

## PREFACE

The uprising began in Warsaw on January 22 (January 10 o.s.), 1863 and soon spread to disaffected elements throughout the Kingdom of Poland and the so-called Western Provinces—the latter a region roughly equivalent to modern-day Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. During the two years prior to the January Uprising, patriotic demonstrations rocked the region. In October 1861, the Russian viceroy of Poland declared martial law. He banned public gatherings and issued arrest warrants for certain leaders.

The vast majority of insurrectionists were ethnic Poles. Fighting alongside them were much smaller numbers of Lithuanian peasants and members of other ethnic groups. Most hailed from the petty nobility (i.e., the Polish *szlachta*) or town estates, though peasants and wealthy estate owners also accounted for a significant portion of the insurrectionists. Jews, who mostly lived in the Western Provinces, played a small role in the January Uprising, in contrast to their role in the uprising of 1830–1831. In 1862, Alexander II considerably broadened the rights of Poland's Jews (though not for Jews living in the Western Provinces), and this served to derail their participation in the protests that culminated in the January Uprising. Some Jews did join the uprising; by and large, however, they maintained an allegiance to St. Petersburg and hoped that the rights they won in 1862 would not be lost.

Hundreds of ethnic Russians and foreign nationals, inspired by the Poles' national aspirations and their resistance to the imperial Goliath, joined the struggle. Russian university students, awakening to the nascent populist movement, were inspired to leave their studies and join the uprising. Other Russians left the military to do so. Some foreigners were

inspired by Giuseppe Garibaldi and his march on Rome a year earlier. Most probably knew their cause was doomed, but nonetheless regarded it as a romantic and heroic effort. One such foreign fighter was Francesco Nullo, of Bergamo, Italy, who formed an Italian legion of twenty fighters. He and most of his associates had been officers in Garibaldi's army. Arriving just in time for the Battle of Krzykawka on May 5, 1863, the legion was destroyed. Nullo and several others were killed; the rest of his men escaped to Galicia or were captured and exiled to Siberia.

The uprising's social heterogeneity rendered it a truly popular rebellion, a fact that helps explain the harshness with which Alexander II suppressed it. Within the empire, ethnic Russians accounted for only slightly more than half the total population, and though there is no indication that the January Uprising inspired other subject populations to rebel at the time, the emperor undoubtedly calculated that a harsh repression of the Poles would forestall problems elsewhere. St. Petersburg may also have been alarmed by the Taiping Rebellion in China, still raging at the time of the January Uprising, and which involved an army of as many as half-a-million peasants battling the troops of the Qing dynasty. Ever since the Time of Troubles during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Russian Crown had learned to fear the fury its subjects could unleash.

For nearly a year, soldiers led by General Mikhail N. Murav'ëv and other top commanders fought to reassert Russian dominance over Poland and the Western Provinces. Murav'ëv's pacification methods won him renown as "The Hangman." Murav'ëv did summarily execute many insurrectionists. Yet, with his emperor's approval, he deported many more. Ultimately, the Russian government would deport tens of thousands of Poles and other residents from the Kingdom of Poland and the Western Provinces during the period 1863–1880. Most deportees were sent to Siberia.

Whereas historians have written about the January Uprising, little scholarship exists on the insurrectionists' actual deportation to, and exile in, Siberia, and nearly all that does exist is written in Russian. *The Mass Deportation of Poles to Siberia, 1863–1880* is the first book in English to discuss the deportation of the Polish insurrectionists, their experiences in Siberia, the tsarist government's administration of them, and the consequences of one of the largest forced migrations of Europeans prior to World War I. This is not a simple tale of heroes and villains. It is first of all an analysis of why the Russian government chose certain policies, and how it enacted (or failed to enact) these policies. This is a study of the tsarist bureaucracy, with a particular focus on the Siberian context. Secondly,

and no less importantly, this is a social history of the Polish insurrectionists in exile. It seeks to illustrate both the realities they faced as well as the world they made for themselves. Many notable and educated Poles were exiled as a result of the January Uprising, and many later wrote memoirs about which other historians have written. However, most of the Polish exiles were neither of noble birth nor particularly well-educated. This study examines this group of so-called subaltern actors in particular so as to return them to the historical narrative.

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The Mass Deportation of Poles to Siberia, 1863-1880

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