never did become a real substitute for the native, reforming middle class of Western tradition, nor would it create a significant political vehicle of progressive liberalism like the Constitutional Democratic Party in Russia. Nevertheless, both the early nationalists and the socialists owed an intellectual debt to positivism. The former eventually adopted much of the positivists’ economic and social agenda, and positivism’s materialist philosophy and emphasis on scientific method definitely influenced the latter.71

The emergence of the modern ideologies of nationalism and socialism marked a transformation in Polish political thought, if not yet a transformation of Polish political culture. Before the revolutionary period, the nationalist and socialist movements had not attained the status of true mass movements. Effectively confined to the underground by the Russian bureaucratic-police system, conspiratorial elites formed primarily from the intelligentsia dominated both camps in their prerevolutionary phase. As political ideologies, however, nationalism and socialism already enjoyed greater popular appeal and a broader social base than either conservative loyalism or liberal positivism. What set them apart was their call for active opposition to Russian rule and the existing political status quo at a time of fluid economic and social change. The ascendancy of nationalism and socialism also coincided with a general reaction among younger intellectuals to the “realism” of the older generation, symbolized by the neo-romantic Młoda Polska (Young Poland) movement in literature, theater, and the arts.

Of the two popular political currents, nationalism proved far more ideologically, and therefore organizationally, cohesive. The birth of the modern Polish nationalist movement is usually associated with three interrelated events: the founding of the Warsaw-based populist periodical Głos (The Voice) in 1886, the formation of the Polish League (Liga Polska) by émigré Polish democrats in 1887, and the creation of a radical student organization known as “Zet” (a popular acronym for the Union of Polish Youth) in the same year. The appearance of Głos, whose most important contributor was Jan Ludwik Popławski, signaled the emergence of a new generation unwilling to accept positivist prescriptions for the nation’s survival. Appealing to the radical and democratic aspirations of this generation, Głos called for mass political action as the only effective form of opposition to

russification. Meanwhile, émigré Polish democrats led by Col. Zygmunt Miłkowski (also known by the pseudonym T. T. Jeż) and relatively silent since the collapse of the Paris Commune and many of their revolutionary hopes, seized the organizational initiative. The publication of Miłkowski’s brochure ‘‘On Active Defense and the National Treasury’’ was both an antipositivist manifesto and the founding document of the nationalist movement. Shortly thereafter, with funds unexpectedly pouring into Miłkowski’s ‘‘national treasury,’’ the decision was made to form the Polish League with the aim of coordinating a renewed struggle for Polish independence. Through its energetic emissary and one-time socialist sympathizer Zygmunt Balicki, the Polish League then inspired the organization of Zet, a clandestine organization of Polish students enrolled in universities both at home and abroad. Together with Głos, Zet subsequently recognized the leadership of the Polish League in the so-called camp of action.

In its formative stage, Polish nationalism represented a mixture of radical populist, democratic, and socialist elements dedicated to the restoration of a unified Polish state. Both the Polish League and Zet were organized along masonic-like conspiratorial lines that kept the movement lean in terms of active members, if not sympathizers. For example, Zet had only eighty-five members in Russian Poland a year after its creation. Then in 1893, the nationalist movement entered a new phase in its development as a result of an internal coup that wrested leadership from Miłkowski and the émigrés. Engineered by Roman Dmowski, a former Zet activist, with Balicki’s cooperation, the coup led to the transformation of the Polish League into the National League (Liga Narodowa), which in turn marked the beginning of far-reaching organizational and ideological changes. Dmowski, whose name became virtually synonymous with Polish nationalism, quickly sought to remove freemasonry’s liberal and cosmopolitan traditions from the movement. While recognizing the need for preserving the conspiratorial and elitist nature of the league itself, Dmowski worked to give the rest of the movement a more open character as well as a larger ‘‘all-Polish’’ focus (instead of its previous preoccupation with Russian Poland). This was accomplished through the publication of Przegląd Wszechpolski (The All-Polish Review) as the league’s leading organ from 1895 to 1905, the formation of the National Democratic Party as the political arm of the movement in 1897, and, under league sponsorship, the creation of satellite organizations such as the Towarzystwo Oświaty Narodowej (TON, Society for National Education).

The ideological changes after Dmowski’s coup were even more significant. As seen from successive programmatic documents—Dmowski’s Nasz patriotyzm (Our patriotism, 1893); the programs of the National
League published in 1897 and 1903 in *Przegląd Wszechpolski*; Balicki’s *Egoizm narodowej wobec etyki* (National egoism and ethics, 1902); and Dmowski’s *Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka* (Thoughts of a modern Pole, 1903)—the movement abandoned its radical democratic and populist roots for an all-embracing integral nationalism. Gradually, less emphasis was placed on the restoration and reunification of Poland as immediate goals, particularly through an armed insurrection. Instead, more attention was paid to the cultivation of national “instincts” through cultural and educational activities—in other words, through the previously criticized methods of “organic work.” The idealistic rhetoric of the not-so-distant past now gave way to calls for realism and “sobriety.” Similarly, anticlerical polemics were replaced by efforts to reach a modus vivendi with the Catholic church as a “national institution.” The movement also became less tolerant of its political competitors, especially the socialists, as it sought to monopolize expression of the “national interest.” At the same time, it became intolerant of other nationalities inhabiting “Polish lands,” particularly Jews and Ukrainians. Under Dmowski’s leadership, the Polish nationalist movement, popularly known as the “Endecja,” evolved into a kind of lower-middle-class populism that characterized other nationalist movements of the period, particularly in central Europe. Yet the Endecja’s organizational tentacles reached beyond the lower middle-class into all Polish social groups, making it the most formidable political force in the Kingdom by the time of the revolution.72

Polish nationalism’s evolution toward a right-wing orientation was occasioned, at least in part, by the rise of an organized socialist movement. Yet from the beginning, Polish socialism was plagued by bitter factionalism resulting from fundamental differences of opinion over two issues: the movement’s relationship to the question of an independent Polish state and the efficacy of terror as a form of political struggle. The first issue made its appearance already in 1881 when Bolesław Limanowski broke with the Geneva-based socialist publication *Równość* (Equality), whose internationalist program was inspired by Marxian socialism and the previous shared experiences of many early Polish socialists with Russian populists (*narod-*

niki) in the imperial Russian universities. Limanowski, who maintained contacts with Polish democratic circles in emigration and later became a member of the Polish League, argued that the position of Równość ignored the national aspirations of the Polish proletariat through its relegation of Polish independence to a mechanical by-product of a distant social revolution. In setting up the rival, but short-lived, Lud Polski (Polish People) organization, Limanowski put the resolution of the Polish question at the top of the “national socialist” agenda.73

The internationalist wing of the movement, however, was the first to set up a functioning organization on Polish soil known simply as “Proletariat,” later called the “Great Proletariat” to distinguish it from its successors. The organization was led by Ludwik Waryński, whose profound belief in the necessity of common action with Russian revolutionary groups to overthrow the tsarist government led to an alliance with the People’s Will, the terrorist offshoot of the narodniki responsible for the assassination of Alexander II in 1881. Cooperation between the two groups ended in mass arrests by the police in 1886 and the collapse of the Great Proletariat after less than five years of existence. In the meantime, however, Waryński and his comrades had managed to spread socialist propaganda and make organizational inroads among the movement’s principal designated audience, the industrial workers of Warsaw, Łódź, and Żyrardów. Downplaying, if not completely negating, the Polish question from ideological conviction, the leaders of the Great Proletariat mobilized workers by concentrating on their immediate socioeconomic concerns and the organization of mutual aid in the event of strikes.74

After the liquidation of the Great Proletariat, a variety of groups emerged to compete for its legacy. The Second Proletariat, created in 1888, departed from the traditions of its namesake in two important respects. Its leadership in the Kingdom, headed by Ludwik Kulczycki, relied on terrorist tactics as the primary means of political struggle against the Russian autocracy, whereas Waryński and his collaborators had viewed terror only as an an-

cillary weapon for use against traitors and spies. In addition, the Second Proletariat, especially through its Geneva-based theoretical publication Przedświt (Pre-Dawn), rejected Waryński’s emphasis on the necessity of cooperation with the Russian revolutionary movement. It believed that the Kingdom was far riper for revolution than Russia, given its more advanced industrialization, its more settled urban proletariat, and its long-standing tradition of rebellion against tsarist rule. Indeed, Przedświt discounted any revolutionary possibilities in Russia whatsoever after the final collapse of the remnants of the People’s Will organization. The Union of Polish Workers, also organized in 1888, was somewhat closer in spirit to the Great Proletariat. Rejecting the terrorist tactics of Kulczycki and the “national socialism” of Przedświt, the Union of Polish Workers concentrated on economic agitation and illegal trade union activity. Its avoidance of political forms of struggle, however, marked an equally significant departure from the traditions of Waryński’s party.75

The largely unplanned outbreak of a general strike in the Łódź textile industry in 1892, accompanied by street rioting and a brief but bloody struggle from makeshift barricades with Russian troops, caught the various Polish socialist groups by surprise. The suppression of the Łódź riots and mass arrests of socialist activists served as an immediate spur for the liquidation of factions and for the temporary unification of the movement. In emigration, Limanowski and the editorial board of Przedświt seized the initiative in November to create the Union of Polish Socialists Abroad, which was then entrusted with the task of drawing up a program for a united organization. A few months later, representatives of the Union of Polish Workers and the Second Proletariat, preferring that unification take place in the Kingdom, held a conference in Warsaw that called into existence the Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna—PPS). The new party, however, was soon decimated by arrests, leaving the formulation of programmatic principles completely in the hands of the émigrés.

The semblance of socialist unity proved short-lived. The publication of a party program in Przedświt in July 1893, largely the work of Stanisław Mendelson, the organ’s chief editor, reflected the views of the émigrés. By assigning priority to the creation of an independent Polish democratic republic, Przedświt and the Union of Polish Socialists Abroad reopened old

wounds. Shortly thereafter, a rival "Zurich group" led by Rosa Luxemburg and Leon Jogiches began publishing *Sprawa Robotnicza* (The Workers’ Cause), which condemned the "nationalism" of *Przedświt*. At home, dissident elements allied with *Sprawa Robotnicza*, consisting mainly of former members of the Union of Polish Workers, quit the PPS in 1894 to form the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland (SDKP, after 1900 called the SDKPiL as a result of a merger with a small socialist group from Lithuania led by Feliks Dzierżyński). The lines quickly hardened as a result of bitter polemical exchanges between Social Democrats and "social patriots," leaving the long-desired unity of Polish socialism a shambles. To complicate matters even further, Ludwik Kulczycki and his adherents withdrew from the PPS in 1900 in protest of the party’s theoretical rejection of terrorism as well as its neglect of social issues. Yet another organization was created, the PPS-Proletariat (sometimes called the Third Proletariat), which vied with both the PPS and the SDKPiL. When one includes the General Jewish Workers Union, popularly known as the Bund, a Marxist organization active among the Jewish urban poor in Russia’s western provinces and itself soon to be challenged by a Zionist-socialist movement, at least four socialist organizations competed for influence in Russian Poland at the turn of the century.76

If the socialists in the Kingdom of Poland were divided, at least they were active. This was particularly true of the Bund and the PPS. Already by 1892, Jewish socialists had established an efficient organization centered in Vilna, and its theoretical refinement of and experience with "agitation" among Jewish workers influenced both Russian and Polish socialist organizations as they emerged. Although the Bund’s activity in the Kingdom of Poland was somewhat peripheral to its main arena in the empire’s western borderlands, its organizations in Warsaw and Łódź were the equal of those of any Polish socialist party on the eve of the 1905 revolution.77 For its part, the PPS developed a stable organization and an efficient smuggling operation between 1894 and 1900, owing in part to the efforts of Józef Piłsudski, a native of Lithuania and editor of the clandestine *Robotnik* (The Worker). By the end of 1903, the PPS could boast of organized activity in Warsaw, Łódź, the Dąbrowa Basin, Radom, Lublin, and Kalisz; the circulation of party appeals in up to twenty thousand copies; and an annual

76. For a factually accurate but ideologically biased account of the PPS-SDKPiL split, see Jan Kancewicz, *Rozłam w polskim ruchu robotniczym na początku lat dziewięćdziesiątych XIX wieku* (Warsaw, 1961).

budget of eighteen thousand rubles. By contrast, the SDKPiL remained largely confined to Warsaw and Łódź; its appeals were published in usually fewer than five thousand copies; and its activity was financed by a meager budget of fifteen hundred rubles. The organizational apparatus of the PPS-Proletariat was even weaker than that of the SDKPiL, and it displayed no signs of political existence outside of Warsaw.

Despite disunity within the movement, the socialist parties, considered together, posed more than an irritant to the Russian authorities and represented a serious challenge to the Polish nationalist movement. The former considered the socialists, particularly the PPS with its militant striving for independence, the chief threat to the political order in the Kingdom. The latter, seeing in the socialist movement’s slogans of class struggle a negation of its own efforts to achieve social solidarity in pursuit of “national goals,” began courting the traditional elite while simultaneously initiating its own organizational activity among Polish workers. Again, the PPS posed the principal danger, in part because of the perceived radicalism of its social program, but also because of its active disputation of the Endecja’s self-proclaimed monopoly on patriotism. Dmowski and the Endecja countered by pointing to Jewish involvement in the socialist movement as evidence of its “alien” character. The competition for popular support had definitely been joined between nationalists and socialists on the one hand, and among socialists on the other. In the process, the existence of a repressive, autocratic Russian government was sometimes forgotten, lost amid heaps of polemical invective, a telling sign of political immaturity among an ambitious but divided intelligentsia at the head of the emerging popular movements.

As the twentieth century began, hardly anyone save a handful of radical socialists anticipated revolution in the Kingdom of Poland, let alone in the Russian Empire. On the surface, all was relatively calm. Agriculture was

recovering from its prolonged slump, promising the renewed expansion of the domestic market for industrial goods. The grievances of the peasantry, though considerable, did not threaten agrarian revolt. Strikes were occurring with greater frequency in industrial centers, but workers’ demands remained confined to immediate economic issues. The old elite seemed content to follow the path of loyalism and conciliation, despite major setbacks, or simply ignored the state altogether and pursued “organic work.” The patriotic and insurrectionary methods of the Polish nobility may have been transferred after a generation or two to the urban intelligentsia at the head of illegal political movements, but their “parties” still bore more resemblance to conspiratorial sects than to modern mass organizations. The Russian authorities kept close tabs on the situation in the Kingdom but were not overly concerned.

Yet they should have been. For just below the surface seethed a society that had changed greatly since the January Insurrection. The peasants, once emancipated with land, became less politically pliable. Instead, as independent proprietors, they displayed growing resentment of the Russian bureaucracy’s interference in local rural affairs. They were thus partially reconciled to the remnants of the szlachta, whose declining wealth and influence nevertheless served to mitigate ancient class divisions in the countryside. The industrial workers, though chiefly concerned about wages and working conditions, ran up against repressive Russian police measures whenever they tried to improve their lot through the “illegal” means of collective action. Petty discrimination against the Kingdom’s industry exacerbated social tensions by increasing unemployment. While the nonnative and absentee captains of Polish industry could only protest such measures to the Russian government (or just as likely, to foreign embassies and consulates), they also led a group of ethnically Polish entrepreneurs to support the national movement with financial contributions, if not direct participation. Finally, the vast majority of Poles may have reconciled themselves to Russian rule, but they could never accept russification and the attempted eradication of their language, religion, history, and culture. Opposition to russification united all groups in society, from conservative clericalists to revolutionary socialists, and led to the creation of informal networks of passive resistance and ultimately, to alienation from the ruling regime. Thus the situation in the Kingdom was far more delicate than the Russian bureaucracy imagined. The Kingdom may not have been pregnant with revolution, but general dissatisfaction had drawn increasing numbers into active opposition to the regime. When that regime belatedly discovered, in the course of 1904, how widespread that opposition actually was, it came as a something of a shock.