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In contrast to the revolt among urban industrial workers in 1905, with its point of departure clearly marked by the January-February general strike, it is far more difficult to pinpoint the outbreak of revolution in the Polish countryside. On the one hand, although a wave of agrarian strikes swept large areas of rural Poland in the spring of 1905, farm workers were seeking higher wages and improved conditions from landowners—hardly revolutionary demands. The strike movement among farm laborers, moreover, was generally peaceful, and once authorities intervened or employers made concessions (or both), the agrarian strikes quickly ended. "Gmina action," on the other hand, which had already begun to assume the form of a mass movement toward the end of 1904, continued to gain momentum in the first months of 1905. Aided and abetted organizationally by nationalist-inspired agitation and publications, the movement retained a strictly "legalistic" character. Gradually, however, the movement assumed more revolutionary forms, especially when early-summer government concessions on the language and school issues failed to satisfy rural society. By autumn, a majority of gmina assemblies were in open revolt against the government, expressing their alienation in a flood of increasingly radical resolutions. No longer content merely to limit the arbitrary exercise of state authority by the Russian bureaucracy, rural inhabitants now sought to replace it with locally derived, popular Polish authority.

To a considerable extent, the growing assertiveness of the gmina movement, its radicalization, and its departure from the cautious and legalistic methods set by the Endecja coincided with the near breakdown of Russian state authority in the Polish countryside. It would take several months of martial law before a semblance of that control could be restored in the
spring of 1906. In the meantime, the paralysis that struck Russian administration and police at the local level had profound consequences that extended beyond the state’s inability to check the activities of unruly gmina assemblies. Villagers frequently took the law into their own hands, whether in resolving property and easement rights (servitudes) disputes or in carrying out vigilant justice against real and suspected thieves. The breakdown of state authority also facilitated a violent turn in long-standing ethnic and religious animosities, particularly in the eastern counties of Russian Poland. Worse still from the government’s point of view, the countryside provided a safe haven, indeed a supporting base, for the terrorist activities of “revolutionary” bands. Small wonder, then, that reports of local officials in the last months of 1905 and the first months of 1906 spoke, in alarming terms, of rural anarchy and insurgency.

Revolution, most assuredly, came to the Polish countryside. That it failed to assume the Russian form of a wave of violence against the manors, though of great moment to latter-day Marxist historians, was immaterial to Russian bureaucrats and police on the scene in 1905 and 1906. In pleading his case with the Ministry of Internal Affairs for introducing martial law throughout the Kingdom of Poland in November 1905, Warsaw governor-general George Skalon placed special emphasis on the disaffection of the peasantry, the stratum of Polish society the government had long considered most amenable to Russian rule. It was therefore in the countryside that the government suffered its most serious setback. Its forty-year operating policy in the Kingdom of Poland, based on a presumption of eternal peasant gratitude and loyalty to the throne for state-sponsored emancipation, had now become completely useless. Instead, it would take extraordinary means of repression afforded by martial law and emergency rule to bring an end to the revolution in rural Poland.

Agrarian Strikes

Although it is difficult to find anything revolutionary in the agrarian strikes of the spring of 1905, they nevertheless assumed the form of a purely self-generated mass movement. As already mentioned, the full-time farm worker, or ordynariusz, stood at the bottom of the social and eco-

economic order in Russian Poland and endured wretched working and living conditions. Moreover, no political party, including the socialist organizations, paid much attention to farm workers before 1905. In contrast to their activities among other social groups, the parties made no attempt to organize farm workers in defense of their economic interests or to mobilize them for political purposes. Leadership for a movement therefore had to come from the agricultural workers themselves.

The inspiration for the strikes came from several sources. There was the already-noted decline in wages paid to farm workers in money and kind during the first years of the twentieth century despite the general recovery of agriculture from the agrarian crisis of the preceding decades. The January–February strike of industrial workers, particularly when joined by employees of sugar refineries located in the countryside, also influenced agrarian workers, sometimes directly. Indeed, the first strikes can be traced to the action of employees of the Elżbietów sugar refinery in Sokółów County of Siedlce Province. On February 21, approximately one hundred workers from Elżbietów appeared on the nearby Ruchna estate belonging to Count Lubieński, where they persuaded farmhands to leave their jobs and join them as they proceeded to neighboring estates. By February 27, the date the Elżbietów workers settled with refinery management, twenty-seven estates in Sokółów County had been struck.

The slow, contradictory, and equivocal response of estate owners and government officials to the strikes also played an important role, if not in their inspiration, then in their rapid expansion. As the strikes spread from Sokółów to Węgrów County, landowners provided the crowd of striking workers with lodging, bread, kielbasa, money, and even horses and wagons as it roamed from estate to estate. Not a single landowner in either county turned to the authorities for help. On the Ceranów estate, according to police reports, farm workers were even permitted to hold a dance in the manor kitchen. When the Land Guard arrived, the proprietor himself turned the rural police away, informing them that “the county chief has no right to interfere with the workers on his estate and that the workers will return to their jobs when it pleases him and them.” The conciliatory attitude of landowners in Sokółów and Węgrów counties and their willing concessions to the strikers’ economic demands undoubtedly contributed to the spread of the strike to six estates in Konstantynów County, where, however,

5. AGAD KGGW 2525, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, February 12 (25), 1905.
the atmosphere, was less festive. The landowner Zaborowski refused the crowd’s demand for money, and, as a result, his son was taken hostage. For the first time, troops were dispatched to the scene. The mere news of their approach together with the intervention of the Huszlew parish priest provided sufficient argument for the crowd to disperse and release the younger Zaborowski.6

By that time, the movement had already spread to Lublin Province, where it acquired even greater momentum. Here the estate owners proved far more recalcitrant, the crowds more coercive, and local authorities less prepared to intervene effectively, especially where the conflict pitted Orthodox workers against Catholic employers. Before March ended, 358 agrarian strikes had been recorded in eight counties of Lublin Province, compared with 129 strikes in Siedlce Province, the original center of the movement, and 573 for the entire Kingdom.7 Only in Nowa-Aleksandria (Pulawy) County, where individual proprietors expressed quick agreement to meet workers’ demands provided that other estates followed suit, could landowners be accused by authorities of abetting the strike movement’s expansion.8 By contrast, panic-stricken landowners in ethnically mixed Krasnystaw, Hrubieszów, and Zamość counties preferred to appeal to authorities for military protection against the crowds rather than negotiate workers’ demands.9 In Chelm County a dozen Polish landowners telegraphed the acting Lublin governor to complain bitterly about the inactivity of the authorities, which, in their opinion, encouraged roaming bands of Orthodox (mainly Ukrainian) workers to make threats, demand money, and force a suspension of work on local estates.10

Toward the end of March, the authorities finally began to take active measures, prompted by the pressure of landowners and the threat to public order posed by the swelling size of the crowds. Immediately upon receipt of the landowners’ petitions and complaints, the Lublin governor issued a proclamation warning that attacks on the property of the landed class, as well as the making of demands accompanied by coercion and threats, would be tried by courts-martial.11 Simultaneously, he demanded that

6. AGAD KGGW 2525, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, February 26 (March 11), 1905.
9. AGAD KGGW 2513, Telegrams of the Minister of Internal Affairs to the WGG, March 7 (20) and March 21 (April 3), 1905.
10. Kalabiński, Carat i klasy posiadające, pp. 88–89.
11. APL KGL 1905:120, Proclamation of the Lublin Governor, March 8 (21), 1905.
county officials use armed force to disperse the crowds and arrest "agitators." To assist them, several companies of Cossacks were then dispatched to Chelm, Krasnystaw, and Lubartów counties, where the use of infantry had earlier proved ineffective against the crowds. Smaller units were also sent to Zamość and Hrubieszów counties.

As in Siedlce Province, the authorities' employment of military force brought the agrarian strike movement to a rapid halt. By the time a company of Don Cossacks was dispatched to a dozen estates in Chelm County in the last days of March, the disturbances had already ended and farm workers had returned to the fields. Elsewhere the crowds dispersed without resistance when faced with military force. The arrest of approximately five hundred "agitators," "organizers," and "active personal participants" also served to pacify the farm workers in Lublin Province. The subsequent sentencing of those arrested, however, was relatively lenient. In Krasnystaw County, for example, of the 121 arrested during the spring strikes, the authorities sentenced 34 to a mere five days in jail and placed the remainder under police surveillance.

Nieszawa, Kutno, and Włocławek counties of Warsaw Province, together with adjacent Koło County in Kalisz Province, formed the third major center of the agrarian strike movement of the early spring. Wages paid farm workers in this region, especially in comparison with Siedlce and Lublin provinces, were relatively high. The strikes in Włocławek County, for example, occurred on "model estates" where workers' conditions were reputed to be the best in the Kingdom. As in Lublin and Siedlce provinces, the strikes were spread by impulsively formed crowds of two to five hundred workers which dispersed immediately, however, when confronted by military force. The one exception, and the only tragedy of the strike movement, took place at the Łanięta estate in Kutno County and resulted in twelve deaths. According to subsequent testimony of the owner of Łanięta, Marian Kiniorski, the farm workers did not understand the demand to disperse, made in Russian, by the captain of the county Land Guard; instead they believed that he had called them to gather around him. As the crowd pressed in, the captain ordered the troops to fire.

12. Kalabiński, Carat i klasy posiadające, pp. 88–89.
18. AGAD KGGW 2501, Warsaw Governor to the WGG, March 4 (17) and March 7 (20), 1905, and 2506, Kalisz Governor to the WGG, March 10 (23), 1905.
19. AGAD KGGW 2501, Petition of Marian Kiniorski to the WGG, March 18 (31), 1905.
Despite the resort to repression, the authorities were not entirely unsympathetic to the plight of farm workers. Ethnic and religious considerations partially informed official attitudes, particularly in the eastern counties of Lublin and Siedlce provinces where Orthodox peasants, many of them former Uniates, labored for Polish proprietors. The pitiful condition of agrarian laborers and the purely economic nature of their demands also impressed authorities. As soon as the strikes ended in Zamość and Krasnystaw counties, for example, local authorities expressed the opinion that most of the farm workers' demands were justified and encouraged gmina officials to take up the matter with landowners.20 Such views seemed to pervade upper levels of the bureaucracy as well. Later in the summer when farmhands at the Piaski Wielkie estate in Lublin County struck, the Lublin governor himself labored hard to budge landowner Józef Drecki toward concessions, justifying his intervention by the fact that the conditions of Drecki's workers were far worse than on neighboring estates.21

Elsewhere in the Kingdom, provincial officials sought to persuade landowners to raise the standard of living of their workers as a preventive measure. Such methods were particularly successful in Łomża Province, where the only strike of the spring was a one-day walkout by seven work-

21. AGAD KGGW 2514, Lublin Governor to the WGG, July 13 (26), 1905.
ers on an estate in Mazowieck County.  

Indeed, for all of April, reports of agrarian strikes came from only three counties of the Kingdom. The movement then flared up again in May in the western counties of Warsaw Province, the northern (Lithuanian) part of Suwałki Province, and two counties of Plock Province. In June and July, agrarian strikes were largely confined to the Lithuanian counties of Suwałki Province. In November, the strike movement returned to the western part of Warsaw Province, affecting estates that had not improved workers' conditions in the spring and summer. Never again, however, would the agrarian strike movement achieve the size and degree of success of the spring, when the vast majority of all agricultural strikes in 1905 occurred.

In the course of the year, agricultural strikes took place in forty-one of the Kingdom's eighty-four counties, affecting some 740 estates. According to one estimate, strikes occurred on approximately half the Kingdom's 1,300 large estates, that is, those larger than 1,400 acres. At least 600 of these estates were located in Lublin, Siedlce, and Warsaw provinces, the centers of the spring strike movement. Smaller estates employing but a few workers, more typical of the rest of Russian Poland, were largely unaffected by the strikes.

Crowd behavior and workers' demands during the agrarian strikes followed similar general patterns, although with some interesting variations. Everywhere the strikes occurred, they spread like a contagion as groups of workers roamed from estate to estate, gathering up new strikers in crowds that changed in size and composition as they went. In Krasnystaw and Zamość counties of Lublin Province, farm workers participated in the initiation of six strikes before returning to their own estates. In Koło and Nieszawa counties of central Poland, workers returned home after initiating four strikes. Through such rotational shifts, sufficient manpower was secured for spreading the strike to the next estate. A few workers, however, always remained behind to take care of the livestock.

The crowds, though generally peaceful, were not entirely nonviolent. Actual physical attacks on landowners or destruction of manorial property were extremely rare. More commonplace were threats aimed at extracting from owners small amounts of money and food, and sometimes

22. AGAD KGGW 2510, Łomża Governor to the WGG, March 11 (24), 1905; Kalabiński and Tych, Warki chłopów 1: 427–429.
26. Ibid.; AGAD KGGW 2506, Kalisz Governor to the WGG, March 10 (23), 1905.
lodging, to sustain the crowd as it moved on to other estates. As most proprietors readily accepted these demands, the threats were seldom carried out. When they were, the usual consequence was a few broken windows. More frequently, estate officials were coerced into joining the crowd or leaving the estate. The crowd also administered beatings to workers who refused to strike. The coercion and violence that accompanied the agrarian strikes, however, paled in comparison with that perpetrated by crowds of industrial workers. Moreover, although the rural police in their small numbers usually proved insufficient to disperse the crowds of striking farm workers, there were no instances of resistance to military armed force.27

Strikers naturally sought improvements in monetary wages and in the size of the ordynaria, the payments many of them received in kind. Farm workers in Siedlce Province claimed that the tsar himself supported their demands for doubling their wages and ordynaria as well as for a nine-hour working day.28 In Lublin County, striking farm workers uniformly demanded wage increases from twenty to thirty rubles, the local annual norm, to forty rubles, as well an increase in ordynaria from twelve to sixteen bushels of grain.29 In the Lithuanian counties of Suwałki Province, workers demanded a 50 percent increase in wages and in-kind payments.30 Other demands frequently included the right to pasture two cows instead of one and larger plots for growing potatoes.

Less frequent were demands for separate living quarters for each family and the elimination of the relatively widespread posylka system, which required a full-time farm worker to maintain a temporary workhand at his own expense. Usually, one of the worker’s grown children performed this function, but if he lacked such, the worker was obliged to feed and lodge a helper, for which he received compensation in kind.31 Other demands were uniquely specific. In the Siedlce region, workers demanded the return of money collected from fines earlier levied against them by their employers.32 In Lublin County, workers demanded the construction of day-care facilities for their young children. One proprietor,

27. For acts of crowd coercion during the agrarian strikes, see Jan Molenda, “Przemoc grupowa w masowych wystąpieniach chłopów i robotników rolnych w Królestwie Polskim na przełomie XIX–XX wieku,” in Przemoc zbiorowa, ruch masowy, rewolucja, ed. Elżbieta Kaczyńska and Zbigniew Rykowski (Warsaw, 1990), pp. 143–145.
29. AGAD KGGW 2513, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, March 9 (22), 1905.
32. AGAD KGGW 2525, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, March 17 (30), 1905.
the owner of Jakubowice Muranowe, actually agreed to this demand, providing two separate rooms and adult supervision for 120 children under eleven years of age.\textsuperscript{33}

Generally, owners agreed to make concessions on wages, in-kind payments, and land usage but ignored the other demands. These concessions, however, were usually enough to satisfy farm workers, who ended their strikes after a few days. In most cases, local employers concentrated their response to workers’ demands. In Sokół County of Siedlce Province, where the strike movement began, the landowners met within days of the initial strikes and agreed on a 25 percent increase in wages and a 15 percent increase in ordynaria.\textsuperscript{34} Similarly, in Warsaw Province, landowners agreed to a modest improvement in workers’ conditions without benefit of state mediation or pressure. In Lublin Province, where owners were most recalcitrant, the state, after using military force to disperse the crowds, successfully influenced most employers to make concessions.

The agrarian strike movement of 1905 thus resulted in a qualified victory for the farm workers as it brought economic improvements to the poorest stratum of the rural population. This was remarkable for a movement that recruited its own leaders and relied on its own internal organizational impetus. Socialist and populist groups were slow to recognize the political possibilities in the agrarian strike movement, whereas the Roman Catholic Church and the National Democrats denounced the striking crowds, although the latter did try to persuade employers to make voluntary concessions. The landowning peasantry, moreover, was generally indifferent to the farm workers’ cause.\textsuperscript{35} The strike movement succeeded in the first months of 1905, however, primarily because the authorities and landowners had been taken by surprise. In the spring of 1906, when farm workers struck again, this time with the external organizational support of the PPS, both the authorities and the large landed proprietors were themselves better prepared and organized to suppress the strikes and resist workers’ demands.

\textit{Gmina Action}

Whereas the movement among farm workers was largely spontaneous and devoid of political goals, the movement for communal self-government

\textsuperscript{33} Kalabiński and Tych, \textit{Walki chłopów} I: 268–269.  
\textsuperscript{34} AGAD KGGW 2525, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, February 25 (March 5), 1905.  
\textsuperscript{35} There were, however, some notable exceptions: e.g., peasants from Opatów County in Radom Province refused to quarter dragoons sent to quell agrarian strikes; Kalabiński and Tych, \textit{Walki chłopów} I: 607–608.
in the Polish countryside had an entirely different character, at least until the autumn of 1905. By the end of 1904, more than one hundred gmina assemblies had passed resolutions calling for the introduction of Polish into local administrative, educational, and judicial institutions. At least thirty others approved similar resolutions during their winter meetings, which concluded in January. Thus, even before the outbreak of the January–February industrial general strike and the revolt of student youth against the Russian educational system, slightly over 10 percent of the 1,291 gmina assemblies in the Kingdom of Poland had initiated "gmina action." Already a mass movement, gmina action would affect at least two-thirds of all rural communes by the end of the year. In the process, however, the movement underwent several significant changes that transformed it into a revolutionary force.

In its initial phase, from the spring of 1904 to early 1905, the movement evolved under the close scrutiny of the nationalist movement with its emphasis on gradualism, legal methods of struggle, and the language issue. The first assemblies were therefore advised to limit their action to a refusal to sign Russian-language protocols of their meetings and to the drafting of Polish-language protocols in their place, which included resolutions asserting the statutory right to use the native language in the conduct of gmina affairs. The anticipated rejection of these demands by county and provincial officials would then be appealed to a higher authority. The politically cautious, procedurally legal strategy recommended to the peasants in the issues of Polak and by TON activists was designed to calm the nerves of those who feared government retribution. The use of Polish in gmina business also made practical sense to peasants, many of whom could not understand the reading of Russian-language protocols that awaited their signature.

As the movement evolved in the course of 1904, however, the proponents of gmina action discovered that a principal obstacle lay within the local communities themselves in the form of opposition from gmina officials, particularly the pisarz (the clerk appointed by the county chief) and the wójt (the mayor elected by the assembly but confirmed in office by the state administration). Frequently, the pisarz would refuse the assembly's demand that he draft a Polish-language protocol, or the wójt would refuse to sign such a protocol and enter it into the official record. Peasant supporters of gmina action responded simply by refusing to affix their signatures to a Russian-language protocol of the assembly's resolutions, an action that could temporarily paralyze local "self-government."

By the end of 1904, Polak began to advise assemblies to take a more aggressive posture in dealing with recalcitrant gmina officials: namely, to dismiss the pisarz from the local administration if he refused to draft the desired protocol and resolutions, to demand that the wójt and plenipotentiaries (pelnomocnicy) arrange for the election of a new pisarz, and to entrust the drafting of the protocol and resolutions to a person selected by the assembly. The opposition of the wójt could be circumvented by emphasizing the role of other elected gmina officials, especially the candidate mayor, the plenipotentiaries, and the village elders (soltysy). Though the emphasis still remained on orderly procedure and peaceful methods, the tactical shift at the end of 1904 imparted to the gmina action movement a new goal in addition to mere polonization: the reform of local self-government by making officials truly responsible to the gmina assembly as the highest source of communal authority.

The state administration was slow to comprehend the potential challenge this posed to its own authority in the Polish countryside. At the end of 1904 and in early 1905, Russian officials continued the traditional policy of refusing to confirm the election of persons of doubtful loyalty to gmina offices and of pressuring those deemed loyal to conform to government dictates. Protocols drafted in the Polish language were simply rejected, as were resolutions demanding the use of Polish in gmina administration. Frequently, county chiefs would reconvene the assemblies and appear personally with members of the Land Guard to inform the peasants of the "illegality" of their action. Where intimidation and threats failed to suffice, certain county officials resorted to deception, warning gmina assemblies that their actions could lead to a restoration of serfdom. Such methods were only partially effective, especially because actual punitive action was mild and aimed at individual "agitators" rather than the collective. For example, fourteen peasants from Lublin County were fined ten rubles each in mid-January 1905 for "agitation against the state language" at their gmina assembly meetings. Nine months later, however, local authorities had yet to collect the fines, fearing that forceful methods could lead to popular disturbances.

There is little evidence to suggest that the industrial general strike of January–February either stimulated or radicalized the gmina movement, with the possible exception of gminy located in or adjacent to industrial

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37. Ibid., p. 211.
40. APL KGL 1905:59, Chief of Lublin County to the Lublin Governor, September 13 (26), 1905.
centers. The student strike at institutions of higher and secondary education, however, did have a galvanizing effect on gmina action and led to the first departure of the popular movement from the tactical norms prescribed by the Endecja. Although the demand for the polonization of elementary schools had been included in the resolutions of gmina assemblies, a boycott of the Russian system of primary education was neither recommended nor, it appears, even contemplated by nationalist politicians. The National Democratic leadership, moreover, did not initially support the student strikes and was in the process of policy readjustment when the movement against the russified schools spread to the countryside. Initiative therefore devolved to local activists not waiting for instructions from above and, more important, to the peasants themselves.

In the early spring, the movement from below against the Russian primary school was particularly strong in Płock and Łomża provinces, where thirty-two and twenty-three communal assemblies, respectively, had already taken up gmina action.\(^{41}\) Documentary evidence reveals a common pattern to these incidents. A crowd of peasants would appear at a village school, demand instruction in Polish, and then remove their children from the school when refused. As a result, instruction was temporarily disrupted at dozens of elementary schools. In a few cases, sympathetic teachers accepted parental demands and began conducting lessons in Polish; others actually encouraged the peasants to act.\(^{42}\) The peasants, however, were not always steadfast in their boycott action. For example, peasants from the village of Święlice in Łomża Province removed their children from the primary school on March 8, only to permit them to return a few days later.\(^{43}\) At the Sobótka primary school in Łęczyca County (Kalisz Province), parents backed away from their initial demand for the exclusive use of Polish, informing the teacher that they would allow their children to return to the school if instruction in Russian were limited to three days a week.\(^{44}\)

The methods of peasant protest against the Russian school, moreover, remained moderate. Violence was rare and limited to vandalism and destruction of portraits of the imperial family.\(^{45}\) Most village communities

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42. AGAD KGGW 2500, Report of SDPA to the WGG, February 23 (March 8), 1905, and 2510, Łomża Governor to the WGG, March 17 (30), 1905; APL KGP 1519, Chief of the Piotków Provincial Gendarmes to the Piotrków Governor, February 24 (March 9), 1905.
43. AGAD KGGW 2510, Łomża Governor to the WGG, March 2 (15), 1905.
44. AGAD KGGW 2506, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, March 10 (23), 1905.
45. APW WGŻŻ 1028, SDPA to the Chief of the Warsaw Provincial Gendarmes, February 28 (March 13), 1905.
involved in the movement at this stage simply stopped sending their children to school. Occasionally, peasants would refuse to pay a teacher’s salary or make capital repairs at a school as long as Russian remained the language of instruction.46 Such was the extent of peasant boldness. More typical was the timid action of peasants from four villages in Miechów County in Kielce Province who permitted their children to remain in school but sent them without their Russian textbooks.47

Timid or not, peasant action against the Russian primary school system in the countryside coincided with a growing diversification and assertiveness of rural protest. With the next quarterly gmina assembly meetings scheduled for March and April, government officials began searching for more effective repressive measures. In anticipation of a new round of “illegal” assembly demands, the Łomża governor requested the authority to sentence administratively gmina action “agitators” as well as those who attempted to interrupt instruction at state schools.48 To these and other appeals, the acting Warsaw governor-general Podgorodnikov responded with a proclamation on March 7 “in the aim of preserving order in the countryside.” It warned that those guilty of violating laws regulating peasant self-government at gmina and village assembly meetings could be subject to administrative fines of five hundred rubles and sentenced to three months in jail under Article 15 of the statutes of “intensified security.”49

Because repressive measures remained targeted at individual “agitators” rather than entire communities, they failed to intimidate the peasants and deter gmina action. Within days of Podgorodnikov’s proclamation, the Kalisz governor reported that the gmina movement was gaining strength everywhere in his province. In Slupca County, for example, Polish language demands were made by seven more gmina assemblies; in addition, several of them refused to assign local funds to support families of reservists.50 Several other assemblies in Kalisz Province simply refused to sign Russian-language protocols, thereby, among other things, holding up the distribution of the local tax burden.51 Similarly, in Warsaw Province, several

46. AGAD KGGW 2525, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, January 27 (February 9), 1905; APL KGP 1519, Chief of the Piotrków Provincial Gendarmes to the Piotrków Governor, February 24 (March 9), 1905.
47. AGAD KGGW 2508, Kielce Governor to the WGG, March 6 (19), 1905.
48. AGAD KGGW 2510, Łomża Governor to the WGG, February 14 (27), 1905.
49. APL KGP 1518.
50. AGAD KGGW 2506, Kalisz Governor to the WGG, February 26 (March 11), 1905, and Report of the SDPA to the WGG, March 2 (15), 1905.
51. AGAD KGGW 2506, Kalisz Governor to the Minister of Internal Affairs, April 2 (15), 1905.
assemblies refused to confirm obligatory expenditures or authorize village elders to draw up tax-distribution lists. Moreover, crowds of peasants in Warsaw Province continued to withdraw their children from the primary schools, forcing many of them to close.\footnote{Kalabiński and Tych, \textit{Walki chłopów} I: 866--867.} In Łomża Province, assembly demands reflected the trend toward diversification and local initiative. Some stuck to the traditional demand of introducing Polish into gmina administration; others extended language demands to the public schools. Several refused to pay for further obligatory subscriptions to \textit{Oświaty} (Enlightenment), a Polish-language government publication aimed at the peasantry, and a few joined in the nascent tax revolt.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 427--429; AGAD KGGW 2510, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, February 28 (March 13), 1905.}

The unexpected response of Polish rural communities to Podgorodnikov’s proclamation, as well as the ineffectiveness of the new repressive measures, led the authorities to a consideration of limited concessions. Although there were a few calls from county administrators for the outright suspension of gmina assembly meetings,\footnote{Kalabiński and Tych, \textit{Walki chłopów} I: 251--255.} most leading officials in the Kingdom, and St. Petersburg as well, continued to cling to the delusion that the mass of Polish peasants constituted a basically loyal social and political force. The Warsaw governor-general, although he believed that a serious threat to Russian authority in the countryside now existed, placed the blame on the pernicious effect of nationalist propaganda.\footnote{AGAD KGGW 2501, WGG to the Minister of Internal Affairs, March 7 (20), 1905.} Authorities also tended to identify their traditional nemesis, the Polish nobility and the Catholic clergy, along with the urban-based intelligentsia, as the principal leaders of gmina action.\footnote{AGAD KGGW 2506, Kalisz Governor to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, April 2 (15), 1905, and 2510, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, February 28 (March 13), 1905; APL KGL 1905:59, Director of the Chancellory of the WGG to the Lublin Governor, April 4 (17), 1905; Kalabiński and Tych, \textit{Walki chłopów} I: 892--894.} Such notions, however, did not square with reality. The clergy’s involvement was limited to those parts of Kalisz and Piotrków provinces which came within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Bishop Stanislaw Zdzitowiecki of Kujawy-Kalisz, the sole episcopal supporter of clerical participation in gmina affairs.\footnote{Robert Blobaum, “The Revolution of 1905--1907 and the Crisis of Polish Catholicism,” \textit{Slavic Review} 47, 4 (1988): 674--675, 682.} The participation of urban-based intellectuals in gmina action was even less noteworthy. Among the “outsiders,” a good deal of nationalist agitation in the countryside was conducted by local landowners who doubled as activists for TON and its successor organizations. Nevertheless, the szlachta provided
only a minority of community leaders for gmina action. The majority of
the activists were peasant assembly members and lower-ranking peasant
officeholders.\textsuperscript{58}

In any event, the government's perceptions of reality led to an attempt
to undermine "outside agitation" through a series of limited concessions.
These included certain provisions specifically aimed at Poles in the Edict
of Religious Toleration of April 30 and the limited language concessions
contained in the June 19 decision of the Committee of Ministers confirmed
by the tsar. Neither measure, however, satisfied peasant aspirations or neu­
tralized the gmina movement. Quite the contrary, their ultimate effect was
to encourage an escalation of peasant demands as well as bolder, more
arbitrary action in their behalf.

The Edict of Toleration, often considered in the literature as a concession
designed for the sole purpose of winning the cooperation of the Roman
Catholic episcopate in combating the revolutionary movement, was also
aimed at the church's peasant parishioners. To begin, the provision of the
edict recognizing the right of the tsar's Orthodox subjects to convert to
other Christian denominations affected hundreds of thousands of former
Uniate peasants residing in the eastern counties of Suwałki, Lublin, and
Siedlce provinces (the latter two comprising the so-called Chelm region),
who could now voluntarily join the Roman Catholic Church. Equally im­
portant, the edict permitted religious instruction in the native language of
the students enrolled in public schools, thus meeting at least one demand
that had appeared in many gmina assembly resolutions.

Whatever the state's intentions, the main impact of the edict was to
further erode Russian authority in the countryside. Before the spring of
1905, Polish nationalist and religious agitation had made considerable in­
rades among the ethnically Byelorussian and Ukrainian Uniates. In Siedlce
Province, where Catholic religious fanaticism was especially strong among
the peasantry and where draft evasion was particularly widespread, rumors
abounded that the pope had blessed the Japanese in their war with Russia.
Peasants also constructed several roadside shrines and crosses without
official permission in what the state considered to be Russian Orthodox
communes.\textsuperscript{59} In Augustów County of Suwałki Province, former Uniates
stopped sending their children to the state primary schools.\textsuperscript{60} Organized
gmina action in these provinces, however, had yet to take firm root.

\textsuperscript{58} For an attempt to aggregate data on local leadership, see Lewis, "Revolution in the
\textsuperscript{59} AGAD KGGW 2525, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, January 27 (February 9), 1905.
\textsuperscript{60} AGAD KGGW 2522, Suwałki Governor to the WGG, April 2 (15), 1905.
The Edict of Toleration unintentionally transformed the nature of resistance in the ethnically mixed eastern counties and stimulated their gmina assemblies to act far more aggressively than their counterparts in the Kingdom’s north-central and western provinces, where the movement had originated. After massive conversions to Catholicism in gminy populated by Uniates in Lublin Province, assemblies elected only Catholics to administrative positions. Such action forced Orthodox mayors, plenipotentiaries, and elders either to convert or to lose office. In Siedlce Province religious tensions flowed outside the gmina assemblies. Catholics and Uniates used physical coercion against Orthodox believers resisting conversion, and crowds reclaimed by force former Uniate churches that had been turned over to the Orthodox Church a generation earlier. In a couple of instances, troops had to be sent to defend Orthodox monasteries from menacing Catholic and Uniate crowds. Such incidents were sufficient in number by the beginning of June to prompt a special proclamation from the Warsaw governor-general, who warned that violations of the religious rights of the Orthodox minority would be punished to the full extent of the law. The authorities also refused to confirm the election of converted mayors in “Orthodox” gminy and removed Catholics from office in those gminy that had excluded Orthodox peasants from participating in the electoral process. Far more severe repressive measures, however, would prove necessary to contain the ethnic and religious strife in the region.

Meanwhile, peasants elsewhere in the Kingdom were unimpressed—as the polonization movement gathered momentum—by the edict’s provision permitting religious instruction in the native language. By the early summer of 1905, 245 gmina assemblies in the Kingdom, some 20 percent of the total, had passed resolutions demanding the introduction of Polish in village schools and courts as well as local administration. Such a level of gmina action proved sufficient to force further concessions from the state in the form of the Decision of the Committee of Ministers of June 19.

By virtue of this legislation, the government adopted the principle of bilingualism in gmina administration. Henceforth all gmina books, cor-

61. APL KGL 1905:18, WGG to the Lublin Governor, August 26 (September 8), 1905.
62. AGAD KGGW 2525, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, April 26 (May 9), 1905.
63. APL KGL 1905:18, Proclamation of the WGG, May 20 (June 2), 1905.
66. AGAD KGGW 2621, Decision of the Committee of Ministers, June 6 (19), 1905.
respondence, and protocols could be kept in Polish in addition to Russian. The government also promised in the future to hire only bilingual people for job vacancies in the commissariats of peasant affairs and to end discrimination based on nationality or religion in state approval of land transactions. As to the future, the government announced that the State Council was considering the introduction of zemstvo institutions and justices of the peace into the Kingdom, two of Alexander II’s “Great Reforms” long denied Russian Poland.

In education, the government reconfirmed the right of Catholics to religious instruction in the native language of the pupils while permitting the Catholic clergy a virtual monopoly on such instruction. More important, the government permitted the use of Polish for the study of arithmetic and the native grammar in state primary schools. The government was more generous to private schools, which were now allowed to use Polish as the language of instruction for all subjects except Russian grammar, history, and geography, all of which remained compulsory subjects. The latter concession, however, affected very few peasants.

None of these provisions applied to the “Russian” gminy of Lublin and Siedlce provinces (the so-called Chełm region) or to the Lithuanian counties of Suwałki Province, where Russian remained the sole language of administration and educational instruction. In the former, such restrictions foreshadowed the separation of the Chełm region from the Kingdom of Poland in the postrevolutionary period; in the short term they served to exacerbate already tense ethnic and religious relations among a mixed population. Fearing that a wave of Catholic “pogroms” against the Orthodox population was imminent, the Siedlce governor pleaded, albeit unsuccessfully, for the introduction of martial law in his province already that summer.67

In northern Suwałki Province, Kawalaria, Mariampol, Władysławów, and Wyłkowyszki counties were almost exclusively inhabited by Lithuanian peasants. The failure to extend the language concessions contained in the ministerial decision to these counties acted as spur to the Lithuanian national movement. Even before June, signs of unrest in the Lithuanian gmina had appeared in the form of agrarian strikes and the resolutions of a couple of gmina assemblies containing language demands on the Polish model.68 After the June decision, gmina action became largely a Lithuanian

67. AGAD KGGW 2584, Minister of Internal Affairs to the WGG, August 19 (September 1), 1905.
68. AGAD KGGW 2522, Suwałki Governor to the WGG, April 2 (15), 1905, and Report of the SDPA to the WGG, April 29 (May 12), 1905.
movement in Suwałki Province. That movement also became far more politically radicalized than its Polish counterpart, thanks largely to successful agitation conducted by the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP). The demands contained in the July 8 resolutions of the Leśnictwo gmina assembly in Władysławów County, for example, called not only for equal rights for Lithuanians and the lithuanization of local government agencies and public schools but also for freedom of religion, the introduction of zemstvo institutions, total gmina control over local expenditures, the establishment of a system of universal primary education at state expense, the reestablishment of a university at Vilnius, the elimination of certain taxes, a ban on “Lithuanian” timber exports, and the expansion of Jewish residence rights.69 The national movement among Lithuanian peasants, moreover, was aimed not only at the Russian bureaucracy. Peasants interrupted homilies of Catholic priests, almost uniformly Poles, who were unsupportive of Lithuanian national demands; and a wave of strikes of farm workers against Polish landowners, encouraged by the LSDP, engulfed three of the four Lithuanian counties in July.70

In the rest of the Kingdom of Poland, thousands of peasants interpreted the government’s concessions as a license to express their emerging national consciousness. For example, the provision in the Edict of Toleration permitting Catholic religious processions spawned various illegal phenomena. In several provinces, volunteer firemen met and accompanied such processions in their uniforms; soon they were joined by peasants wearing distinctive local and regional costumes, headware, and emblems and carrying Polish banners—all this in violation of an imperial ukase of 1876. On such occasions, local music ensembles, formed under the auspices of the volunteer fire departments, often played the forbidden “God Preserve Poland.” To prevent the religious processions from turning into national demonstrations, the Warsaw governor-general instructed provincial authorities to punish violations of the ban on Polish national costumes with harsh administrative sentences.71

Neither concessions nor repression, however, could slow the escalation of the movement against the government in the Polish countryside. In Łomża and Plock provinces, gmina assemblies responded to the language concessions of June by calling for a boycott of state-sold alcohol and tobacco products. The Łyse gmina assembly in Kolno County (Łomża Prov-

70. AGAD KGGW 2523, Suwałki Governor to the WGG, June 11 (24), June 26 (July 9), June 27 (July 10), and July 18 (31), 1905.
71. AGAD KGGW 2577, Circular of the WGG to Provincial Governors, June 17 (30), 1905.
ince) even resolved to levy fines on those who failed to adhere to the popular ban on drinking and smoking. In Mława, Ciechanów, and Przasnysz countries (Plock Province), peasants attended "congresses" disguised as picnics and hosted by local landowners to discuss temperance and "other methods of struggle" against the government. From Warsaw Province as well came reports that the concessions of June were having little impact, except to encourage gminy to strive for the complete elimination of Russian from the conduct of local affairs.

The National Democrats, too, sensed the growing militancy among the peasantry. The leadership of the Endecja had been surprised by the extent of popular antipathy to the Russian educational system and only belatedly endorsed the spontaneous action of peasant communities which had closed numerous village elementary schools in the spring. In an attempt to regain the initiative over gmina action, the Endecja, through the still-influential periodical *Polak*, now instructed peasants to go to the schools at the beginning of the academic year and demand instruction exclusively in Polish. If teachers refused, parents were to remove their children from the premises and place them in "secret schools." The Endecja also encouraged gminy to assert their right to control and supervise village schools in assembly resolutions, including the right to hire and fire teachers.

With the battle lines thus drawn, the quarterly gmina assembly meetings scheduled for July and August became the most crucial test of peasant attitudes toward the concessions of June. In Łomża Province, where gmina action had struck deep roots, assemblies again went beyond the recommendations of *Polak*. The Długoborz assembly, for example, refused to construct two new schools with state assistance until Polish became the exclusive language of instruction. The Kubra assembly went even further, annulling its resolution of the previous year to build a new school "because it would not satisfy the needs of our children." Villagers of Wojciechów in Chełm County of Lublin Province resolved not to pay the school tax because "we don’t need Russian schools." Members of the Krzeczonów gmina assembly in Lublin County expressed their dissatisfaction with the June concessions by refusing to attend the meeting convened by the au-

72. AGAD KGGW 2511, Report of SDPA to the WGG, June 21 (July 4), 1905.
73. AGAD KGGW 2517, Płock Governor to the WGG, June 22 (July 5), 1905, and Report of the SDPA to the WGG, June 22 (July 5), 1905.
76. AGAD KGGW 2511, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, September 13 (26), 1905, and 2512, Łomża Governor to the WGG, October 8 (21), 1905.
77. AGAD KGGW 2514, Report of SDPA to the WGG, August 30 (September 12), 1905.
Authorities on August 7. This did not stop them, however, from sending a petition to “President” Sergei Witte, listing their grievances and demands.78 In Piotrków Province, several gmina assemblies passed resolutions a second time reconfirming and expanding earlier language demands.79

Gmina action thus continued to move into new terrain. Similarly, the opening of the schools in September led to the spread of the popular movement against them despite the state’s concessions on bilingualism. According to the Warsaw governor, “disturbances” occurred wherever subjects were instructed in Russian.80 Similar reports came from Płock and Łomża provinces, where the movement against the schools had begun the previous spring. Peasants also forced the closing of schools, for the first time, in Piotrków, Kielce, and Radom provinces. Usually, parents disrupted lessons simply by removing their children from the school, the form of action

78. Ibid., July 25 (August 7), 1905; APL KGL 1905:59, Chief of Lublin County to the Lublin Governor, July 27 (August 9), 1905.
79. APL KGP 1521, List of gmina assemblies that passed Polish-language resolutions, compiled in mid-October, 1905.
80. AGAD KGGW 2504, Warsaw Governor to the WGG, September 25 (October 9), 1905.
recommended by Polak, but in one instance an explosion from a petard disrupted instruction at the Błaszki primary school in Kalisz Province.\footnote{AGAD KGGW 2507, Kalisz Governor to the WGG, September 9 (22), 1905.}

Meanwhile, as the school boycott intensified in the countryside, "secret instruction" proliferated. In fact, during the course of the revolution, the authorities would uncover more than three hundred illegal schools, and this was only a fraction of the total.\footnote{Borkowski, \textit{Chłopi polscy w dobie kapitalizmu}, p. 118.} For example, the nineteen-year-old peasant Antoni Malczewski, whose own education was limited, nevertheless organized an underground school on an estate in Płonsk County (Warsaw Province), where children of both sexes between the ages of eight and fourteen received instruction in Polish grammar and religion for a tuition of thirty kopecks.\footnote{APW WGŻŻ 1730, Chief of the Warsaw Provincial Gendarmes to the SDPA and the Superintendent of the Warsaw School Directorate, March 22 (April 4), 1906.} Twenty children received similar instruction in the home of the peasant Ignacy Zieliński in the village of Dolsznów in Lublin County.\footnote{APL KGL 1905:25, Chief of the Lublin Provincial Gendarmes to the Lublin Governor, December 7 (20), 1905.}

By the time of the October Manifesto, gmina action had been taken in one-third of all communes in the Kingdom of Poland, but the most intensive stage of its development was yet to come. The expansion of the movement before the October Manifesto had been gradual and, for the most part, remained nonviolent. Resistance to the government, however, took increasingly active and aggressive forms. The growing arbitrariness of peasant behavior through gmina action, encouraged by the progressive decline of government authority in countryside, also spilled over into other areas of rural life. Whereas the gmina movement was shaped by a significant degree of political organization, however, certain other collective actions of peasant communities—namely, trespassing and vigilantism—defied organization and control from the outside.

\textit{Servitudes}

Disputes in the Polish countryside over servitudes, or peasant easement rights, had a much longer history than gmina action, extending back to the emancipation legislation of the 1860s. The gradual liquidation of private servitudes over the course of two generations, accomplished through negotiated agreements and state intervention, had nevertheless left some village communities dissatisfied. Peasants frequently resorted to litigation,
sometimes lasting several years, only to receive what they considered unjust decisions. Regarding easement rights on state-owned property, peasants enjoyed no legal recourse whatsoever. Where the state continued to permit peasants to cut timber, gather firewood, graze livestock, and fish, it now charged fees. Peasants again felt cheated, especially when these fees were increased in the first years of the twentieth century.

The most bitter disputes revolved around peasant access to private and state forests. Because of rising lumber prices and the increasing scarcity of timber, estate owners were particularly eager to liquidate forest servitudes. For similar reasons, the state sought to expand profitable timber exports while simultaneously limiting peasant access. The liquidation of private servitudes and the restrictive forest conservation policies of the state affected not only peasant felling of timber in commercial and state forests but also the pasturing of peasant livestock and the gathering of firewood.

Although the number of servitude-related disputes increased at the beginning of the century, peasants could do little but turn to the courts or petition the authorities, forms of collective action that had failed to produce the desired results. The gradual breakdown of Russian state authority in the countryside in 1905, however, encouraged peasants to take more aggressive action in defense of their economic interests, action mainly in the form of massive illegal trespassing incidents involving entire villages. Believing that the woods and meadows in dispute were rightfully theirs and essential to their survival, peasants also resisted forest guards, the rural police, and state officials who tried to halt their illegal felling, pasturing, and gathering operations.

In the course of 1905, illegal trespassing and servitude-related disturbances occurred in 189 of 1,287 gminy, or 14.7 percent of the total, peaking in the last three months of the year. The peasants had various sources of inspiration for taking illegal and forceful action. The governor of Piotrków Province, where some of the first incidents occurred, believed that peasants derived their example from industrial workers "who gained desired results by illegal means." Similarly, villagers of Czarna in Radom County reportedly began cutting down trees and resisting state forest guards under the leadership of the artisan Michał Wierzbicki, who sought

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asylum with his rural relatives after his participation in the "disorders" in Radom. In nearby Iłża County, peasants invoked the name of the emperor in claiming that the disputed forest land belonged to them. Peasants who illegally felled timber near Przasnysz in Płock Province, with damages estimated at seven thousand rubles, were apparently persuaded in their action by soldiers returning from service in the central Russian provinces, where, according to the soldiers, "even the old ladies are chopping.

Peasants also had long memories, basing their claims to easements on ancestral rights. Illegal peasant grazing on the Klomnice estate in Noworadomsk County (Piotrków Province) was only the most recent episode in a twenty-year dispute. Peasants from the gmina of Szumowo in Łomża County, led by a candidate sołtys, justified their illegal trespassing and felling of timber in the state forest with the argument that "the land belonged to our fathers." State forest rangers in Wieluń County (Kalisz Province), in attempting to remove trespassing villagers from Dziętrzyniki, were told by resisting peasants that this part of the forest had been "stolen" from their ancestors and that they were only reclaiming what was rightfully theirs.

Ambiguities in government policy also played a role in encouraging illegal peasant behavior. As an economic concession to assist the rural economy, the Ministry of Agriculture and State Domains decided in the late spring to permit peasants to pasture livestock in specially designated areas of state forests where grazing did not harm young growth. The concession, instead of being greeted by peasant gratitude, was immediately misconstrued as a license for free, unrestricted access to state forests. For example, six hundred peasants from the villages of Wilków and Psary in Kielce County took the ministry’s decision to mean that they now had the right to graze two cows each in the nearby state forest. The villagers, armed with clubs and scythes, could not be persuaded that they had been misinformed. Subsequently, the Land Guard arrested one of the peasant leaders, but a crowd liberated him from the gmina jail. Finally the Land Guard, this time assisted by dragoons, arrested sixteen peasants involved in the storming of the jail and other acts of resistance to the authorities.

89. AGAD KGGW 2518, Radom Governor to the WGG, January 30 (February 12), 1905.
90. AGAD KGGW 2517, Płock Governor to the WGG, December 7 (20), 1905.
92. AGAD KGGW 2510, Łomża Governor to the WGG, March 2 (15), 1905.
93. AGAD KGGW 2506, Kalisz Governor to the WGG, April 25 (March 8), 1905.
94. AGAD KGGW 2509, Kielce Governor to the WGG, June 9 (22), June 21 (July 4), and June 25 (July 8), 1905.
The Szydłowiec state forest, spanning parts of three counties in Radom Province, provided the setting for a similar chain of incidents. Conflict between dozens of villages and state authorities began in mid-May when the state raised its fee for pasturing livestock from nine to forty kopecks per head. Peasants were given until June 2 to pay the new fee or remove their livestock. But when they learned from various newspapers about the government’s concessions on access to state forests, the peasants refused to pay any fee and violently resisted the attempts of rangers and the Land Guard to halt their operations. Eventually, after several weeks of illegal grazing and felling, a “flying detachment” of Cossacks successfully dislodged the trespassing villagers. Arrest warrants were issued for twenty-four “main agitators,” who subsequently received jail sentences ranging from one week to two months, a mild punishment considering that the Radom governor had recommended their exile from the Kingdom.95

The greatest number of trespassing incidents resulting from misinterpretations of government concessions occurred in the Spała imperial forest, one of the tsar’s favorite hunting grounds, which spanned large parts of Piotrków and Radom provinces. After the ministry’s decision, peasants from 130 villages arbitrarily grazed their livestock and, to a lesser extent, cut down timber in the forest. Peasants, defending what they considered their legitimate rights, resisted efforts to remove them with clubs and axes. As the tsar was personally concerned, the minister of Internal Affairs took charge, ordering the dispatch of four squadrons of cavalry to stop the trespassing, arrest the leaders, and sequester the peasants’ livestock.96 Peasants in Opoczno County (Radom Province) continued to graze their cattle in Spała, however, until disease rather than troops forced them to remove their livestock.97

The government’s inconsistent application of repressive measures in response to the trespassing incidents added to the confusion. Generally, resort to military force came quickly when the peasants continued to trespass on state property and resisted forest guards and rural police. On private estates, however, the government tried to rely on mediation and other political means to end disputes. Some officials proved less than sympathetic to complaining landowners. The chief of Noworadomsk County (Piotrków Province), for example, refused to intervene on behalf of the landowner Ziółkowski, who “grossly exaggerated” an incident of illegal grazing on

95. AGAD KGGW 2519, Radom Governor to the WGG, June 13 (26), June 14 (27), and July 3 (16), 1905; Kalabinski and Tych, Walki chłopów, 1: 626–627, 631, 638–644.
96. AGAD KGGW 2519, Minister of Internal Affairs to the WGG, June 8 (21), 1905.
his estate. The Piotrków governor, who requested several squadrons of cavalry to end trespassing in the Spała imperial forest, restricted his intervention in incidents on private estates to dispatching county officials and peasant commissars to the scene, where they were to resolve matters "without the spilling of blood." Sometimes, the peasants’ use of force against estate officials compelled the state to intervene, particularly on the 250,000 acres of forests owned by the Zamoyski estates in Lublin and Siedlce provinces, where some 148 villages engaged in illegal logging and pasturing. Even then, provincial authorities subsequently tried to persuade Count Zamoyski to drop his lawsuits against the offending peasants.

Peasants often asserted their claim to easement rights by denying access to others. In July, peasants from the village of Prusy in Stopnica County (Kielce Province), led by their elder, refused to permit agricultural workers employed by a neighboring estate to graze livestock on a parcel of disputed land. More frequently, they interfered with the operations of logging

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100. Lewis, “Revolution in the Countryside,” p. 27; APL KGL 1906:155, Lublin Governor to Count Konstanty Zamoyski, August 30 (September 12), 1906.
101. AGAD KGGW 2509, Kielce Governor to the WGG, July 16 (29), 1905.
firms in forests belonging to private estates. One of the more famous incidents occurred in a forest owned by Count Zamoyski in Biłgoraj County (Lublin Province) which had been leased to the A. Franke Lumber Company. At the end of March, twenty peasants appeared at the site and demanded a halt to logging operations. When the lumberjacks refused, a crowd of fifty peasants arrived the next day, confiscated the logging equipment, and drove the Franke workers from the forest.\(^\text{102}\) Peasant opposition to logging operations also made its way into gmina assembly resolutions. For example, the Wyszków gmina assembly (Warsaw Province) at its quarterly meeting in late December demanded not only unlimited access to state forests but an end to all timber exports as well.\(^\text{103}\)

Although peasant assertion of easement rights sometimes merged with gmina action, servitudes disputes were more likely to promote class antagonisms in rural society and thereby undermine the polonization movement. The Endecja, the main political force behind gmina action, came out strongly against illegal peasant trespassing, claiming that the agrarian disputes were fanned by "subversives" and provided the Russian government a pretext for employing military force.\(^\text{104}\) Such appeals to national solidarity, however, were largely ineffective among peasants convinced of the legitimacy of their claims. The Kalisz governor reported that although gmina action was widespread in his province, in economic matters peasants were "looking after their own interests."\(^\text{105}\) In Radzyń County (Siedlce Province) peasants met with landowners on the Milianów estate, where the latter tried to win them over to the idea of gmina action. The peasants began to leave, however, when told that this did not mean they could fell timber and graze cattle on private estates.\(^\text{106}\) Likewise, nationalist agitation made little headway in Zamość County (Lublin Province), the scene of some of the more bitter servitudes disputes.\(^\text{107}\)

Disputes over land use in rural society, moreover, were not confined to peasants and noble landowners, even though they certainly represented the vast majority of cases. In Tomaszów County (Lublin Province) the neigh-

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102. APL KGL 1905:120, Chief of Biłgoraj County to the Lublin Governor, March 31 (April 13), 1905.
104. APW WGŻŻ 1747, Appeal of the National Democratic Organization in Opatów, November 1905.
105. AGAD KGGW 2507, Kalisz Governor to the WGG, October 29 (November 11), 1905.
106. AGAD KGGW 2526, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, September 2 (15), 1905.
107. AGAD KGGW 2515, Provisional Governor-General of Lublin Province to the WGG, November 18 (December 1), 1905.
boring Catholic and Orthodox villages of Nabróź and Radków, respectively, had their long-standing dispute over common land referred to the gmina court. When the court found in favor of the latter, the Catholic peasants vented their dissatisfaction with the decision by attacking the victors. In Radom Province, factory workers from Ostrowiec intervened on behalf of tenant farmers in a dispute over common land with peasant proprietors from the village of Godzielin. In this instance, only the timely mediation of Opatów County officials prevented a violent confrontation.

The Jewish community of Międzyrzec in Siedlce Province illegally gathered wood on an estate, of the same name, where it claimed servitude rights. Police arrested ten community leaders, and when a crowd of one thousand Jews attempted to free them, it had to be dispersed by military force. Similarly, the Jewish inhabitants of Węgrów, also in Siedlce Province, in their property dispute with the owners of local flour mills, were responsible for eight thousand rubles in damages resulting from trespassing incidents at the end of May.

In all these incidents, more extreme manifestations of rural class conflict—namely, actual peasant land seizures and attacks on individual nobles and their property—were indeed rare, particularly in comparison with the central Russian provinces. Overall, there were only fourteen cases of peasant land seizure in the Kingdom of Poland during the revolution; of these, half took place in Lublin Province. Where they did occur, they were based almost entirely on disputes over access and compensation, rather than ownership. In March, 150 peasants attacked the manor of Józef Klemensowski, owner of the Celejów estate in Lublin Province, after he refused to turn over eight morgs (approximately eleven acres) of land in exchange for lost servitudes. Similarly, villagers from Skurcza in Gwrołin County (Siedlce Province) arbitrarily seized sixty morgs (eighty acres) of land long disputed with the owner of the Wilga estate. In fact, only one documented land seizure was not related to servitudes; in Częstochowa County, four hundred peasants seized two morgs of land from the Mykanów estate for the construction of a chapel.

111. Lewis, “Revolution in the Countryside,” p. 28.
113. AGAD KGGW 2526, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, July 28 (August 10), 1905.
114. AGAD KGGW 2498, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, September 17 (30), 1905.
In disputes over easement rights on private and state property, peasants generally engaged in willful acts of civil disobedience. Open violation of property rights, most often coupled with resistance until confronted by superior force, characterized peasant behavior. Peasants considered their clearly illegal behavior legitimate, based on just claims and rights recently lost. Only in rare instances did they allow their hunger for additional land to extend beyond those claims and perceived rights. Peasant action may have been arbitrary, even lawless, in the effort to defend or recapture easement rights, but it knew certain limits. The vigilante movement in the countryside, in contrast, recognized almost no legal boundaries as peasants took the law into their own hands.

**Rural Vigilantism**

Peasant reliance on the instrumentalities of popular justice in Russian Poland, of course, long predated the first decade of the twentieth century. As in other cultures, popular justice, or *samosad* (literally, self-justice), among the Polish peasantry had multiple applications: to enforce compliance with locally established mores, to punish petty theft and other property transgressions involving members of the local community, or to protect the village from threats posed by "outsiders." When dealing with their own members, village communities relied on traditional forms of ritualized public humiliation, rather than outright violence, to prevent future violations of customary standards or recognized property rights. Violence was usually reserved for "outsiders" who themselves had committed an act of violence against individual villagers or were believed to constitute a danger to the community as a whole. Peasants resorted to popular justice because it was "natural" but also because they believed it to be a more effective deterrent than a regular legal system that had yet to take deep root in the countryside.

What distinguished popular justice during the revolution in Russian Poland was a dramatic upsurge in violent vigilante actions directed at criminal elements and resulting in scores of fatalities. Like the cases involving illegal peasant trespassing, the number of violent incidents of *samosad* began to escalate in the spring of 1905 and peaked during the last three months of the year. Unlike the mass trespassing incidents, which declined dramatically after the implementation of martial law at the end of 1905, vi-

gilantism remained a relatively widespread phenomenon in the Polish countryside throughout 1906 and well into 1907. It also appears to have had greater range. During a two-year period from May 1905 to May 1907, twenty-eight counties in nine provinces reported incidents of violent vigilantism. Yet vigilantism, like illegal peasant trespassing, was hardly a unified and organized mass movement, as village communities responded individually to local stimuli. For example, in Siedlce Province vigilante activity was confined to the summer months of 1905; in Plock Province, peasant samosądy peaked in the early autumn of 1906. In Lublin and Warsaw provinces, in contrast, vigilantism was a more or less constant feature of the entire period.

Systematic scholarly analysis of peasant samosądy during the revolution is nonexistent. Nevertheless, it is not particularly difficult to determine the causes of the dramatic increase. First, as mentioned, the efficacy of popular justice was deeply rooted in village tradition. Second, though official statistics are not especially reliable, they do denote a sharp increase in rural crime rates at the turn of the century, partly from the general increase in population, partly from the deterioration of the rural police as a crime deterrent. Exceedingly overburdened, understaffed, and poorly paid, the Land Guard found it difficult to cope with organized bands of criminals who cooperated in extensive networks, engaged in armed robbery over large areas, and lived in their own heavily guarded settlements. Demoralized elements of the Land Guard, moreover, frequently found it in their interest, physical or financial, to turn a blind eye, allowing the criminal to work without fear of capture. A populist pamphlet of the era no doubt expressed peasant perceptions: “We all know full well that our police are pals of the thieves. If something is stolen and the injured party turns to the police, they either will not make an effort to investigate, or they only pretend to investigate—of course, in such a way that they do not find the guilty party.”

Peasants lived in constant fear of these gangs, as reporting their activities frequently invited revenge. Yet the gangs also inspired a burning hatred among their victims; for the theft of a peasant’s horse or livestock could bring economic ruin to a household. With the gradual decline, then near collapse, of Russian authority in the Polish countryside over the course of

116. These figures are based on data collected by the author from Polish central and provincial archives; unfortunately, because documentary sources refer both to specific incidents and to “several” or “a number” of vigilante actions in a given locality, more elaborate quantification is rendered impossible.

1905, coupled with the preoccupation of the police with combating political agitation, social disturbances, and the like, criminal elements took advantage of the situation to increase their parasitic activities. Yet the breakdown in government authority also eliminated the most important barrier to the peasants' ridding their communities of the gangs of armed robbers and horse thieves through their own action. The result was a wave of mob violence in the countryside unprecedented in the postemancipation era.

The rural vigilante movement began in the late spring of 1905 in Piotrków and Siedlce provinces. In early June, peasants from the village of Śrock in Piotrków County, after attending morning Mass, broke into the gmina jail and beat two thieves to death.118 Six weeks later, the body of the locally notorious Józef Woszczał turned up near the village of Dobron in Łask County. In this case, the thief had been apprehended by the peasants themselves during an attempted armed robbery.119

In Łuków County of Siedlce Province, groups of peasant vigilantes killed four thieves and administered severe beatings to two others in mid-June. Seven criminals, fearing similar action against themselves, voluntarily turned themselves in to local authorities. This attempt to escape popular justice failed, however, when a crowd of forty broke into the county jail.120 Similarly, in Radzyń County, five thieves were beaten to death in early July; of the five, only one had actually been convicted of a crime.121

All of this paled in comparison with the scale of vigilantism in Włodawa County, the scene of a recent crime wave and where a number of gmina assemblies had complained bitterly that the authorities were not taking sufficient action. The theft of church money and valuables in the town of Włodawa on July 15 served as the trigger: the incident incited a crowd of two hundred Christians, who were then joined by Jewish teenagers, to hunt down the suspects. Three “well-known” thieves were caught and beaten, another drowned in a pond, and five others turned themselves in.122 The movement then spread to surrounding villages, where crowds of peasants, numbering up to a thousand, set off in search of known and suspected thieves. Alarmed by the size of the crowds, the Włodawa County chief issued a circular forbidding samosołady and warning peasants that they would be punished if they continued their violent action. Instead, he invited

118. AGAD KGGW 348, Piotrków Governor to the WGG, June 4 (17), 1905.
119. Ibid., July 14 (27), 1905.
120. AGAD KGGW 341, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, June 14 (27), 1905, and 2526, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, June 13 (26), 1905.
121. AGAD KGGW 2526, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, June 25 (July 8), 1905.
122. Ibid., July 20 (August 2), 1905, and 341, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, July 23 (August 5), 1905.
peasants to report the criminals to the authorities. At the same time, the Siedlce governor sent urgent appeals to both the Catholic and Orthodox clergy to denounce vigilantism in their homilies. Not that clerical influence always deterred the peasants. One priest who interfered with a vigilante action after Mass in Kriwowerba was told, "If you defend a thief, you too are a thief." The crowd went on to murder six criminals.\textsuperscript{123}

Most crowds, although they failed to disperse, nevertheless rounded up dozens of thieves and escorted them to county officials in Włodawa. Between August 7 and August 9 alone, peasants deposited fifty-two thieves in the county jail. Claiming that "they want[ed] to be able to sleep at night without fear of being robbed," the peasants warned the county chief that they would kill his prisoners if they were released.\textsuperscript{124}

The story, unfortunately, does not have a happy ending. To prevent the anger of the population from falling on the police, the county chief detained the thieves for several weeks. Formal charges could not be brought against many of them, however, and the chief eventually ordered their release. Some villages then tried a different tack. For example, the inhabitants of Dubeczno petitioned the Siedlce governor to exile eleven thieves from their midst. Because eight had not been formally charged with a crime, only three of the named persons were deported from the province. Meanwhile, the criminals took their revenge. Shortly after the Siedlce governor proclaimed an end to samosady in Włodawa County, the homes of peasants from Chmelew and Lubicin were set ablaze by arsonists in retaliation for the villages' participation in the vigilante movement.\textsuperscript{125}

In the autumn, the center of the movement shifted to Warsaw and Lublin provinces. Beginning with a samosad carried out by thirty peasants in the gmina of Łukowiec in Nowomińsk County in early September, the movement in Warsaw Province soon ranged over six counties.\textsuperscript{126} In Warsaw County, peasant samosady followed on the heels of and may have been inspired by a wave of working-class attacks on criminal gangs in Warsaw's industrial suburbs.\textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{123} AGAD KGGW 2526, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, August 17 (30), 1905, and Siedlce Governor to the WGG, August 26 (September 8), 1905.
\textsuperscript{124} AGAD KGGW 2526, Reports of the SDPA to the WGG, August 1 (14) and August 4 (17), 1905, and Siedlce Governor to the WGG, August 2 (15), 1905; and 341, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, August 17 (30), 1905.
\textsuperscript{125} AGAD KGGW 2526, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, September 12 (25), 1905; 2527, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, October 7 (20), 1905; and 341, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, September 21 (October 4), 1905.
\textsuperscript{126} AGAD KGGW 2503, Warsaw Governor to the WGG, August 27 (September 9), 1905.
\textsuperscript{127} AGAD KGGW 342, Warsaw Governor to the WGG, October 12 (25), 1905.
went on a rampage against criminals in late October, leaving five victims in their wake.\textsuperscript{128} A distinguishing feature of the vigilante movement in Warsaw Province, especially in the months after the October Manifesto, was the attempt to institutionalize popular justice as an alternative to the regular legal system. The gmina of Belsk in Grójec County resolved to form its own police and claimed that if the authorities released a criminal, “he will then be brought before the people’s court.”\textsuperscript{129} Peasant courts and committees to prosecute criminals were also set up in the gminy of Radecznica, Wola Bogłowska, and Przybyszew.\textsuperscript{130}

In Lublin Province, peasant vigilantism swept over seven counties, beginning in areas that were predominantly Polish in November and December and then spreading to the largely Ukrainian communities of Chełm and Zamość counties in the first months of 1906. In Lublin County, one of the few places where the agrarian section of the PPS wielded some influence in the countryside, vigilante assaults on settlements inhabited by criminals were reportedly inspired by socialist agitation.\textsuperscript{131} If so, they provide the only cases of external involvement and organization. Dozens of peasants were arrested in these incidents, but punishment was relatively light. For example, fourteen peasants from the colony of Borzechów, the scene of a particularly violent samosąd, were sentenced to one-month jail sentences for their active leadership of a vigilante mob of two hundred.\textsuperscript{132} The contagion of popular justice also spread to the Jewish communities scattered in small towns throughout the province. In Chełm a crowd of Jews captured sixteen local thieves and held them in a prayer house until they agreed to return the stolen goods; those who refused were administered severe beatings before the authorities could intervene.\textsuperscript{133}

Violent samosądy were also reported in Kielce, Radom, Łomża, and Suwałki provinces in the last three months of 1905. In Ilża County (Radom Province), crowds of as many of five hundred peasants tried to eliminate criminals in the area. Dragoons stopped one of these crowds near Lipsko on November 16. When the frenzied mob refused to disperse, the soldiers

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., November 8 (21), 1905.
\textsuperscript{129} AGAD KGGW 2505, Warsaw Governor to the WGG, December 28, 1905 (January 10, 1906).
\textsuperscript{130} Lewis, “Revolution in the Countryside,” pp. 23–24.
\textsuperscript{131} AGAD KGGW 2515, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, November 16 (29), 1905, and Lublin Governor to the WGG, December 4 (17), 1905.
\textsuperscript{132} AGAD KGGW 2515, Provisional Governor-General of Lublin Province to the WGG, December 30, 1905 (January 12, 1906); APL KGL 1905:178/2, Chief of Lublin County to the Lublin Governor, December 10 (23), 1905.
\textsuperscript{133} AGAD KGGW 2515, Report of SDPA to the WGG, December 22, 1905 (January 4, 1906).
fired, mortally wounding six peasants. In Suwałki Province, vigilantism was largely a Lithuanian movement. The most violent incident occurred in Mariampol County, where Lithuanian peasants waged a running battle with criminal arsons. On the night of December 14–15, a crowd pummeled seven thieves, who later died from their injuries. In this instance, the authorities were not inclined toward leniency; nine members of the crowd were arrested and charged with murder.

Armed robbers and horse thieves were the overwhelming majority but not the only targets of peasant vigilantism. In May 1905, Stanisław Torka, a forest guard on the Kruszyn estate in Noworadomsk County (Piotrków Province) shot and killed the peasant Ewa Cesiel ska while she was illegally gathering firewood. A crowd of four hundred peasants then descended on Kruszyn, intending to carry out vigilante justice. Although stopped by estate officials and members of the Land Guard, the crowd gave them a week to turn over Torka, threatening to pillage the estate if refused. The incident ended when Torka fled before the peasants’ deadline expired. In January 1906, the body of a state forest ranger was found in the village of Borki in Końskie County (Radom Province). His death was apparently the work of peasant vigilantes who retaliated against the guard’s behavior during recent trespassing incidents. In addition to forest guards, hated members of the rural police, soldiers who had displayed excessive brutality in dealing with the local population, and gmina officials who cooperated with the execution of repressive measures all figured among the victims of peasant samosądy.

Vigilantism, although it peaked in the last months of 1905, was the most persistent of the agrarian movements. New waves of peasant violence against thieves were reported in Plock, Kielce, and Warsaw provinces in the summer of 1906 and in Lublin and Radom provinces during the winter of 1906–1907. The mere restoration of formal state authority in the countryside was not enough to eliminate the popular resort to samosądy. Only with the dramatic increase in the size of the Land Guard in subsequent years, coupled with an improvement in the material condition of the police,
were the authorities able to check the expanding rate of rural crime as well as the spontaneous and violently reactive response of its peasant victims. Well before then, however, when rural vigilantism was reaching its peak at the end of 1905, it merged with other movements in the Polish countryside, both organized and spontaneous, to create a situation that many high-ranking state officials in the Kingdom characterized as ‘‘complete anarchy.’’

Rural Poland after the October Manifesto

The October Manifesto, with its promise of constitutional guarantees of basic civil freedoms along with a generally elected legislative assembly, also encouraged hopes for the restoration of an autonomous Kingdom of Poland. Rural Poland, the principal stage of the movement for home rule through gmina action, therefore greeted the manifesto of October 30 with genuine enthusiasm, even gratitude. The manifesto was officially proclaimed to the population during church services on Sunday, November 5, and was followed by large but peaceful demonstrations in hundreds of small towns dotting the Polish countryside. Throughout Russian Poland these national processions adhered to a fairly common pattern, indicative of a high degree of organization. They were almost exclusively initiated by National Democratic activists and sympathizers, whether landowners in Nowomińsk County (Warsaw Province), physicians in Pułtusk County (also Warsaw Province), Catholic clergy in Kalisz Province, or volunteer firemen in Ciechanów County (Plock Province). Members from all walks of rural society participated in the colorful processions, which were headed by the clergy and accompanied by the orchestras of volunteer fire departments intoning “Boże coś Polskę.” The volunteer firemen also assumed responsibility for preserving order. After an expression of thanks to the tsar for the new “freedoms,” the crowds dispersed to their homes, which were then illuminated by candles. The only incidents of violence occurred later that night and involved the vandalism of unlit homes, usually belonging to local Russian administrative and police officials. In the town of Turek (Kalisz Province), for example, a stockbroker, a tax assessor, a no-

138. AGAD KGGW 2504, Warsaw Governor to the WGG, November 15 (28), 1905; 2505, Warsaw Governor to the WGG, November 22 (December 5), 1905; 2507, Kalisz Governor to the WGG, October 29 (November 11), 1905; and 2517, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, November 3 (16), 1905.
tary, a treasury official, and a postal-telegraph official, all Russians, had their windows smashed.\textsuperscript{139}

Despite the peaceful and celebratory mood of early November, rural society did not patiently await the implementation of the new "freedoms." Encouraged by nationalist propaganda and widespread reports in the Polish press of imminent political autonomy, peasants wasted little time in stepping up their attacks on the most visible symbols of foreign rule. The destruction of Russian-language road, street, and building signs now assumed epidemic proportions in parts of Warsaw, Łomża, Lublin, Suwałki, and Siedlce provinces.\textsuperscript{140} Elementary schools, another traditional target of rural discontent, also came under increasing popular assault. In Warsaw Province alone, sixty-six primary schools were closed in early November because of attacks on schools and teachers, boycotts by pupils and parents, or the refusal of gmina assemblies to meet contracted obligations.\textsuperscript{141} Peasants in Itża County (Radom Province) added state vodka stores and local government buildings to their list of "Russian" targets.\textsuperscript{142}

In this atmosphere charged with expectations of home rule, gmina action now assumed the proportions of a tidal wave. In the three months following the October Manifesto, more than four hundred communal assemblies joined the movement for the complete polonization of rural administrative, educational, and judicial institutions. Although gmina action continued to follow orderly procedural forms, the diversity and assertive nature of the assembly resolutions point to the movement's growing popularization and radicalization. In Nieszawa County (Warsaw Province) all gmina assemblies resolved in early November to withhold funding for village schools until Polish became the exclusive language of instruction.\textsuperscript{143} Some assemblies, like that in Lubanie, further resolved not to pay the salary of the village school teacher, to forbid the presence of members of the Land Guard at assembly meetings, and to replace bilingual road and building signs with their Polish equivalents.\textsuperscript{144} The Czemiernik gmina assembly (Lubartów County, Lublin Province) went further: in addition to demanding

\textsuperscript{139} AGAD KGGW 2507, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, October 29 (November 11), 1905.

\textsuperscript{140} AGAD KGGW 2504, Warsaw Governor to the WGG, October 25 (November 7), 1905; 2512, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, November 18 (December 1), 1905; 2515, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, November 1 (14), 1905; 2524, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, December 5 (18), 1905; and 2527, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, November 16 (29), 1905.

\textsuperscript{141} Michal Szulkin, \textit{Strajk szkolny 1905 roku} (Wrocław, 1959), pp. 151–152.

\textsuperscript{142} AGAD KGGW 2520, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, November 4 (17), 1905.

\textsuperscript{143} AGAD KGGW 2504, Warsaw Governor to the WGG, November 1 (14), 1905.

\textsuperscript{144} AGAD KGGW 2504, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, November 9 (22), 1905.
the polonization of local institutions and the barring of police functionaries from assembly meetings, it resolved to prepare the official gmina seal in Polish, to remove the settlement of disputes between peasants from the jurisdiction of peasant commissars, and to resist the implementation of administrative fines and sentences.\textsuperscript{145}

According to the governor of Piotrków Province, gmina action gathered particular strength in those parts of his province where local community officials, namely mayors and clerks, joined the movement.\textsuperscript{146} Indeed, as Richard Lewis has pointed out for the country as a whole, the expanded role of gmina administrators in this intense phase of the movement represented a most dramatic change in local leadership patterns.\textsuperscript{147} Earlier viewed as "lackeys" of the Russian government because of their refusal to support or cooperate with the implementation of "illegal" assembly resolutions, mayors and clerks had lost a good deal of their authority. Some had actually been removed from office by their constituents; others had been subjected to violent physical attacks. For example, the pisarz of Ćmielow gmina (Radom Province), a well-known opponent of gmina action, was murdered on September 22.\textsuperscript{148} The escalation of such incidents, together with the desire to maintain their positions and salaries, prompted the defection, especially after the October Manifesto, of increasing numbers of community officials to the side of the government's opponents.

The steady erosion of this former base of support in the Polish countryside, coupled with the perception that the revolutionary movement was making ever-deeper inroads among a previously apolitical peasantry, contributed to the government's decision of November 10 to extend martial law from the Warsaw and Łódź industrial regions to all of Russian Poland. But whereas military rule helped to pacify urban areas as the great general strike came to an end, it did little to restore immediate order to the villages. Concentrating its main effort in the cities, the state lacked the manpower and resources to reestablish its authority, quickly and effectively, in the countryside. To be sure, "binding" decrees were issued by the Warsaw governor-general as well as by the "temporary" provincial military governors. The local population was made liable for all property damage incurred as a result of attacks on public and state institutions; those who resisted payment could be subjected to fines of up to three thousand rubles.

\textsuperscript{145} APL KGL 1905:194.
\textsuperscript{146} APL KGP 1521, Piotrków Governor to the WGG, January 25 (February 7), 1906.
\textsuperscript{147} Lewis, "Revolution in the Countryside," p. 15.
\textsuperscript{148} AGAD KGGW 2519, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, September 19 (October 2), 1905.
or to three months in jail. In Radom Province, rural communities were made responsible for the defense of telegraph lines, railroad tracks, and bridges and financially liable for all damages to state property "regardless of the circumstances." Yet the attacks on state institutions and property continued, and efforts to collect fines from rural communities met with open resistance. In Opatów County (Radom Province), not only did rural residents refuse to defend state property, but they began actively to resist tax collection, a phenomenon that quickly spread to other parts of the province. Without the means of enforcement, the state's attempt to impose martial law in rural Poland only served to exacerbate existing tensions. In Kielce Province, relatively quiet thus far according to its governor, martial law immediately transformed an "abnormal" relationship between the population and the authorities to one of "open hatred" of the former for the latter. Likewise in Łomża Province, the genuine gratitude to the tsar displayed in early November quickly dissipated after the proclamation of martial law.

The decision to lift martial law at the end of November, made after a mere eighteen days in force, that is, before it had made any real impact, also proved ill-advised. Again, as in early November, small towns became the scene of large Polish patriotic demonstrations. In the meantime a clear shift had occurred in popular attitudes. The largely peasant crowds now claimed victory, which is how they interpreted the lifting of martial law, and, unwilling to wait for further concessions from above, they began to seize its fruits from below. The next three weeks, from December 1 to December 22 (the date when martial law was reimposed), marked the peak of the revolution in the countryside.

During these three weeks, state power virtually collapsed as rural communities defiantly substituted "Polish" for "Russian" authority. In Płonsk and Kutno counties of Warsaw Province, gmina correspondence was conducted exclusively in Polish, whereas in the remaining counties of the province, peasants signed only the Polish text of assembly protocols. In Mława County (Płock Province), one of the original centers of gmina

149. APL KGP 1518, Decree of the WGG, October 16 (29), 1905.
150. AGAD KGGW 2520, Proclamations of Provisional Governor-General of Radom Province, November 4 (17) and November 6 (19), 1905.
151. AGAD KGGW 2520, Provisional Governor-General of Radom Province to the WGG, November 9 (22), 1905.
152. AGAD KGGW 2509, Kielce Governor to the WGG, November 7 (20), 1905.
153. AGAD KGGW 2512, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, December 10 (23), 1905.
154. AGAD KGGW 2505, Warsaw Governor to the WGG, November 24 (December 7), 1905.
action, twenty-five mayors and clerks appeared before the county chief without their Russian badges and submitted only Polish versions of their assemblies’ resolutions. Earlier they had agreed to resign en masse if the authorities removed any of their number from office. Similarly, twenty-four gmina court officials from the first circuit of Płock Province collectively resolved to conduct legal proceedings and correspond with the authorities exclusively in the Polish language. The arbitrary and exclusive use of Polish also extended to the village schools throughout the Kingdom. Teachers who refused to abide by gmina decisions were summarily dismissed and their schools closed. In Garwolin County (Siedlce Province), the teachers themselves resolved to conduct lessons solely in Polish at their local congress of December 10.

Gmina assemblies, moreover, asserted the right to elect all local officials, either in community resolutions or through direct action. For example, in Koło County (Kalisz Province), all gmina clerks appointed by the county chief were removed from office and replaced by newly elected ones. Other rural communities sought to democratize local government by eliminating property qualifications for participation in assembly meetings. During this period, many assemblies, such as the one in Izbica (Krasnystaw County, Lublin Province), permitted those without voting rights to participate in its meetings, in blatant disregard of the warnings of county and police officials who were also in attendance. A late-December resolution of the Wyszków gmina assembly (Pultusk County, Warsaw Province) extended the vote to all inhabitants of the commune, including one hundred people who had attended the meeting illegally and affixed their signatures to its protocol.

The democratization of gmina action at the end of 1905 indicated the growing appeal of populist, and to a lesser extent, socialist propaganda in the villages. Three PPS agitators, for example, attended the aforementioned

155. AGAD KGGW 2515, Resolutions of the Congress of Gmina Mayors and Clerks of Miława County, November 29 (December 12) 1905, and 2517, Report of SDPA to the WGG, December 16 (29), 1905.
156. AGAD KGGW 2517, Telegram of the Provisional Governor-General of Płock Province to the WGG, December 11 (24), 1905, and Senior President of the Warsaw District Court to the WGG, December 16 (29), 1905.
157. AGAD KGGW 2527, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, December 3 (16), 1905.
158. AGAD KGGW 2507, Kalisz Governor to the WGG, December 10 (23), 1905.
159. APL KGL 1905:267/2, Chief of the Lublin Provincial Gendarmes to the Lublin Governor, December 31, 1905 (January 13, 1906).
160. APW WGGŻ 1836, Resolutions of the Wyszków Gmina Assembly of December 15 (28), 1905.
Wyszków assembly meeting.\textsuperscript{161} Populist influences, however, were making even greater inroads. In November, an appeal of the Polish People’s Union (Polski Związek Ludowy—PZL) had called upon peasants to demand the convocation of a national legislature in Warsaw, equal voting rights for all community members, radical tax reform, and a limitation of the military service of the Kingdom’s residents to their own country, all of which now found their way into the resolutions of several gmina assemblies.\textsuperscript{162} Inspired by the success of this agitation, the PZL went even further in December, encouraging peasants not to pay taxes or provide recruits. It also called upon community officials to refrain from dealing with the Russian government until demands for “our own national government” had been satisfied.\textsuperscript{163}

Such propaganda harmonized with the radical and exceedingly anarchic inclinations of the peasants themselves. The peasant tax revolt, which had begun in Radom Province in early November, spread quickly to several other provinces after the lifting of martial law. Some assemblies resolved not to pay specific taxes; others sanctioned nonpayment of all taxes. Government efforts to collect encountered violent resistance. Tax collectors were chased from the villages; local officials assisting in tax collection were physically assaulted; and county officials were prohibited from auditing community records. To break the resistance of Siemień gmina (Radzyń County) to tax collection, the Siedlce governor ordered the sequestering of peasant livestock, which was then sold at government auction.\textsuperscript{164} Local inhabitants responded, however, by boycotting the auction. In Opatów County (Radom Province), where the tax revolt eventually involved ten gminy, the use of Cossacks to collect taxes, though temporarily successful, deprived towns in this mixed rural-industrial region of adequate troop strength.\textsuperscript{165}

Similarly, in Opatów County, conscripts from eleven gminy refused induction into the army.\textsuperscript{166} At the settlement of Grodzisk (Błonie County, Warsaw Province), a crowd of peasants prevented recruits from reporting for military service. Troops sent to restore order then clashed with local

\textsuperscript{161} APW WGŻŻ 2484, Report of the Chief of the Warsaw Provincial Gendarmes, September 20 (October 3), 1906.
\textsuperscript{162} AGAD KGGW 2505, Appeal of the PZL, November 1905.
\textsuperscript{163} AGAD KGGW 2517, Plock Governor to the WGG, December 10 (23), 1905.
\textsuperscript{164} AGAD KGGW 2527, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, December 1 (14), 1905.
\textsuperscript{165} Kalubiński, \textit{Karát i klasy posiadające}, pp. 388, 410.
\textsuperscript{166} AGAD KGGW 2520, Provisional Governor-General of Radom Province to the WGG, December 24, 1905 (January 6, 1906).
residents, leaving two dead in a bloody melee.\textsuperscript{167} Throughout the Kingdom, gmina assemblies passed resolutions calling on local recruits to refuse military service. As a result of this widespread popular resistance to conscription, according to one account, the authorities were able to mobilize in the Kingdom in 1905 only 70 percent of those called up for military service.\textsuperscript{168}

Rural communities frequently coupled their refusal to provide recruits for the tsar’s army with resolutions that renounced their obligation to provide supplies (usually in the form of food and lodging) for the Land Guard and provincial gendarmes. In its resolution, the Kościelnice gmina assembly (Turek County, Kalisz Province) justified its refusal to subsidize the rural police “because the Land Guard is not necessary.”\textsuperscript{169} The Otwock assembly (Nowomińsk County, Warsaw Province) went even further, resolving to remove the Land Guard from the gmina and to replace it with a popular guard formed from local inhabitants.\textsuperscript{170} Throughout Siedlce Province, where a branch of the monarchist and ultranationalist Union of the Russian People had recently announced its existence, crowds of peasants mustered in arms (mainly hunting weapons) to defend their communities from the rumored arrival of “Black Hundreds.”\textsuperscript{171} The formation of popular militias and self-defense forces in the countryside coincided, moreover, with the already mentioned creation of “people’s courts” to administer popular justice and defend village communities from rural crime.

As peasants formed their own indigenous institutions, attacks on Russian state institutions continued to escalate. In Warsaw Province, post offices, vodka retail outlets, and local administrative offices provided the principal targets of crowds that numbered in the several hundreds. One such crowd ransacked gmina administration offices in Rudzienko, ousted the local mayor and clerk, and destroyed deeds and documents in the chancellory.\textsuperscript{172} Rioting in the settlement of Białobrzegi (Radom Province) resulted in damages to state property in the amount of almost two thousand rubles as local residents “failed to take any measures to stop the looting and aid po-

\textsuperscript{167} AGAD KGGW 2505, Warsaw Vice-Governor to the WGG, December 2 (15), 1905, and Warsaw Governor to the WGG, December 17 (30), 1905.
\textsuperscript{168} Borkowski, \textit{Chłopi polscy w wieku kapitalizmu}, p. 118.
\textsuperscript{169} AGAD KGGW 2507, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, November 30 (December 13), 1905.
\textsuperscript{170} APW WGGŻ 1724, Chief of the Gendarmes of Warsaw, Nowomińsk, and Radzymin counties to the Chief of the Warsaw Provincial Gendarmes, January 5 (18), 1906.
\textsuperscript{171} AGAD KGGW 2527, Siedlce Governor to the WGG, November 29 (December 12), 1905; Provisional Governor-General of Siedlce Province to the WGG, December 23 and 26, 1905 (January 4 and 7, 1906).
\textsuperscript{172} AGAD KGGW 2505, Warsaw Governor to the WGG, December 19, 1905 (January 1, 1906).
lice.” In the four Lithuanian countries of Suwałki Province, incidents of arson against state institutions became so widespread as to convince St. Petersburg to approve provincial requests for a localized reintroduction of martial law already on December 17.

Crowd violence, moreover, did not confine itself to institutions. Gmina assemblies in Lithuanian Suwałki openly threatened police officials and gendarmes with death if they even appeared in their communities. Consequently, all twenty-four members of the Land Guard in Wylkowyszki County were transferred to the county seat out of concern for their lives. Similarly, members of the rural police in Gostynin County (Warsaw Province) and Koło County (Kalisz Province) asked to be either transferred or relieved of their duties because of threats against their lives. A dramatic increase in attacks on the rural police, “even on their quarters at night,” totally “terrorized” and “paralyzed” the Land Guard in Kielce Province, according to its governor. Likewise in Łomża Province, those members of the Land Guard who resided among the population, few in number and poorly armed, found themselves “in an impossible situation” and were “in daily fear for their lives.”

Everywhere the precarious condition of the Land Guard inspired alarming reports from provincial officials bemoaning anarchy, chaos, and the collapse of civil administration. Equally alarmed were the National Democrats, who feared losing control over events in the countryside to peasant spontaneity and political rivals. Already in November, the Endecja warned against “excesses” of rural violence fanned by “subversives” which only served to provide the Russian government with a pretext for military intervention. By December, the Endecja was reduced to using the argument that it would be much worse under German rule, which would be the inevitable result if the peasants listened to “the socialists.” The truth of the matter, however, was that by the beginning of winter, appeals for calm behavior, regardless of the quarter from which they came, could

173. AGAD KGGW 2521, Radom Governor to the WGG, February 22 (March 7), 1906.
174. AGAD KGGW 2524, Circular of the Suwałki Governor to County Chiefs, December 3 (16), 1905; and 2584, WGG to the Minister of Internal Affairs, December 2 (15), 1905.
175. AGAD KGGW 2524, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, December 5 (18), 1905.
176. AGAD KGGW 2505, Warsaw Vice-Governor to the WGG, December 3 (16), 1905; and 2507, Report of the SDPA to the WGG, December 30, 1905 (January 12, 1906).
177. AGAD KGGW 2509, Kielce Governor to the WGG, November 7 (20), 1905.
178. AGAD KGGW 2512, Provisional Governor-General of Łomża Province to the WGG, December 21, 1905 (January 3, 1906).
179. APW WGŻŻ 1747, Appeal of the National Democratic Organization in Opatów, November 1905.
180. AGAD KGGW 2505, Warsaw Governor to the WGG, December 14 (27), 1905.
not hope to restore order in a situation where organized state authority had seemingly evaporated. To reestablish that authority, the Russian government reintroduced martial law to the entire Kingdom on December 22.

In the course of 1905, revolution indeed came to the Polish countryside. Though not marked by violent social upheavals of peasants against the landed class, the revolt nevertheless resulted in a displacement, albeit temporary, of Russian authority from rural Poland. The creation of an alternative authority by popular forces from below to fill the vacuum left by the temporary abandonment of the countryside by Russian officials, nevertheless, failed to happen. To be sure, for the first time in its history, the peasantry of Russian Poland became actively engaged in political life. As a consequence of its inexperience, however, that engagement became absorbed more in the elimination of existing institutions than in their replacement by viable alternatives that could withstand a reassertion of state power. Makeshift people's courts could not substitute for a regular system of justice, nor could "secret instruction" be mistaken for a system of education. Popular guards and militias likewise failed to take the place of a regular police and army. Russian military rule, once it was applied with far greater seriousness of purpose, easily swept these ad hoc popular institutions away.

Yet restoring order in the Polish countryside proved no easy task, despite the severity of martial law after December 22. In some provinces, the process lasted months, elsewhere years. In the meantime, gmina assemblies continued to pass illegal resolutions; armed bands continued to attack state institutions; rural police and county officials remained targets of assassins; educational institutions remained closed; and vigilantism continued to claim victims among the criminal element. Eventually, through a massive injection of additional personnel and resources, the Russian government succeeded in arresting the upheaval that had engulfed the Polish countryside by the end of 1905. It never succeeded, however, in fully reestablishing the institutional authority of the state over the rural population.