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'RUSSIAN BARBARISM' IN THE PROPAGANDA OF THE POLISH JANUARY UPRISING (1863–1864)

The focus here is 'Russian barbarism' as the topic of Polish propaganda in the context of the January Uprising. The inverted commas, of course, do not suggest that the acts of cruelty committed by the Russians were invented by the Poles: the thing is, the 'barbaric' depiction of the Russians in the Polish propaganda constituted part of a designed whole that in the diplomatic game of the time was to play an essential role. My argument is that this role consisted of developing a premise for humanitarian intervention. Since the latter, an institution of international law taking shape in the nineteenth century, had to do with a colonial vision of the world, the Polish propaganda tended to 'orientalise' Russia. Thus, the 'Russian barbarism' concept provides a paradoxical situation where imperial discourse was used by a subdued nation against an invading empire.

In the course of this insurrection, a hundred pamphlets were published in Western countries dealing with the situation in the (Congress) Kingdom of Poland, not to mention a number of articles scattered across Western newspapers and magazines.¹ This is fascinating material for a book focusing on this nineteenth-century propaganda war; a single author would not be able to take command of all the resources though. Hence, I have limited myself herein to the materials of Polish propaganda – that is, those generated

¹ Michel Fridieff, 'L'opinion publique française et l'insurrection polonaise de 1863', *Le Monde Slave*, xv, 2 (1938), 348; this volume is confirmed by Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz, 'Francuska opinia publiczna wobec powstania styczniowego', in Sławomir Kalembka (ed.), *Powstanie styczniowe 1863–1864. Wrzenie – bój – Europa – wizje* (Warsaw, 1990), 573–4.

by the Central Agency's Printing Department and published in the Cracow daily *Czas*, the latter being commonly regarded in 1863 as a sort of official journal of the insurgent government.² This resource is in itself abundant enough and, in combination with the diplomatic correspondences of the time, it enables one to reconstruct the direction of the propaganda associated with Polish diplomatic action.³

² The Printing Department prepared materials of use in influencing the authorities' elite (notes, memorials, collections of documents regarding the uprising) and public opinion (news services, political articles and pamphlets). A body of the diplomatic documents has been published by Adam Lewak (ed.), *Polska działalność dyplomatyczna 1863–1864* (Warsaw, 1937) [hereafter: PDD, 1] and *Polska działalność dyplomatyczna 1863–1864: zbiór dokumentów, ii: Korespondencja agentów dyplomatycznych Rządu Narodowego* (Warsaw, 1963) [hereafter: PDD, 2]. Władysław Czartoryski, *Pamiętnik 1860–1864. Protokoły posiedzeń Biura Hotelu Lambert*, pts. i–ii: *Entrevues politiques*, ed. Henryk Wereszycki (Warsaw, 1960) provides a valuable complementary resource. Amongst the document collections supporting the diplomatic as well as propaganda action, the following come to the fore: *Code rouge: ordonnances et circulaires des generaux Mourawieff, Dlotowskoi, Annenkoff, Lowchine etc* (Paris, 1863); and, Władysław Czartoryski, *Affaires de Pologne: Exposé de la situation suivi de documents et pièces justificatives. Communiqué aux membres du Sénat et du Corps Legislatif* (Paris, 1863) (also published in English). The Western reader encountered broader campaigning, as a rule, through press agencies and established journals and magazines, as the idea to set up an owned press organ in the West was quit. In light of this practice, the *Éphémérides polonaises*, edited by Leon Kapliński, a bulletin of uprising incidents and a source of the material made use of by the Printing Dept. in other works, appears as a unique phenomenon; see *Éphémérides polonaises* (Paris, 1863–4). The bulletin's first two volumes (*Février et Mars* [hereafter: EP, 1], *Avril, Mai et Juin* [hereafter: EP, 2]) were issued in 1863, the third (*Juillet, Août et Septembre* [hereafter: EP, 3]) in 1864. Amongst the most important journalistic actions calling for being taken into account in a discussion on the accusations of Russian 'barbarism', the pamphlet by H. Forbes, *Poland and the interests and duties of western civilization* (London, 1863), inspired by Prince Czartoryski, ought to be mentioned. As for the propaganda-related importance of the Cracow's *Czas*, let us remark that the daily's content was translated in Paris into French and forwarded to French ministers and dignitaries.

³ I accordingly leave aside herein the uprising's internal propaganda; cf. Franciszka Ramotowska, *Tajemne państwo polskie w powstaniu styczniowym 1863–1864. Struktura organizacyjna*, 2 vols. (Warsaw, 1999), *passim*; Marek Jaeger, *Działalność propagandowo-informacyjna władz powstańczych (1794, 1830–1831, 1863–1864)* (Lublin, 2002).

I THE JANUARY UPRISING

In January 1863, the Kingdom of Poland was part of the Russian Empire, when an uprising broke out against the Empire's power. This outbreak was obviously not a 'must' but it did not come as a surprise at all. Suppressed independence and civilisational backwardness were the basic challenges for the Polish elite during the period when the former Commonwealth remained partitioned. The patriotic canon developed by the Polish emigration community cherished the prevalent idea of one day regaining independence by galvanising the social energy that would be released as part of a modernisation process. At home, however, this canon was tempered by the reality of an existence within the limits of the invader countries. Hence, modernisation seldom turned out to be the main objective of actions taken in the public sphere.⁴ Such actions were frowned upon in Petersburg, where it was legitimately feared that they might lead to an arousal in Polish political aspirations, extending not just to the Congress Kingdom, but to the entire pre-partition Commonwealth area, including lands directly incorporated into the Empire (so-called 'Stolen Lands'), which the Russians considered indigenously Russian. Therefore, a combination of a lack of reform, restricted education and hindered development of modern economic and cultural institutions was regarded as a recipe for peace in Poland. This strategy, efficient as it was during the reign of Tsar Nicholas I, proved useless in the years of intellectual ferment that overwhelmed Russia after its defeat in the Crimean War. The more splendid the prospects of reform were in the metropolis, the more disillusioned his Polish subjects in the Kingdom became with the scope of concessions Alexander II resolved to make. It can be said, in this sense, that the outbreak of the uprising was a national response to the exclusive modernisation of the Empire.

The uprising owed its outbreak to the 'Reds' faction. Beginning in the autumn of 1861, they had been building a secretive National Organisation, declaring (on 1 September 1862) its leading body, the National Central Committee, to be a legal 'country

⁴ The dilemmas of Polish nineteenth-century elites are excellently described in *Dzieje inteligencji polskiej do 1918* [A history of the Polish intelligentsia], ed. Jerzy Jedlicki (Warsaw, 2008; the respective authors of this three-volume work are Maciej Janowski, Jerzy Jedlicki, Magdalena Micińska).

government'.⁵ The programme the 'Reds' advocated referred to the idea, elaborated by Polish democratic thought, that an uprising would break out at the moment when an enfranchisement reform was announced; thus, combat in the name of the country's independence was to be combined with social reforms which, it was believed, would enlarge the insurrection's social foundation. However, the 'Reds' gained real authority through a series of patriotic-religious demonstrations, which made them reign over the collective imagination. Apart from having a symbolic authority and a conspiratorial organisation, they lacked the means of action. These means were held by activists representing the circles of the landed gentry and great bourgeoisie, who formed a competitive faction known as the 'Whites'. Critical of a precipitate insurrection, they declared themselves in favour of the programme of slow modernisation (so-called organic labour), but the 'Whites' could not gain much popularity when compared to the patriotic propaganda of the 'Reds'. Although the 'Whites' endeavoured to prevent an uprising, they joined it once it broke out: partly due to their sense of patriotic duty and partly out of fear that the insurrection might turn into a social revolution. The resources at their disposal soon enabled the 'Whites' to take over power but they still had to take into account strong opposition from the 'Reds'. This is how the history of this uprising was marked by political conflict between the radical and the moderate factions of the national movement.

With the 'Whites' prevailing in the internal policy area, they, all the more so, grew prevalent in foreign policy. In preparing the uprising, the 'Red' activists gave almost no thought to the issue of foreign policy, failing to go beyond a vague idea of forging alliances with other peoples striving for freedom. Thus, soon after the outbreak, control over diplomacy was taken over by the highly experienced conservative-liberal emigration politicians of the Paris Hôtel Lambert milieu. Their spontaneous initiative was legalised ex-post by the Warsaw-based National Government as it nominated Prince Władysław Czartoryski, the leader of this political camp, the head of the Central Agency

⁵ Stefan Kieniewicz's *Powstanie styczniowe* (Warsaw, 1972) remains till this day an irreplaceable concise monograph of the January Uprising. For the most complete depiction of the development of the uprising's political structures, see Franciszka Ramotowska, *Narodziny tajemnego państwa polskiego 1859–1862* (Warsaw, 1990); and, *eadem*, *Tajemne państwo*.

(a foreign office equivalent). The political tradition of Hôtel Lambert was founded upon the conviction, elaborated over thirty years of emigration politics, whereby a national uprising should only be declared at the moment a war broke out between the Western powers and Russia.⁶ The events of the year 1863 enforced a strategy based on a reversal of this dependence: once an uprising was on anyway, a war ought to be brought about which would make the Western allies support the Polish insurrection.⁷ Most actions undertaken at that time by the Polish diplomatic service aimed at this goal; to attempt to replace diplomatic intervention in defence of the uprising with its humanitarian equivalent.

II HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

At the time when the Poles considered the concept of humanitarian intervention, the status of humanitarian intervention as an international law institution was only gaining shape.⁸ The process related to a sought-for resolution to the question of the legitimacy of the use of violence in defence of alien subjects against the tyranny of their government. The issue in question was verbalised in the seventeenth century by Hugo Grotius, as a side effect of his considerations on 'fair war'. However, since the time of Emmerich de Vattel, it was found

⁶ Hans Henning Hahn, *Außenpolitik in der Emigration. Die Exildiplomatie Adam Jerzy Czartoryskis 1830–1840* (Munich etc., 1978).

⁷ On international aspects of the January Uprising, see, primarily, Henryk Wereszycki, *Austria a powstanie styczniowe* (Lvov, 1930); *idem*, *Anglia a Polska w latach 1860–1865* (Lvov, 1934); Vladimir G. Revunenkov, *Pol'skoe vosstanie 1863 g. i evropeiskaya diplomatiya* (Leningrad [Saint Petersburg], 1957); Stefan Bóbr-Tylingo, *Napoléon III, l'Europe et la Pologne en 1863–64* (Antemurale, vii–viii, Rome, 1963); Hans-Werner Rautenberg, *Der polnische Aufstand von 1863 und die europäische Politik: im Spiegel der deutschen Diplomatie und der öffentlichen Meinung* (Wiesbaden, 1979); Ludwik Bazylow (ed.), *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, iii (Warsaw, 1983), 478–628 (the sections on January Uprising are authored by Henryk Wereszycki and Jerzy Zdrada) [hereafter: HDP].

⁸ Mark Swatek-Evenstein, *Geschichte der "Humanitären Intervention"* (Baden-Baden, 2008); Aleksandra Mężykowska, *Interwencja humanitarna w świetle prawa międzynarodowego* (Warsaw, 2008); Francis Kofi Abiew, *The Evolution of the Doctrine and Practice of Humanitarian Intervention* (The Hague, 1999).

necessary to distinguish between the concept of humanitarian intervention and that of war on the grounds that such an intervention could be employed only in the pursuit of limited goals. The goals amounted to enforcing upon a ruler that the rights of his subjects should be respected.⁹ The intent behind this distinction was that an intervention, once applied to a country, would not menace its sovereignty; this seemed theoretically feasible as long as the modern idea of sovereignty was restricted by the rules of Divine and natural law. The gradual spreading of the notion of the absolute sovereignty of the state, and of the international community as a community of equal sovereigns, became in the first decades of the nineteenth century the basis for banning any intervention and, as such, turned out to be the main point of reference for the humanitarian intervention theory. In line with the doctrine of legal positivism, this theory developed no more on the basis of natural law, but instead, on the basis of positive law.¹⁰

For those claiming the theory's validity, the starting point was the fact that the period's law of nations considered war a legal means of claiming and pursuing one's interests. The argument went that if there were interests serving as the excuse for those striving for war, there could, all the more so, exist such ones which justified the use of measures below the threshold of war. Thus, the legal validity of humanitarian intervention appeared dependent upon the question: what sort of interests might be the basis for it? The answer most frequently given indicated that 'the considerations of Humanity' were in the interests of the entire of 'human society'. Not only are states members of an international community: indeed, they are part of the human commonwealth, with its specific rights, identical to those of the rights of man to live, possess and be free. Infringement upon those rights in a given country would give the others the right to defend them. Hence, humanitarian intervention was designed in the nineteenth century as an action of the 'human community' taken in defence of its specific interests; thus, as an 'intervention of Humanity' (*intervention d'humanité*).¹¹

Let us stress that 'Humanity', which was referred to in this construction, was not universal in its character (as a natural-law idea),

⁹ Swatek-Evenstein, *Geschichte*, 86–7.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 75–9; Abiew, *The Evolution*, 23–30, 34–7.

¹¹ Swatek-Evenstein, *Geschichte*, 59–63, 79–81.

but rather, it referred particularly to a certain civilisational standard elaborated on in Western Europe, as well as in a community (broader than Europe) within which it had been achieved. One may thus perceive 'Humanity', in the terms of such a concept, as a secularised version of the idea of *Christianitas*, and of the superiority of Christianity over the non-Christian world. The structure of the nineteenth-century law of nations was analogous: rather than extending to all the states regardless of cultural differences, it only covered the countries united under a common (European) order of values. This double particularism influenced, in an extremely material way, the character of 'intervention of Humanity', determining the identity of potential victims and perpetrators of intervention-triggering violence and suggesting the models of conduct in the given situation. The very definition of 'Humanity' implied that only violence aimed at members of the civilised commonwealth, committed by 'barbarians', could be the basis for humanitarian intervention and, indeed, only massacres inflicted on Christians were regarded as humanitarian disasters in the nineteenth century. This turned 'intervention of Humanity' into an instrument that could 'civilise the uncivilised nations' but could also highly obstruct a response in the case of a 'violation of Humanity' within the civilised community. Moreover, the placement of 'uncivilised nations' outside of 'Humanity' and beyond the law of nations resulted in no rigours being imposed in relations with them, for violation of which they would be stigmatised.¹² Hence, it was as if the 'barbarians' remained unaffected by 'barbarism'. This theoretical aspect of the doctrine's development was strictly connected with the diplomatic practice by which 'interventions of Humanity' were known to take place almost exclusively on the borderline between the Christian and Muslim worlds.

The humanitarian argumentation was first used during the war for Greece's independence (1821–30). Russia was the first to take it up, arguing that owing to its 'barbaric' conduct, Turkey placed itself beyond the limits of the European law of nations and could no longer be regarded as a 'civilised state'. This declaration was meant to support the strivings of Greek insurgents for aid from the European monarchs gathered at the Congress of Verona (1822), but it did not bring about the expected result as Chancellor Metternich opposed

¹² *Ibidem*, 64–71.

it, perceiving the Greek uprising only in terms of a rebellion against the legal authority.¹³ But this same declaration appeared efficient as a means of pressure on the British, who consequently quit their traditionally pro-Turkish position and resolved to regard the insurgents as a combating party, explaining this switch as an endeavour to turn a 'barbarian' war into a 'civilised' war (1823). This step, which *de facto* meant recognition of the Greeks as subjects of the law of nations, accelerated the Sultan's decision to send Ibrahim Pasha's corps to the Peloponnese in order to conclusively suppress the rebellion (1824). The extreme brutality with which the Egyptian general set about his task aroused a wave of outrage in Europe and provided a new premise for using the humanitarian argument. The aftermath of Ibrahim Pasha's actions gave the incentive for the emergence of the 'considerations of Humanity' that Russia and Britain referred to in the Petersburg protocol of 4 April 1826. These powers, referring to the Greeks' request for help, assigned thereby to themselves the right to take action, in view of bringing the war to an end, and determined that the means to achieve this should be the political separation of Greece with Ottoman sovereignty remaining preserved to her own territory. These decisions subsequently provided the foundation for the Treaty of London (6 July 1827) whereby Russia, Great Britain and France demanded an armistice as an introductory phase for the emergence of an independent Greece; the related secret protocol stated that in the case of the demand being rejected, the signatory states would use their combined forces to bring about this intention. Turkey was finally forced to accept the Treaty by means of the Adrianople Peace Treaty of 1829. As is known, however, this was not effectuated by the alliance of its signatories, which was decomposed after the Battle of Navarino (20 October 1827), but by Russia itself. By declaring war, Russia did not refer any more to the violated 'humanity considerations' but to Turkey's inadvertences against the treaties; in the Adrianople Treaty, Russia did not confine herself to ensuring the respect of the Greeks' rights but gained certain territorial and economic benefits as well.

This did not prevent some theorists (starting with H. Wheaton) and philosophers (J. S. Mill) from regarding Greece's war for inde-

¹³ This revolutionary interpretation was referred to also by Russia, in political circumstances it found convenient – e.g. in order to torpedo the plan of full independence for Greece, announced by Chancellor Metternich in 1825.

pendence as the first humanitarian intervention in history. However, as was shown by the attempted intervention of France and Britain in the Kingdom of Two Sicilies in 1856, the Greek case's precedence played a more important role in the theory of law than in political practice. The strife caused by Western powers who aimed to withhold the persecution of the political opposition in Sicily by means of demonstrating their power encountered resistance from Russian diplomacy which claimed that a verbal protest should suffice in such situations. The powers managed to work out a common position for the last humanitarian intervention before the January Uprising broke out in Poland – the intervention in Syria and Lebanon (1860–1) was namely considered as such. The triggering factor was the civil war between the Christian Maronites and the Islamic Druses, during which the victorious Muslims perpetrated a brutal retaliation on the defeated. The situation in Lebanon was brought under control by the Ottoman authorities but the pogrom occurring shortly after in the Christian quarter of Damascus (9–17 July 1860) induced a backlash in the European press which presented the events not as a civil war but as a 'massacre of defenceless Christians' committed with participation from the Turkish administration.¹⁴ This image of events was regarded as evidence of the Ottoman authorities being incapable of reinstating order and an international commission was offered to Turkey in view of this end with European troops offered to be sent to the conflict area, which finally happened, with the Sultan's consent, on 3 August 1860. The French contingent operated in Lebanon pursuant to a convention signed by representatives of Turkey and the European powers, which highlighted that the intervention did not aim at the territorial conquests, exclusive influences or commercial benefits of the signatories. The mandate thus restricted the actions taken on behalf of the international community and the nature of the premise for intervention meant that it is commonly regarded as an example of humanitarian intervention despite the involved powers formally referring to Turkey's failure to keep to the promises declared at the Paris Treaty; in fact, the French military mission did not play a serious part in reinstating peace as it was preceded by the Ottoman administration.¹⁵

¹⁴ Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus 1860* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1994), 108.

¹⁵ Swatek-Evenstein, *Geschichte*, 126–32.

Hence, the process of shaping humanitarian intervention as an international law institution was to a lesser extent connected with diplomatic practices than it was with the interpretations proposed by outstanding theoreticians of the law of nations. The doctrine was most comprehensively interpreted only by works published in the last quarter of the nineteenth century (e.g. those of Egidé Arntz, Gustave Rolin-Jaequemyns and Antoine Pillet), although the power of the humanitarian argument had been recognised and a structure of humanitarian intervention was getting into shape much earlier on. By the 1860s, the following elements were discernible within it: (i) the so-called trigger situation, consisting of a mass-scale violation of human rights in a ('uncivilised') country; (ii) the third-country intervention (most frequently involving a group of 'civilised' states) with the sole purpose of putting an end to the situation; (iii) the justification of the actions taken based on humanitarian considerations.¹⁶ Therefore, a specific type of propaganda constituted a prerequisite part of the intervention; it consisted of 'creating the barbarian', that is, drawing a profile of 'abominable, disgusting, abhorrent and barbarous' actions by a government which has triggered a humanitarian crisis.

Thus, 'intervention of Humanity' was connected with the 'orientalisation' of the incriminated state. Obviously, not based on the type of 'Orient' that, beginning with the eighteenth century, had from time to time served as a pattern of ideal civilisational solutions (like Montesquieu's Persians), or, by no means, the one that the Romanticist culture elected at times as the subject of identification, with 'noble barbarism' as a symbol of the great future of a 'retarded nation'.¹⁷ The 'Orient' that was evoked in an 'intervention of Humanity' was obviously the product of the imperial discourse that was based upon the difference between the reasonable, mature West, developed culturally and civilisation-wise, and the chaotic, immature (infantile), 'savage' East, which was regarded as incapable of developing on its own.¹⁸ By its very definition, this discourse was used by the empires to give

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 50–1; cf. humanitarian intervention legitimacy criteria by Abiew, *The Evolution*, 42–3.

¹⁷ Erazm Kuźma, *Mit Orientu i kultury Zachodu w literaturze XIX i XX wieku* (Szczecin, 1980); Andrzej Wierzbicki, *Europa w polskiej myśli historycznej i politycznej XIX i XX wieku* (Warsaw, 2009), 29–34.

¹⁸ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978); Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York, 1998).

grounds to the authority they held over their colonies and Russia referred to it quite naturally. Yet, Russia's status proved ambiguous in this respect as there was a strong tendency in European culture to refer to this particular empire as a colony ('Asian barbarism').¹⁹

It was these practices and their accompanying discourse that Polish diplomats referred to during the January Uprising of 1863–4.²⁰

III HUMANITARIAN ARGUMENTATION IN THE PROPAGANDA OF THE POLISH JANUARY UPRISING

The diplomatic intervention undertaken by the Western powers in 1863 in Petersburg required the Polish politicians to keep up appearances in a way that prevented them from being accused of striving for a war. The Central Agency, however, perceived this intervention essentially as a prologue to an armed intervention; in parallel, a number of initiatives were taken in the Black Sea area to potentially provoke the outbreak of a 'second oriental war'.²¹ However, insofar as the Polish foreign policy of 1863 was meant to bring about a military conflict between the Western coalition and Russia, the number one task for the Polish diplomatic service was to establish such an alliance. Since the delivery of this intent clashed with the conflicting interests and mutual mistrust amongst the Western powers, the importance of propaganda increased. The high rank of

¹⁹ Ewa M. Thompson, *Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism* (Contributions to the Study of World Literature, 99, Westport, Conn., 2000); Kuźma, *Mit Orientu*, 123–5.

²⁰ Today's historians of the law of nations sometimes consider the case of diplomatic intervention of the great powers in 1863 as an example of humanitarian intervention. M. Swatek-Evenstein, who is sceptical towards such an interpretation, remarks that it is not grounded in any 19th-century conceptualisation. This author highlights that the Russian policy with respect to the insurgents *de facto* corresponded with the period's criteria of humanitarian disaster; it was not regarded as such *de iure* because of the particularism of 'intervention of humanity' as advocated at the time. Cf. Swatek-Evenstein, *Geschichte*, 137–9.

²¹ The plans included a seizure of Odessa, yielding support to the insurrection in Cherkessia, and the development of a Polish fleet operating from the Turkish shore; through an involvement of Turkey and, possibly, Persia, against Russia, these drivers were meant to finally trigger an international conflict on the scale of 'a second oriental war'; PDD, 1, 254, 364, 367–78, 400, 403–6.

this factor was confirmed by the fact that a special cell was set up in the Polish diplomatic apparatus (called the Printing Department), joined by collaborators of the Hôtel Lambert milieu (Walerian Kalinka, Julian Klaczko, Leon Kapliński, Bronisław Zaleski, Ludwik Wołowski, Leon Zbyszewski) and tasked with managing the propaganda action.

The propaganda, forming part of the foreign policy structure, quite clearly served the delivery of the policy's purposes. Russia quite naturally became its central subject-matter: as a threat to Europe, in any incarnation of the latter concept (*Christianitas, Humanitas*, a system of states, Order and Civilisation), Russia was expected to consolidate the Western powers in defence of the values deemed European. In the uprising's propaganda, the conflict with Russia thus gained a universal dimension, the Polish cause becoming one of 'Order', 'Humanity', Christianity and the safety of Europe, all of which were threatened by the Russian empire's 'schism', 'barbarism' and 'revolution'. True, each of these incarnations of 'Moscow' bore a discernible component of 'barbarism' as a lack of, or threat to, civilisation; yet, the concept of 'barbarism' understood through non-humanitarian acts, that is, 'violations of Humanity', is the actual topic of this article. The description of these acts was the necessary premise for recognition of Russia's policy towards the uprising as a humanitarian disaster.

It is worth remarking, by the way, that similar arguments were used by the Poles before the uprising broke out: in order to reinforce their endeavours taken in London (1861–2) for a diplomatic intervention in Petersburg, they sought to take advantage of the impression exerted on the Western opinion by the bloody pacifications committed by the Russians against the peaceful demonstrations of February and April 1861 in Warsaw, and by the profanation of Warsaw churches on 15 October 1861.²² The Russian party could not make a 'relevant' reply to the Polish accusations of 'barbarism' at that time. In 1863, however, the Russians assumed a reversal strategy, creating, instead, an image of 'Polish barbarism', which, in the Russian propaganda, had two facets profiled for the use of, respectively, a conservative and a liberal critique of the uprising. The first, targeted primarily

²² HDP, 446–57; Wereszycki, *Anglia a Polska*, 22–43; Jerzy Zdrada, 'Sprawa polska w okresie powstania styczniowego', in Kalembska (ed.), *Powstanie styczniowe*, 448–9; Joanna Nowak, *Władysław Zamoyski. O sprawę polską w Europie (1848–1868)* (Poznań, 2002), 253–63.

at Western political elites, depicted the uprising in terms of a social revolution, which was a barbaric act as it destroyed the social order that was the foundation of civilisation. The crowning evidence of the barbarism of this sort was provided by the so-called 'St Bartholomew's Eve massacre' (i.e. an alleged slaughter of Russian soldiers committed the night the uprising broke out where attempts at representatives of the government administration were made and executions were sentenced by the Polish clandestine state). The other facet of 'Polish barbarism' was of a completely opposite character: analysis which made use of the Slavophilic concept of antagonism between 'Slavic folk' and the 'Latinised nobility' led to the conclusion that the uprising was a feudal rebellion against Tsar Alexander II's democratic reforms. Such a depiction enabled one to challenge the thesis whereby Poland was superior civilisation-wise over Russia and to reverse the stereotype of 'the Pole, the knight' into 'the Pole, the defender of savageness'.²³ It may thus be said that the military and diplomatic wrestle of 1863 was accompanied by a propaganda war,²⁴ which still calls for a comparative-studies depiction.

In 1863, the Poles presented their cause as a 'question of Humanity' whenever they noticed that it aroused reluctance or anxiety as a political matter. This was the reason why humanitarian arguments were first used in the actions taken in the United Kingdom. With regards to the politics towards the United Kingdom, the Polish diplomats were enduring a tactical dispute. W. Czartoryski claimed that aid for the uprising ought to be demanded from the British. However, Władysław Zamoyski, who informally represented Polish affairs in London, stressed that the British were reluctant to get involved in an

²³ Leonid E. Gorizontov, 'Pol'skaya tsivilizovannost' i "russkoe varvarstvo": osnovanie dlya stereotipov i avtostereotipov', in Mariya V. Leskinen and Victor A. Khorev (eds.), *Mif Evropy v literature i kul'ture Pol'shi i Rossii* (Moscow, 2004), 64–5; Mikhail Dolbilov and Aleksei Miller (eds.), *Zapadnye okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii* (Moscow, 2006), 210–11. The dissonance between this new stereotype of a Pole and the modernity of certain forms of Polish activity, proving astonishing to Russian officials, was described, on the example of the attitude towards the Catholic Church, by Mikhail Dolbilov, 'The Russifying Bureaucrats' Vision of Catholicism: The Case of Northwestern Krai after 1863', in Andrzej Nowak (ed.), *Rosja i Europa Wschodnia: "imperiologia" stosowana* (Cracow, 2006), 197–221.

²⁴ This was even noticed by Dmitrii Milyutin, the Russian war minister in 1863; see Larisa G. Zakharova (ed.), *Vospominaniya general-fel'dmarshala grafa Dmitriya A. Milyutina* (Moscow, 2003) [hereafter: Milyutin, *Vospominaniya*], 190–1, 253–4.

affair which entailed the menace of war. He consequently advised that, instead of help for the insurrection, a legal declaration be demanded that would refuse Russia the right to reign in Poland resulting from the violation of the conditions bound to this reign by the Treaty of Vienna (the so-called forfeiture concept).²⁵ There was a high possibility that acceptance of such a declaration would have led to a war; hence, Zamoyski's concept was designed as a stratagem, whatever one should think of its efficiency. In spite of the tactical differences between them, both politicians referred to 'Russian barbarism' but the diverse character of their elucidations also determined the different functions of the argument.

In Zamoyski's concept, substantially legalistic as it was, its function was persuasive: the 'savageness of Muscovite rule'²⁶ described the way in which Russia broke the treaty's terms and conditions for its rule in Poland. Thus, violation of the Vienna Treaty, rather than an offence to 'humanity', remained in the foreground. It is true that in his talks with British politicians, Zamoyski sometimes reversed this hierarchy, persuading that as long as Britain did not recognise the fact that the treaty had been broken, it would remain responsible to pursue the 'barbarian method' in which this violation was effected.²⁷ This did not, however, change the general meaning of the Zamoyski concept where the legalistic essence was encased with 'barbarism' rhetoric. This added to the United Kingdom's contempt due to negligence of its treaty-based obligations by indication of the scale of the infringements and the fact that 'savage barbarians' were the perpetrators.

The proper humanitarian argumentation appears in Czartoryski's British addresses, presenting 'Russian barbarism' as evidence of Europe's moral obligation to come to Poland's aid. Rather than being merely rhetorical reinforcement, it thus assumedly proved to be a substantive justification of the Polish demands to provide aid to the uprising, to bring about an armistice and, later, to recognise the Poles as a combating party. This argument was used by Czartoryski in his first conversation with Lord Palmerston (15 May),²⁸ but its tactical

²⁵ Joanna Nowak's *Władysław Zamoyski* is the most recent publication on this topic.

²⁶ The wording is used by Zamoyski in his talk with Lord Grey, see Czartoryski, *Pamiętnik*, 156.

²⁷ As e.g. in his talk with Lord Palmerston; see PDD, 2, pp. 322–3.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, 326.

meaning was explained by the Central Agency dispatch of a fortnight later that aimed at breaking Zamoyski's resistance to the armistice design promoted in Paris.²⁹ Presenting the advantages of the demand of an armistice, the dispatch found that it would put Russia before an uncomfortable choice. A consent for an armistice would *de facto* have afforded the Poles their belligerent rights and stood for recognition that the 'Stolen Lands' were Polish. Should Russia have rejected this demand, it would have proved that its actual "purpose is an extermination war, eradication of the name of Poland". Russia would have thus denounced itself before Europe, finally making Britain react. The British Government, trying to avoid proposals of political significance, would not be able to stay indifferent with respect to the humanitarian issue. Otherwise said, the humanitarian question was meant to serve as a lever for the political issue.³⁰ When, however, in his following conversation with the British Prime Minister (on 1 June), Czartoryski remarked that "the rights of humanity and righteousness require that we be recognised [as a belligerent]", the reply he received was, "we're talking politics, not humanity".³¹ Nonetheless, the more the British politicians challenged the influence of the question of 'Humanity' on politics, the more willingly they referred to the Polish cause as a humanitarian issue: this enabled them – as a complete opposite to what the Poles expected – to evade making a political declaration.³²

It remains a matter of fact, though, that social factors (the British opinion of being outraged at 'Russian barbarism') and political factors that had a say in the first months of the uprising (the will to push France against Russia) incited the British politicians to create an impression that they were driven by humanitarian considerations as far as the Polish affair was concerned.³³ To make use of this climate, Czartoryski resorted in his first talks to a quite simplified argumentation pattern, where 'Russian barbarism' was the simple premise

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 331–3.

³⁰ N.B., this same argument was also used in the Russian propaganda against the Poles, who were accused of cruelty. Albeit such a message was not quite trusted amongst the British politicians – Palmerston reported Czartoryski on these accusations with irony, it nonetheless facilitated the game for them; Lord Russell repeated them in the House of Lords (on 8 June 1863); see PDD, 2, pp. 336–7; HDR, 532.

³¹ PDD, 2, p. 337.

³² Wereszycki, *Anglia a Polska*, 47–9, 68, 111, 145.

³³ *Ibidem*, 47–92; Zdrada, 'Sprawa polska', 454–79.

for the conclusion that “the uprising indispensably needs help”;³⁴ yet, it proved useless quite soon. Then, once the strivings for an armistice ended in failure (in July 1863) and the Polish requests and proposals grew in opposition to Palmerston’s cabinet, the said pattern was adapted to the new political circumstances and extended in its incentive.

Setting about mobilising British public opinion against the British Government and, simultaneously, appearing before this same Government as petitioners, the Polish politicians doubtlessly found themselves in a very delicate position. Making appeals to British honour, supposedly jeopardised by ‘Russian barbarism’, turned out to be a method that could merge the criticism and the claims. Therefore, the thesis, already known to us, whereby the British Government would be accountable for violent acts committed by Russians in Poland became the new premise of Polish demands. Unlike in Zamoyski’s concept, this was not meant as a legal responsibility but as a moral responsibility, one which ensued not from relinquishment of legal actions but from undertaken actions (diplomatic intervention) which, conducted in an ill-considered or not-sufficiently-vigorous manner, eventually led to exacerbation of Russian repressions. When, therefore, the ‘extermination war’ conducted by Mikhail Murav’ëv was presented to Lord Russell as a ‘system of barbarism’ supported by the Russian state, it was stated on this occasion that this system had emerged “under the always-hurting impression of alien intervention” that had united the entire Russian nation against Poland in a hatred that was not so staunch before. Since “all that rested within the logic of things and was easy to foresee”, there is a moral duty now resting upon the HRM Government to recognise the insurgents as a belligerent, which would simply mean recognising their right to defend themselves.³⁵ It is characteristic that this moralistic perspective was connected with a legal argumentation.

Referring to the Greek precedent, the Poles reminded the British that Russia had itself put forth the rule that could be usable against it today: an intervention of the great powers would be legitimate not merely due to political considerations but also through humanitarian ones, that is “when the rights of humanity are violated by the excesses

³⁴ PDD, 2, p. 326.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, 353–6; analogically, *ibidem*, 365–6.

of a bloody and barbaric government".³⁶ Knowing that Palmerston denied the analogy, it was recommended that his position be polemised against. If the justification behind it is that

Turkey wanted to violently transfer the entire population of Morea to Egypt, and settle the Fellahs in lieu of it, ... [whilst] Russia has not gone that far, and did nothing of the sort,

then, the British Premier's opinion ought to be confronted with the facts of the policy pursued by Murav'ëv. For,

what is Murav'ëv actually doing in Lithuania? Is he not transporting Poles, thousands of them, into the depths of Russia? Is he not striving for a complete exploration of all the Polish proprietors and leaseholders? Is he not calling in their lieu, the Great-Ruthenians and *Raskolniks* into Lithuania; is he not expelling all the Polish officials and placing Muscovite ones everywhere?³⁷

In this way, through a reference to the London Treaty of 1827, the humanitarian argumentation gained a sort of legal sanctioning – conversely, let us notice, to Zamoyski's concept whose author sought additional moral sanction for his legalistic conception.³⁸

The Polish propaganda evoked the images of 'Russian barbarism' in France too, and it was not without purpose that *Éphémérides polonaises* were announced as "calendars of a war Europe has not seen in ages", a war in which "acts of ferocious barbarism committed by the Russians ever since the struggle began" imbue the whole world with dread.³⁹ Those 'acts of barbarism' often appeared to be 'anti-social'

³⁶ This is one of the theses in Czartoryski's memorial to Lord Russell of 20 September 1863; *ibidem*, 351, 367. It was published before then in the *English diary*, and reprinted by the *Czas* (1863), no. 207 (12 Sept.), 1.

³⁷ PDD, 2, pp. 351–2.

³⁸ In spite of the Central Agency's recommendations to use Czartoryski's arguments in the meeting action carried out in England, both types of argumentation functioned in reality; see PDD, 2, pp. 348–52 (text of the instruction); pp. 382–6 (Mieczysław Waligórski's account of the actions taken by the London Agency and the National League in Sept. and Oct. 1863); *Czas* (1863), no. 222 (30 Sept.), 2–3 (script of a meeting in Brighton, 17 Sept. 1863).

³⁹ EP, 1, p. 6. This horror of the French opinion and political elites was noted down by Andrzej Edward Koźmian in his correspondences sent to the *Czas* daily; see *Czas* (1863), no. 50 (3 March), 2; no. 88 (18 April), 2; no. 94 (25 April), 2;

actions, though. In reference to the defence of the social order against a social revolution, which was one of the fundamental myths of the Second Empire, the manifestations of Russian violence were inscribed in the model of a Jacobin revolution, threatening, as it were, the ‘cause of order’ represented by the Polish uprising. Yet, the signs by which Paris suggested it would quit the idea to intervene, as visible in the course of the Council of Ministers meeting of 5 August,⁴⁰ led the Poles to fall back on humanitarian argumentation. As was the case with England, it appeared to be a means of mobilising the public opinion against the politicians unwilling to engage in a war.⁴¹

And, it was based on the patterns known from England. Thus, Napoleon III’s ‘moral association’ with Murav’ëv’s decrees was highlighted; the Russian Governor-General’s activity was presented as a paradoxical effect of an intervention undertaken owing to ‘humanity-related considerations’, and it was argued that if France should be willing to decline responsibility for his deeds, it had to recognise the Poles as a combating party.⁴² Legal argumentation reinforced this moralistic tone in France as well. The arguments were based on the Greek precedent in the London Treaty of 1827,⁴³ but the intervention in Syria and Lebanon in 1860–1 was also evoked in this context – quite naturally, given France’s decisive role in the venture. The French deputies, inspired to this end by the Poles, referred to this example during the Legislative Body discussions held in December on an address to the Emperor. Speaking against the demands of peace and the resumption of an alliance with Russia, proposed by the pro-Russian faction lead by Duke de Morny, they simultaneously defended the Napoleonic idea of a European congress.⁴⁴ The deputy Jérôme David

no. 97 (29 April), 2; no. 123 (2 June), 2; no. 161 (18 July), 2; no. 218 (25 Sept.), 2; no. 225 (3 Oct.), 2; no. 279 (5 Dec.), 2.

⁴⁰ HDP, 530; Bóbr-Tylingo, *Napoléon III*, 198–9.

⁴¹ For W. Czartoryski’s assumptions before the December session of the Senate and the Legislative Body, see PDD, 1, 417, and a polemic with Senator Charles Dupin in *Chwila* (1863), no. 11 (31 Dec.), 2.

⁴² *Czas* (1863), no. 182 (12 Aug.), 1; no. 210 (16 Sept.), 1. Cf. *Czas* (1863), no. 181 (11 Aug.), 1; no. 205 (10 Sept.), 1.

⁴³ *Czas* (1863), no. 184 (14 Aug.), 3 (quote from *Journal des débats*).

⁴⁴ For more on this debate, see Bóbr-Tylingo, *Napoléon III*, 266–76; Fridieff, ‘L’opinion publique’, 85–92. There were two amendments to the address draft proposed by Duke de Morny: the first, put forward by twelve deputies, demanded that the Poles be recognised as a belligerent; the second, by left-wing deputies.

argued that if Russia had demanded in 1860 that a conference for the Turkish Christians be convened owing to the 'question of humanity', it could not then evade its participation in a congress on the Polish affair, once Russia had outstripped Turkey in barbarism.⁴⁵ These same barbarisms made an alliance with Russia impossible. The idea of such an alliance, "in the face of Murav'ëv who is killing men, women and priests carrying the sacrament to the dying people", seemed outrageous to another speaker, Eugène Pelletan. He consequently proposed an amendment to the address being discussed, claiming that the diplomatic relations should be broken off with "a great power that is trampling with its feet the treaties and the perennial precepts of humanity".⁴⁶ This debate did not shun from making references to the social order and the political interests of Europe; the strong emphasis that was put on the humanitarian aspect of the uprising caused that the Polish affair ceased to be in France just a 'matter of Order', turning instead into a 'matter of Humanity', as an amendment to the address in question put it:⁴⁷ the moment the case was politically lost.⁴⁸

IV 'RUSSIAN BARBARISM'

The 'barbarism' which was meant to persuade Europe about the humanitarian character of the Polish case was an extraordinary violence – that is, such which exceeded the rules of its admissible use. War is obviously a traditional domain of violence, though this does not suggest that any violent act could have been justified by a war. On the contrary, the feudal code of the law of war, which took shape in the Middle Ages, imposed limitations in this respect, which, beginning with the *Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field* (22 August 1864), were

The spokesmen for the former and latter group were Jérôme David and Eugène Pelletan, respectively.

⁴⁵ *Chwila* (1864), no. 27 (4 Feb.), 3.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, no. 29 (6 Feb.), 2.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, no. 26 (2 Feb.), a supplement.

⁴⁸ With a vote of 234 against 12, the French Parliament accepted the address draft as proposed by Duke de Morny. As observed by Fridieff, 'L'opinion publique', 92, this mass acceptance of a text written by the leader of the Russian faction marked the end of the Polish affair for France.

turned into written standards of international law.⁴⁹ Politics was the area where violence was traditionally excluded. No surprise, then, that not only the wartime abuse of violence but also the replacement of the authority by violence in politics passed for a ‘barbarism’. The events of 1863 provided experiences of both situations – and this both were due to the character of the warfare pursued by Russia⁵⁰ and of what Alexander II himself called “the severest military dictatorship”, i.e., the measures taken by Murav’ëv and Berg in order to reinstate “the authority of the legal government”.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Marian Flemming, ‘Wstęp’, in *idem*, *Międzynarodowe prawo humanitarne konfliktów zbrojnych. Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw, 2003), 13–25.

⁵⁰ Some factual examples of the Russian army’s wartime barbarism are covered e.g. by Kieniewicz, *Powstanie styczniowe*, 388–9. Not only the Poles were outraged by the violent acts and rapes committed by the Russian soldiers: “Their enraged brutality”, Grand Duke Constantine complained to his brother, “is dreadful and has begun achieving the dimensions that make me scared”; *ibidem*, 388. Also Nikolaï V. Berg sometimes admits that “infuriated [Russian] soldiers finished-off the wounded”. In his view, the Russians’ cruelty came in response to the insurgents’ cruelties against the peasants; see *idem*, *Zapiski o powstaniu polskiem 1863 i 1864 i poprzedzającej powstanie epoce demonstracji od 1856 r.*, trans. K. J. [Karol Jaskłowski], 3 vols. (Cracow, 1898–9), iii, 122–3, 237. Also Nikolaï Pavlishchev admitted that “the cruelty in the battlefield has attained the degree that we scarcely take anyone prisoner-of-war”, but he primarily expatiates over “the bestiality of the insurgents [which] has crossed all the lines”; see Mikołaj Pawliszczew [Nikolaï Pavlishchev], *Tygodnie polskiego buntu (1861–1864)*, ed. Apoloniusz Zawilski, 2 vols. (Warsaw, 2003), ii, *passim* (quotes from pp. 178, 202).

⁵¹ Kieniewicz, *Powstanie styczniowe*, 631. Kieniewicz, *ibidem*, 496–7, 540–1, 608–9, 659–65 and Dawid Fajnhauz, *1863: Litwa i Białoruś* (Warsaw, 1999), 244–50, so characterise the rule of Murav’ëv and Berg. As for N. V. Berg, he finds that the extending insurrection forced a switch in the policy pursued by Russia: instead of “commissions and indulgence”, “the Grand Duke ought to be recalled from Warsaw, an ordinary jeneral [general] to be placed in his office, who, having imposed the strictest siege-warfare across the country, would drive out one nail with another through ruthless terrorism!”, see Berg, *Zapiski*, iii, 124. Berg described Murav’ëv as a “savage Mongolian despot” and a sadist, extremely acutely criticising the terror system he has introduced in Lithuania; *ibidem*, 152–66. Yet, admiration for Murav’ëv was prevalent in Russia; cf. e.g. Milyutin, *Vospominaniya*, 237–46; Bóbr-Tylingo, *Napoléon III*, 204–5; Svetlana Fal’kovich, *Rol’ vosstaniya 1863 g. v protsesse skladyvaniya natsional’nogo stereotipa polyaka v soznanii russkich*, in Tadeusz Epsztein (ed.), *Polacy a Rosjanie: materiały z konferencji “Polska – Rosja. Rola polskich powstań narodowych w kształtowaniu wzajemnych wyobrażeń”*, Warszawa – Płock 14–17 maja 1998 r. (Warsaw, 2000), 169. The most extensive coverage of this topic is in Henryk Głębocki, *Fatalna sprawa. Kwestia polska w rosyjskiej myśli politycznej (1856–1866)* (Arkana Historii, Cracow, 2000).

Examples of wartime barbarism were amongst those most frequently used in the Polish propaganda of the time. When presenting to the French parliamentary members the character of the war fought in Poland, Władysław Czarторыski found that the insurgents were "facing a cruel and savage enemy". Insofar as the nations "that have emerged out of barbarism" observed "the rules of war", Moscow had apparently broken all of them:

When her [Moscow's] army becomes the lord of the battlefield, finishing off the wounded proves the first effect of the triumph; the captives, if lucky enough to avoid the lot, are dispatched to join the army in Caucasus, or conscripted for penitentiary military units; the commanders, once caught, incur the disreputable penalty of death. But those hordes are even scarier in case they have incurred a defeat. They would then retreat, marking the track of their passage by conflagration and devastation, giving in the desolated villages the reigns to the sword and the brand, or taking by assault the defenceless towns where, as proudly reported by the women of Siemiatycze, "the wives are dying beside their husbands, the children are giving up the ghost beside their parents".⁵²

The injured, the captives, the defenceless people and those not taking part in the struggle were the instances at which violence ought to have been discontinued, in spite of the war going on – according to the code the Prince referred to. The charge of 'barbarism' in war, highlighted in the Polish propaganda, essentially consisted in describing the cases and multiplying the methods of breaking the rule of withdrawing from violence against the non-war populace and those who were unable to fight any longer. The curtness visible in Czarторыski's appeal often gave way in the press to a very different poetics, where a baroque expression, full of the ghoulish details of the crime, was at times intertwined with descriptions of the frenzy of the victims and the perpetrators, in some really frenetic images.⁵³ A similar vividness

⁵² Czarторыski, *Affaires de Pologne*, XXV. An almost identical reasoning (with only the rhetoric making the difference) in EP, 3, pp. 9–11.

⁵³ For more on Romantic(ist) freneticism, see Maria Janion, *Gorączka romantyczna* (Warsaw, 1975), 443–4; Józef Bachórz and Alina Kowalczykova (eds.), *Słownik literatury polskiej XIX wieku* (Wrocław etc., 1991), 77–8, 142. An example is provided by the description of the occurrences in the village of Sołowijówka: "the drunken bandits tortured their benefactors" (i.e. the insurgents announcing the enfranchisement). The local *tchinovniki* were watching the scenes, joking about

was applied in the accounts of, primarily, the cruelties taking place in the battlefield (against the captives and the wounded),⁵⁴ where violence, in spite of the restrictions imposed on it, remained an ordinary thing; descriptions of the violent acts against civilians showed expanding violence, the tier of expression applied remaining lower: the very fact that violence was applied proved sufficiently meaningful. The violence extended to increasingly broader circles of people not even involved in the combat, becoming, in fact, almost commonplace. It affected doctors offering aid to the wounded insurgents⁵⁵ and clergymen granting them their priestly service.⁵⁶ It moved from the battlefield into the nobility's manors and palaces, to the towns and villages getting burned, pillaged, and bombed, in retaliation or without any identifiable reason.⁵⁷ This violence was expanding in a manner contrary to any reasonability of action: the destructions whose purpose was to reinforce the efficiency of violence (e.g. burning down the forests giving shelter to the insurgent troops⁵⁸) but it became turning into a destruction for destruction's sake (trampled cereal crops, arson⁵⁹), up to the degree of ritual destruction – as in the case of several Lithuanian villages whose dwellers were deported, their houses robbed and the site of the fire ploughed over.⁶⁰

the victims. The father of a victim (named Lasocki) is reported to have committed suicide, his wife was affected with insanity, see EP, 3, pp. 132–3.

⁵⁴ Thus, the wounded and the captives were “not only” murdered but subject to torture before then, burned alive, their bones being broken, their bodies emboweled, and their corpses maltreated after death (the heels cut off, the eyes knocked off, hundreds of wounds inflicted). The killed were not to be buried and an ‘infernal dance’ was danced around them; see e.g.: *Czas* (1863), nos. 53 (6 March), and 90 (21 April); EP, 3, pp. 150–2; EP, 2, pp. 48–51, 119, 126, 138, 167, 224–5; EP, 3, pp. 82, 87, 101. Pavlishchev confirms the description of the massacre near Buda Zaborowska, see *idem*, *Tygodnie*, ii, 193.

⁵⁵ EP, 3, pp. 165–6.

⁵⁶ *Czas* (1863), no. 81 (10 April); EP, 3, pp. 48–9, 114, 166.

⁵⁷ E.g.: EP, 1, pp. 43–57, 77–81; EP, 2, p. 40; EP, 3, pp. 48–9, 109–10, 166–7, 169, 173. Cf. e.g. *Czas* (1863), no. 33 (11 Feb.), p. 1. In Pavlishchev's opinion, it was the prospect of pillage that explained why the number of insurgents was not diminishing in spite of the defeats incurred, see *idem*, *Tygodnie*, ii, *passim*.

⁵⁸ EP, 3, pp. 214–15. Cf. Berg, *Zapiski*, iii, 166.

⁵⁹ EP, 1, p. 121; EP, 3, pp. 94–5.

⁶⁰ Such was the case of the villages of Jaworówka, Dzika and Sztukiny, EP, 3, pp. 158–9, 177–9, 208. N. V. Berg describes in the same way the destruction of the villages of Jaworówka, Grodno *Guberniya*, and Ibiany, Kovno *Guberniya*. To his

Such a systemic character of violence would only be ascribed to Murav'ëv's rule, though. The army's earlier actions were primarily a chaos of violence, absorbing any order and finally overwhelming the perpetrators of the confusion. The *Czas* of Cracow saw in it the Russian 'governmental system' which in the period of peace was lawlessness and during the war became an "invasion of Asian hordes". The only authority a horde can recognise is its own 'passions' (rather than reason) – and this is why the orders to murder are first executed on the civilians, then on representatives of the civil power and finally, on their own army officers.⁶¹ The unbridled passion culminates in outward violence: Russian soldiers finished off their injured companions in order to rob them, or, completely disinterestedly.⁶²

Amongst the civilian victims of wartime violence, highlighted were those to whom, in terms of the European tradition, the privilege of inviolability extended: children, old people and, in the first place, women and clergymen. Prince Czartoryski's statement that 'a policy of eradication' was being pursued in Poland, "not just against young and old people but also against women and children", ranked in 1863 amongst those circulating descriptions of the enemy⁶³ which drew their sanction from the factual course of the war as well as from the tradition of accusation of inhuman and daemonic nature of the one who ignores the age, class and sex.⁶⁴ Violence against the clergy and

mind, those were acts of "thoughtless barbarism", making him doubt "whether we really live in the 19th century"; Berg, *Zapiski*, iii, 164.

⁶¹ *Czas* (1863), no. 51 (4 March), 1. Cf. descriptions of the army's attacks on clerks and officials (village mayors, justices of the peace, policemen, postal clerks) and on followers of the Russian Government, in EP, 2, pp. 29–30, 147–9, 159–60, 163–4; EP, 3, pp. 40, 81.

⁶² *Czas* (1863), no. 53 (6 March), 1; EP, 3, p. 39.

⁶³ Czartoryski's utterance quoted here is from his open letter to Charles Dupin, *Chwila* (1863), no. 11 (31 Dec.), 2; cf. Czartoryski, *Affaires de Pologne*, XXV. As we read in an address of Paris workers to Jean-François Mocquard, compiled by the Polish Committee of Paris, "Russia ... is killing the citizens, the elderly and children. Getting killed are the mothers, wives, and maidens"; this being "barbarian cruelties that overwhelm our civilisation with horror"; see Jerzy Borejsza, Henryk Katz, and Irena Koberdowa (eds.), *Pierwsza Międzynarodówka a sprawa polska. Dokumenty i materiały* (Warsaw, 1964), 166.

⁶⁴ Robert Urbański, "Tartarorum gens brutalis". Trzynastowieczne najazdy mongolskie w literaturze polskiego średniowiecza na porównawczym tle piśmiennictwa łacińskiego antyku i wieków średnich (Studia Staropolskie, N.S., Warsaw, 2007), 30–1, 266–7.

women deserves our special attention: identifiable in it is not only a violation of the laws of war and warfare but also an infringement of the sacred status of the victims. Thus, the limits of 'irrational chaos' were exceeded, violence turning into profanation.

A certain ambiguity is discernible in this allegation of sacrilege. It was a product of the contradicting tendencies in the delineation of the borderline between the sacred and the profane, which simultaneously exerted their impacts on the Polish culture. With the vivid inclination to sacralise the homeland, as manifested in, say, the personal ideals of 'the Polish Mother' or 'the patriot priest', it encountered the awareness that the sacred drew the strength of inviolability from their separation from the profane reality whilst losing it through participation in the sphere of public affairs. By means of example, let us evoke here the controversies related to the clergy's accession to the National Organisation which was preparing an uprising (autumn 1862), seen, on the one hand, as the fulfilment of a civic and patriotic obligation and assessed, on the other hand, as a sinful act of alliance with 'the godless Revolution'.⁶⁵ Those controversies nowise disappeared after the uprising broke out, getting marked in the Polish propaganda with two story-telling paths narrating on the clergy's political and military activity.⁶⁶ The first, referring to the idea of the uprising as a crusade, perceived it as a patriotic and religious virtue. It was on this basis that Rev. Stanisław Iszora, who was, sentenced to death for having read out from the church pulpit the peasantry enfranchisement deed, which formed part of the Uprising manifesto proclaimed on 22nd of January

⁶⁵ These culminated in the affair of the famous *Open Letter* by the Rev. Hieronim Kajsiewicz, 1863, see Piotr Brożyna, 'Próba ognia. Wokół "Listu otwartego ..." księdza Hieronima Kajsiewicza z 1863 r.', *Przegląd Historyczny*, lxxix, 3 (1988), 21–41; Bolesław Micewski, 'Ksiądz Kajsiewicz a powstanie styczniowe', *Znak*, xxv, 233–4 (1973), 1520–45. The opposite pole of sacralisation of the homeland comprised the ideal of theocracy, which however assumed a separation of the functions of priest and politician. An exemplary manifestation of this view was the article titled 'Służba kapłańska w polskim narodzie' [The priestly service in the Polish nation], *Tygodnik Katolicki*, 51–2 (1862), 477–81, 485–94.

⁶⁶ In his penetrating study on this subject-matter, Eugeniusz Niebelski argues that the involvement in question was not as strong as the Polish and Russian propagandas wished to see it. There is no doubt, in turn, about a significant role of the clergy in the National Organisation and in the uprising administration; see *idem*, *Nieprzejednani wrogowie Rosji. Duchowieństwo lubelskie i podlaskie w powstaniu 1863 roku i na zesłaniu* (Lublin, 2008), 182–267.

1863, could pass for a religious martyr,⁶⁷ whilst Rev. Antoni Mackiewicz, who commanded an insurgent troop, served as an example of “the patriotism and fiery mercy of the clergy”.⁶⁸ The “numerous evidence of courage and patriotism, provided by the clergymen ever since the uprising began”, were believed to explain the Russians’ hatred toward Catholicism.⁶⁹ Obviously, it would be awkward to consider political involvement as giving grounds for violence (military involvement being a different story),⁷⁰ but the fact that a priest or a woman has departed from his/her ecclesiastical or domestic retreat deprived them of the privilege of absolute immunity emphasised in the accusations of the sacrilegious character of the violent acts committed by the Russians. Hence, the Polish propaganda defended, on the other hand, ‘an absolute’ character of Polish women and the clergy, showing them as completely innocent victims of Russian repressions, persecuted not for their political activity but for their fulfilment of the family or religious duties. A gradation of Russian violence thus appears, peculiar to the area: from repressive measures explainable by the suspicion of a political character of what was supposed to be essentially sacred, through to deliberate violence against the *sacrum* as such.

This gradation is best visible in the descriptions of violence against the Catholic Church. The list of victims opens with priests punished with deportation or death for their serving as chaplains with insurgent troops⁷¹ or even for having accidentally granted the sacraments to wounded insurgents. The case of a priest beaten by Russian soldiers who took the tolling of bells at Angelus as a signal sent to the insurgents is classable in the same category.⁷² The political pretext grows less and less clear, though: clergymen groundlessly accused of participation in conspiracy are deported;⁷³ catechism instruction

⁶⁷ EP, 3, pp. 181–6.

⁶⁸ EP, 2, p. 113.

⁶⁹ EP, 2, p. 65.

⁷⁰ Especially that even canon law was breached, which Russia should otherwise have observed on the grounds of the concordat of 1847. Berg was amongst those who openly demonstrated his indignation at the conviction of Rev. Iszora, the fact and the course of it (the priest was not deprived of his Holy Orders before his death, and was hanged dressed in his cassock); see Berg, *Zapiski*, iii, 160.

⁷¹ See fn. 54.

⁷² EP, 3, p. 95.

⁷³ EP, 3, p. 77.

is banned as conspiratorial meetings.⁷⁴ The prosecutions become exclusively religious in character: priests get attacked in the course of funeral ceremonies they conduct, or during the holy masses that they celebrate.⁷⁵ The zenith is reached when a priest gets killed who has refused to follow a demand of an apostasy. “And the guardians instantly came running and danced an infernal dance around the palpitating corpse”, as we read of this assassination.⁷⁶

This same gradation refers to the violence aimed at sanctuaries and liturgical vessels. It started with instances of profanation against churches and monasteries, and instances of desecration of cemeteries, which in the course of the warfare were treated as a sort of ‘logistical background’ of the insurgent troops, obviously under a pretence which appeared false.⁷⁷ The true reason was debunked in the Polish propaganda as the intent to commit robberies, during which extremely scandalous instances of sacrilege appeared: in the Holy Cross Church in Warsaw, the Russian soldiers were reported to have “drawn the bodies of the dead out of the coffins”, allegedly in search of weapons, but in fact, of gold possibly hidden there.⁷⁸ Also in this case, the military pretext for the profanation finally faded away, giving way, first, exclusively to the desire of robbery – the object being not just the jewellery hidden in those coffins but also the liturgical vessels⁷⁹ and, finally, a demonical destruction of sacred objects, just because they were sacred. There was nothing else that propelled General Alexander Bremsen to order to cut down a cross standing at the entrance road to a town: the cross “remained lying in the dust of the road, broken and devoid of the image of Christ, with which the soldiers were playing, throwing stones at it”.⁸⁰ Similar were the incidents of parodying the

⁷⁴ EP, 2, pp. 31–2.

⁷⁵ EP, 2, pp. 224–5; EP, 3, p. 133.

⁷⁶ EP, 3, p. 101.

⁷⁷ EP, 3, pp. 63–4, 229–30.

⁷⁸ *Czas* (1863), no. 218 (25 Sept.), 1, and no. 219 (26 Sept.), 3. “Dreadful and despicable are those deeds of the barbarians”, a Warsaw correspondent thus summarised his report, asking: “Will the civilised world be still watching them with its indifferent eyes?”

⁷⁹ As in the attack on a church in Dziadkowice near Siemiatycze, ordered by Gen. Zakhar S. Manyukin: the object of the robbery was a “pyx containing the Flesh and Blood of Our Lord Jesus”; “the priest shielded it with his hand, and the soldiers chopped his fingers off over the pyx”; *Czas* (1863), no. 53 (6 March).

⁸⁰ EP, 3, p. 94.

religion, which were shown by the Polish propaganda, in line with the convention of the description of the Mongols dating back to the medieval times, as a procedure typical to “the people of Gog and Magog” (dressing up in canonicals in order to desecrate religion).⁸¹ This is how a Russian soldier behaved in Pułtusk:

he appeared ... dressed in sacral robes, with an aspergillum and a chalice in his hands, drinking vodka from the holy vessel. He is said to have told the passersby of the rebellion, sprinkling them and asking why haven't they gone off to the woods.⁸²

A similar gradation is identifiable as far as violence against women is concerned, which is explainable by the nineteenth-century cultural trend of equipping the social roles of wife and mother with a sacred status.⁸³ As was the case with the clergy, the political involvement of females (national mourning, nursing service) was presented as fulfilment of a vocation (honouring the memory of the dead, acts of mercy). The repressive measures applied against women, which sufficiently upset the opinion already in the former case, additionally gained the dimension of profanation in the latter.⁸⁴ Attention was primarily drawn by the struggle of with the national mourning,⁸⁵ which was depicted as “insults at women in private mourning”.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Urbański, “*Tartarorum gens*”, 267.

⁸² EP, 2, p. 164. Let us make a side note that this particular case, if it has ever occurred, could be regarded as an example of two symbolic codes clashing. The sacrilegious behaviour of the Russian soldier could as a matter of fact have been a manifestation of the ‘anti-behaviour’ typical to the Russian culture, which aims at “publicly sneering (defilement) and, at the end of the day, ... incorporation into a reversed world which may be comprehended as unworldly or satanic”; Boris A. Uspienskiĭ, ‘Antipovedenie v kul’ture drevnei Rusi’, in *idem*, *Izbrannye trudy*, i (Moscow, 1994), 324–5. Thus, two strategies of symbolic demonisation would appear concurrent within this story.

⁸³ Jan Prokop, ‘Kobieta Polka’, in Bachórz, Kowalczykowa (eds.), *Słownik literatury polskiej*, 414–17.

⁸⁴ EP, 3, pp. 206–7 (quoting the example of women punished by deportation for ‘crimes’ such as request for a possibility to have their killed men buried, or for having laid flowers at their grave, and for tending ill or wounded insurgents).

⁸⁵ See Murav’ëv ordinance against the mourning, of 25 [13] June 1863: EP, 2, pp. 208–10; *Code rouge*, no. 7; and, Gen. Levshin’s banning the mourning: *Czas* (1863), no. 248 (30 Oct.), p. 1.

⁸⁶ E.g. *Czas* (1863), no. 155 (11 July), p. 1; no. 169 (28 July), 3; EP, 3, pp. 51–2.

Excelling amongst those ‘insults’ was the essentially peculiar instruction by Murav’ev which ordered the Vilna prostitutes to assume mourning so as not to make them any different from ‘the respectable women’.⁸⁷ Sexual violence was visible in this instruction on a symbolical level, as it ranked amongst the acts of violence that desecrated the ‘sacredness’ itself: the ‘womanly shame’ and the ‘sanctuaries’ of the female body, domestic peace and the family. True, the motif of rape appeared in the Polish propaganda rarely and was expressed in a cautious wording,⁸⁸ instances of beating or murder of women during attacks on towns and noble manors were spoken of much more frequently.⁸⁹ Incidents featuring beaten women were, for some reason, particularly powerful propaganda-wise, to the extent that Lord Shaftesbury once asked Lord Russell at the House of Commons “whether the Queen’s Government still thinks it right to maintain relations with a government that orders to thrash and torment women.”⁹⁰ No surprise, then, that the Russian propaganda contradicted the Polish charges. It did not deny repression but remarked that the accusations were groundless: repressive measures were indeed applied to females, but extended only to those women who took “part in the revolution”.⁹¹ Clearly, such disclaimers only encouraged the upholding of the charges.⁹²

⁸⁷ EP, 2, pp. 221–3.

⁸⁸ A sexual overtone was also discernible in complaints about detention of arrested females together with males, or even in police offices or barracks; EP, 3, pp. 30, 206. This is directly referred to probably only in the description of the notorious attack on the Zamoyskis’ tenement house, where “the soldiery ... having kidnapped the men, closed the women in the emptied apartments, disgracing and defiling them”, see *Czas* (1863), no. 217 (24 Sept.), 3; no. 218 (25 Sept.), p. 1.

⁸⁹ EP, 3, pp. 91, 109–10, 162–3, 165, 173.

⁹⁰ Czartoryski, *Pamiętnik*, 155. Lord Shaftesbury published a letter with a similar message in the *Morning Post*, edition of 3 June 1863; see Wojciech Jasiakiewicz, *Polska działalność propagandowa w Wielkiej Brytanii w dobie powstania styczniowego w świetle korespondencji, pamiętników, publicystyki i prasy* (Toruń, 2002), 175. In reference not to the Government but to the tsar himself, Forbes used the phrase of ‘a whipper of women’, see *idem*, *Poland*, 18.

⁹¹ E.g. *Dziennik Powszechny* (1863), no. 270 (13 [25] Nov.), 1088.

⁹² E.g., Senator Louis-Bernard Bonjean stated at the French Senate (on 18 Dec. 1863) that Russia had indeed denied that whipping was applied to women in Warsaw but remained tacit about the women subject to this penalty in Minsk, see *idem*, *Discours sur les affaires de Pologne* (Paris, 1863); see also: *Chwila* (1863), no. 6 (24 Dec.), 2.

Russia is “turning the country into a desert”, “destroying everything with fire and sword”, is willing to “depopulate the towns, impoverish the country, so as to render it inert”.⁹³ Such was the image of this war that emerged from the description of its first months, the Russian army being virtually its only anti-hero. The common and purposeful character that was initially exaggeratedly ascribed to the acts of wartime barbarism, soon came true in the barbarisms of the military dictatorship. “In the face of the administrative, forensic and economic measures that they [the Russians] are using”, as Czartoryski commented on the rule of Fëdor Berg and Murav’ëv, “the barbarisms committed at the battlefield are growing pale”. This was no more “a suppression of the rebellion” but “a slaughter of the entire tribe, devastation of the whole civilisation”.⁹⁴ As it was most frequently put, ‘an extermination war’ was fought where barbarism was coupled with a social revolution. As is clear from Czartoryski’s utterance, the ‘barbaric and savage deeds’ were not identical with instances of the violation of the laws of war by the army. An ‘extermination war’ meant, simply, a war declared against the society, and although the army was still the executor, it played this part only because it replaced the Government in this respect. Introducing thus violence into politics, it violated not only the laws of war but, in the first place, the natural laws.

Never a more burdensome yoke has been superimposed on people in a form more barbaric than this – thus *Code rouge* described Murav’ëv’s rule, where – a simple army officer and a commune managed by an unenlightened villager is granted the right to have the property, peace, the future, and the very life of individuals, at his disposal.⁹⁵

If the dictatorial power of the local ‘war principals’ became an institutional symbol of the ‘new’ barbarism, then terror was at its essence. The Polish propaganda used this description for all the acts of legal violence on the part of the Russian Government (calling the

⁹³ PDD, 2, p. 326; *Czas* (1863), no. 112 (19 May), p. 3; no. 33 (11 Feb.), 1.

⁹⁴ Czartoryski, *Affaires de Pologne*, XXVI.

⁹⁵ *Code rouge*, no. 7. Cf. EP, 2, p. 213, condoled on the population of Lithuania having been subject to the rule of war principals, “granted with the power over the life and death of everybody”. Cf. EP, 3, pp. 26–7. M. Waligórski chimed this opinion in a polemic with Grant Duff, an English deputy: *Chwila* (1864), no. 19 (24 Jan.), 2–3.

executions murders⁹⁶), which, quite naturally, ensued from the fact that any Russian law in Poland was deemed illegal. This, in turn, aroused rather obvious doubts in the West, and thus it is not surprising that the sentences executed on behalf of the insurgent government triggered ‘horror and reprehension’ there, as assassinations always do.⁹⁷ Yet, even the adherents of legalism and positive law were outraged by the law enacted by Berg and Murav’ëv: retroactive, providing for punishments incommensurate with the crimes committed,⁹⁸ and grounded upon the collective responsibility principle. Just because these principles denied the Western idea of law, the sanctions based thereupon could be presented not as legal punishments but as violations of the natural laws by the “ukases of the Muscovite rule, most overwhelmingly savage and barbarian”. Hence, the “administrative, forensic and economic measures” mentioned by Czartoryski, which should be understood to mean mass detentions and deportations,⁹⁹ contribution¹⁰⁰ and confiscations,¹⁰¹ appeared in

⁹⁶ A number of examples are provided by the consecutive volumes of *Éphémérides polonaises*. See the “list of patriots executed by firing squad or hanged” in EP, 3, pp. 283 ff.

⁹⁷ Czartoryski, *Pamiętnik*, 167, 185.

⁹⁸ For the reasons behind the confiscations of estates in Lithuania, see EP, pp. 3, 28–9. M. Dolbilov and A. Miller quote the number of 850 estates sequestered and confiscated in six *guberniyas* of the North-Western Krai; *idem* (eds.), *Zapadnye okraïny*, 211.

⁹⁹ EP, 3, pp. 49–50, 67, 102–3, 171–3. The number of people deported from the western *guberniyas* of the Russian Empire resulting from the January Uprising has been estimated, by Leszek Zasztowt, at 62,000, see *idem*, *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia a Rosja XIX–XX wieku. W kręgu edukacji i polityki* (Bibliotheca Europae Orientalis: Studia, Warsaw, 2007), 147–75.

¹⁰⁰ June 1863 saw the imposition of a penalty tax (*shtrafnyĭ sbor*) of 10% of the income, whose enforcement triggered associations with a contribution to the winning party. Declared as an extraordinary measure, the tax had its rate officially reduced to 5% in 1864, but it was in fact frequently increased, and was cancelled only in 1897; see Dolbilov and Miller (eds.), *Zapadnye okraïny*, 211.

¹⁰¹ The thesis whereby estates were confiscated on a mass scale was often illustrated by a “list of names, drawn up based upon the official Russian documents, of the estates under sequestration within the Vilna Voievodeship alone, till 4 July 1863”, listing the names of 396 proprietors. EP, 3, p. 28, says that the list was reprinted several times. W. Czartoryski provided Lord Russell with, probably, this same list (“list of the sentences imposed by Gen. Murav’ëv in the Vilna Voievodeship alone, within the recent two months”), see PDD, 2, pp. 353–4. For more on other like documents, printed in the Western press, see EP, 3, pp. 27–8. This same

this light as a thoroughly groundless attack on the individuals' liberty, lives, and property.

The Polish propaganda obviously spared no descriptions of the 'barbarian' legislation. Murav'ëv's circulars and instructions were reprinted in the press (primarily in the Cracow *Czas*) after the official magazine *Kurier Wileński* and thereafter a body of them was published in a separate brochure, the already-mentioned *Code rouge*. This publication also took account of the doings of General Berg and of the Warsaw *ober-politsmeister* Gen. Lev I. Levshin, whose orders were, apparently for the reader, an increasingly transparent instrument of violence. Beginning with the ukase of 22 September 1863 on the complicity of the witnesses of the attempt at General Berg (19 September 1863) and of the dwellers of a house near which the attempt was committed (the actual perpetrator having run away¹⁰²), which ukase was designed as an ex-post 'legalisation of the robbery' of the Zamoyskis' tenement house,¹⁰³ the *Czas* enumerated the subsequent examples of orders introducing the collective responsibility rule. Thus, house owners would be accountable for their tenants, factory owners for their workers, shop and café owners for their customers.¹⁰⁴ On discussing this legislation, the newspaper remarked not only on the immanent 'barbarism and savageness' but also on the vague categories of banned objects and acts. It was the case that amongst "the objects devised as warfare armament", it should have included "footwear, wintertime clothing and underwear", on the one hand, whereas, on

Uprising bulletin comprised detailed descriptions of individual confiscations and contributions, as e.g. in EP, 2, pp. 219–20 – on confiscation of the estates (temporarily) left by their owners. This was a fact, and Murav'ëv's ukase of 8 June 1863 was issued to this end; Fajnhauz, 1863, 247.

¹⁰² *Czas* (1863), no. 219 (26 Sept.), 3. N. Pavlishchev justified this ukase, similarly as the entire legislation imposed by Berg, by a demoralisation of the Warsaw populace who did not respond to the attempts on Russian officials, see *idem*, *Tygodnie*, ii, 384–5.

¹⁰³ The occurrence that has otherwise become one of the greatest symbols of Russian terror and barbarism; see *Czas* (1863), nos. 215–23 (22 Sept.–1 Oct.); EP, 3, pp. 240–6. Cf. Pawliszczew, *Tygodnie*, ii, 379–81.

¹⁰⁴ *Czas* (1863), no. 224 (2 Oct.), 3; no. 235 (15 Oct.), 2–3; no. 237 (17 Oct.), 2; no. 239 (20 Oct.), 1; in this same category belonged the ukases, issued earlier on by Murav'ëv, on the estate owner's responsibility for his servants, stewards, and even neighbours; *Czas* (1863), no. 155 (11 July). Cf. the case of a Vilna shopkeeper for the stance of his helper; EP, 3, p. 80.

the other, persecuted were those whoever were “suspected of evil intents”, then, as the *Czas* emphasised, anyone could have been accused of anything. The enforcement of such a ‘barbarian law’ thus ceased being any different from abuse; since the actual intention of the legislator was detectable in the latter, this enforcement was no more different from violence. A certain gradation of it becomes visible also in this context. Insofar as the cases of confiscation, or even of the capital punishment, under false pretence provided the examples of violence which abused the law,¹⁰⁵ the execution of the four alleged perpetrators of the attempt on the Vilna Marshall Aleksander Domeyko, before the actual assassin was captured and executed,¹⁰⁶ seems to have been a step forward, made towards a violence that cancels the law and turns into “violence reigning at full length”.¹⁰⁷

The frenetic images of the wartime barbarism have already been mentioned. Although the terror could at times appear as ‘madness’,¹⁰⁸ it assumed the traits of the grotesque owing to the stupidity of the orders introducing it.

In this bloody chronicle – an uprising bulletin wrote of the Russian repressions – like in the gloomiest plays by Shakespeare, the grotesque is sometimes mixed with monstrosity, thus even increasing the horror of the spectacle, or of the story.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ The example of Alger, a worker at Evans’s factory, executed by a firing squad for manufacture of iron balls for hospital beds, which the authorities recognised as grenades; *Czas* (1863), no. 235 (15 Oct.), pp. 2–3; and, the confiscation of brothers Haser’s tenement house “for alleged shots of insurgents out of the house, which in fact were the work of a drunken gendarme”. “It is certain”, a Warsaw correspondent wrote on this occasion, “that the Muscovites had an appetite for Marconi’s house, but the gendarme wrongly delivered the plan he was entrusted with”; *Czas* (1863), no. 239 (20 Oct.), 1.

¹⁰⁶ *Czas* (1863), no. 198 (1 Oct.), 1; cf. Kieniewicz, *Powstanie styczniowe*, 608–9. Another example of the sort is quoted in EP, 3, p. 91: Dziekoński, the commander of Brest, apparently had a Pole sentenced to deportation hanged, and sentenced instead to deportation another, randomly selected, prisoner.

¹⁰⁷ Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York, 1970), 54–5.

¹⁰⁸ E.g. the *Siècle* observed that in the doings of the Russian Government, “a mad activity breaks through everywhere. Ukases and measures go one after another. ... The proconsuls are multiplying, one surpassing the other”; quoted after: *Czas* (1863), no. 250 (1 Nov.), 1.

¹⁰⁹ EP, 2, p. 112.

But horror alone was not at stake there. In the *Czas*'s editorial commentary to an ukase by Gen. Levshin which meticulously determined the admissible women's apparel, it is not the horror but the ridiculousness of the order that comes to the fore. The magazine's editors recalled with irony "the crime of putting on a pair of black gloves", finding that

the Muscovite Government attained in its ordinances and measures of oppression ... the heights of despotism and unreasonability, at the same time.

Every civilised nation, the commentary goes on, can comprehend how ridiculous this instruction is:

it is nonetheless known how deeply all the savage peoples are fond of a medley of glaring colours.¹¹⁰

How is it, then, that a horrifying 'barbarian' could trigger laughter? The answer to this question seemingly lies in the complex history of the idea; let us notice, for the time being, that stupidity is what simultaneously arouses laughter and horror about a 'barbarian'.

V

TOWARDS A COLONIAL DISCOURSE

The barbarism the Russians were accused of consisted, first of all, of violence: 'ferocious', 'brutal', 'bestial', 'cruel', as well as 'pagan', 'un-Christian', or even, 'satanic' one.¹¹¹ A violence that "insults Christianity"¹¹² whilst "disproving the touted progress of civilisation, which dishonours the age we live in".¹¹³ To put it another way, the charges of barbarism reflected the entire complex history of the idea,¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ *Czas* (1863), no. 253 (5 Nov.), 1.

¹¹¹ Most of these descriptions are found in the speeches of Edmond Beales, who obviously, was not the only one. "The wounded being finished off in a pagan manner" was the observation of Agaton Giller, cf. *Czas* (1863), no. 90 (21 April).

¹¹² This phrase was also used by Beales, see, Katz and Koberdowa (eds.), *Pierwsza Międzynarodówka*, 122.

¹¹³ *Morning Advertiser Chronicle* of 15 Jan. 1864 [quoted after: *Chwila* (1864), no. 16 (21 Jan.), 3]. Also, cf. identical voices in the German press; Rautenberg, *Der polnische Aufstand*, *passim*.

¹¹⁴ For the enormous literature on historical incarnations of the civilisation vs. barbarism opposition, see Reinhardt Koselleck, 'Zur historisch-politischen

which was initially used to stigmatise the “cruel, ignorant and aggressive” enemies of the Hellas; afterwards, the heathens, bearing the same traits; and from then on, since the middle of the eighteenth century, those who did not meet the West-European norms of modernity and progress. However, the dominant component of the descriptions of the Russian violence was its ‘non-Europeanness’. Veiled at times with a “mask of European polish”, it usually appeared in a sheer “nakedness of Asian barbarism”.¹¹⁵ This ‘Asian barbarism’ was, in turn, also a heterogeneous image.

Its definitely excelling motif was an “incursion of Asian hordes”, which, according to “the logic of Asian barbarism”, strove for annihilation of the nation and destruction of the country.¹¹⁶ The Russian ‘governmental system’, as we can read, for instance, in the *Czas*, means lawlessness and corruption in the period of peace, whilst in the period of war it “bears ... all the signs of an incursion of Asian hordes: pillage, rapes, conflagrations, and murders”.¹¹⁷ Although the above-quoted article described this system as ‘a modern Byzantinism’, such reference to the Byzantine tradition was unique in 1863, in the context of charges of barbarism. Incomparably more frequently, the Mongols served as ‘the model’ for ‘hordes’: their devastating invasions in the thirteenth century formed a vivid element of Polish historical awareness. Thus, Russia generally conducted in Poland “a war worthy of the Mongols, finishing off the wounded, destroying everything with fire and sword”,¹¹⁸ whereas Murav’ëv, Berg and Annenkov issued “Mongolian ukases”.¹¹⁹ Other barbarians were

Semantik asymmetrischer Gegenbegriffe’, in *idem*, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Theorie, Frankfurt am Main, 1979), 211–59; Philip Bagby, *Culture and History: Prolegomena to the Comparative Study of Civilizations* (London, 1958); Fernand Braudel, ‘L’Histoire des civilisations: le passé explique le présent’, in *Encyclopédie française*, xx: *Le monde en devenir (histoire, évolution, prospective)* (Paris, 1959), chap. v; Jerzy Jedlicki, *Jakiej cywilizacji Polacy potrzebują? Studia z dziejów idei i wyobraźni XIX wieku* (Warsaw, 1988); *idem*, *Świat zwyrodniały. Łęki i wyroki krytyków nowoczesności* (Warsaw, 2000); Władysław Tatarkiewicz, ‘Cywilizacja i kultura’, in *idem*, *O filozofii i sztuce* (Warsaw, 1986), 147–59; Wierzbicki, *Europa*.

¹¹⁵ *Czas* (1863), no. 198 (1 Sept.), 1.

¹¹⁶ PDD, 1, p. 54.

¹¹⁷ *Czas* (1863), no. 51 (4 March), 1.

¹¹⁸ *Czas* (1863), no. 112 (3 May), 2–3.

¹¹⁹ *Czas* (1863), no. 219 (26 Sept.).

evoked relatively seldom – as, e.g. the Scythes,¹²⁰ or the Vandals, whose name seemed however to emphasise the character of the thoughtless destructions of the cultural goods, committed by the Russian army at the Zamoyski tenement house in retaliation for the attempt on Viceroy Berg.¹²¹ In France, the Mongols were sometimes replaced in the gradation of barbarism by the Turks, which would be explainable by a recent intervention of France in defence of the Syrian Christians. The Russian persecutions of the Catholic clergy were thus compared to “the incursion of the Druses from Lebanon on the Maronites”,¹²² whilst even the comparison against Muslims was to the disadvantage of the Russians. “Look how the Muscovites outpace in barbarism their own ancestors – the Tatars!”, exclaimed, for instance, Jérôme David, a deputy; and, apparently approaching Tatars as a *pars pro toto* of the Ottoman Empire, he went on saying, “the Turks would never even conceive the idea of punishing females in mourning, or the idea of banning the tears and distress”.¹²³ Andrzej Edward Koźmian, referring to a letter from “a compatriot from India” published in the French press, reversed the known saying in a similar manner:

Our compatriot, having got to know the Tatars, confutes the proverb: “scratch your Muscovite, and you’ll find a Tatar inside him”, is of opinion that Tatars represented a higher tier of civilisation than the Muscovites, and the Muscovites are unworthy of the Tatars.

“The French governmental journals”, so the *Czas* correspondent punch-lined the anecdote, “are starting to expose Turkey as higher in terms of civilisation than Russia is”.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Forbes, *Poland*, 14.

¹²¹ *Czas* (1863), no. 216 (23 Sept.).

¹²² EP, 3, p. 76. Berg also compared Murav’ëv to a “sheik of the Druses, who persecuted the Maronites”; Berg, *Zapiski*, iii, 161.

¹²³ *Chwila* (1864), no. 27 (4 Feb.), 3.

¹²⁴ *Czas* (1863), no. 97 (29 April), 2. Clearly, similar hyperbolas are also encountered in the *Czas*’s editorials: on commenting the consecutive ukases of Murav’ëv, the newspaper wrote e.g. that the Russian Government was worse “than the Turkish sultans, Tatar khans, and even negro caciques”, for each of them founds himself upon some moral principle, “erroneous perhaps, but recognised by the ruling community out of which this authority has stemmed”. Tsarism, in turn, is an alien thing in Poland, and it endeavours to pursue its rule without a principle – by means of sheer violence; *Czas* (1863), no. 244 (25 Oct.), 1.

‘Incursion of Asian hordes’ (be it Mongolian, Tatar or Turkish) referred thus to brutal violence and cruelty – the key trait of Russian barbarism, as per the Polish message. It has to be highlighted, though, that this image also made use of other connotations of ‘Asian barbarism’ – those, in specific, that were suggested by the colonial discourse. In the centre of it appeared then the characteristics of ‘the savage’ such as infantility, irrationalism, cowardice, *etc.*, which of course imposed upon the ‘civilised’ people a condescending way of handling the ‘barbarians’. It is worth noting that this repertoire was made use of by the profiles of Murav’ëv, whom – it was argued – no-one would ever match as far as a combination of “cruelty and cowardice, lust for blood with lust for gold”.¹²⁵ Czartoryski, in his talk with Palmerston, seemed to refer to such a way of behaviour. On warning the British Prime Minister against declaring *a priori* peaceful intentions and advising him to take resolute action against Russia, the Polish diplomat accordingly explained that “the Muscovites are ferocious people – they are Asians, and one needs to be resolute with them without irritating them”.¹²⁶ As is easy to see, the Polish politician used the phrase ‘ferocious people’ in a sense not quite distant from the commentator of the *Czas*, who, as we can remember, ascribed to them a fondness of a ‘medley of colours’. Let us then resume the question regarding the “ridiculousness of the terrifying barbarian”. If his image combined the faces of his ‘Mongolian ancestors’ and ‘the colonial savages’, and cruelty was accompanied by stupidity, then the convention of the grotesque was certainly a means to discharge the horror through laughter, whilst also drawing a portrait made of dismay and condescension.

trans. Tristan Korecki

¹²⁵ *Czas* (1863), no. 238 (18 Oct.), 1.

¹²⁶ “Palmerston most completely agrees with this”, Czartoryski added, see *idem*, *Pamiętnik*, 144.