Abstract: During the 1863 Polish Uprising, Russian intellectual circles were split into two camps: the “Herzenists” on one side, who sympathized with the rebellious Poles and criticized the tsarist government's repression, and the “Katkovists” on the other, who supported St. Petersburg's actions. This article is the first concurrent analysis of Alexander Herzen's and Mikhail Katkov's articles on the Uprising, which aims to uncover how the latter successfully swayed Russian public opinion. It argues that the views on history, state and nation expressed by their articles on the Polish Question recall the philosophical issues that had shaped Russian intellectual life in the 1830s and 1840s, mainly Left Hegelian historiosophy and the Westernizer – Slavophile debate. Finally, modern theories on the rise of nationalism reveal that Russian understanding of the “nation” in 1863 was already moving towards a modern form of ethnic nationalism.

The “Poland” that was partitioned by the Russian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia, and the Habsburg Empire in the late eighteenth century was in reality the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth, a multinational empire inhabited by Poles, Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Jews. St Petersburg incorporated two thirds of the Commonwealth's territory into its empire and created the Kingdom of Poland and the Western Provinces, two regions that would prove difficult to govern up until 1917. In January 1863, the imperial Russian government announced that 30,000 men from the Russian partition of Poland were to be drafted into the Tsar's army. In reaction to this new measure, Polish nationalists established an insurrectionist government and waged partisan warfare, which the tsarist troops crushed mercilessly. The Polish Uprising provoked heated debates in the burgeoning Russian press and has been regarded as a defining moment in the development of Russian national consciousness. Two journalists stood at the centre of the debate: Alexander Herzen, who propounded his pro-Polish views in the influential biweekly Kolokol, published illegally from London, and Mikhail Katkov, who supported the tsarist government in the daily Moskovskie Vedomosti, a legal but censored newspaper published in Moscow. Intellectual circles were split into two corresponding camps: the 'Herzenists' sympathized with the rebellious Poles and criticized tsarist repression, whereas the nationalist 'Katkovists' supported the Russian government's actions.¹ If the elite was divided, the reading public sided decidedly with Katkov.

Since 1857, Kolokol had been the most widely read publication in the Russian Empire, which was no small feat considering that it was illegal and had to be distributed across Europe and into Russia through underground networks. It was acknowledged that the Free Russian Press’ publications – Kolokol amongst them – were read in government circles and that Herzen’s

articles on the peasant question influenced certain aspects of the Emancipation reforms. Although he had already written in favour of Polish independence in early 1861, which had not affected his overall popularity, his continuous defence of Polish insurgents in 1863 lost him the support of the Russian reading public. Over the course of 1863, the circulation of Kolokol plummeted from 5,000 to a mere 500 copies.\(^2\)

Katkov’s fortunes followed a trajectory opposite to Herzen’s. He assumed the editorship of the heavily censored Moskovskie Vedomosti between 1850 and 1855, and again from 1863 to 1887. Although censorship under Alexander II (1855-1881) could not compare to what Katkov had known during his first tenure as editor, he was not free to publish anything he wished, even if his post-1863 popularity afforded him more leeway than most of his colleagues. It cannot be denied that Herzen had infinitely more editorial freedom than Katkov did, but one should not assume that the latter’s position on the Polish question was imposed by the government. His articles were tolerated because he had become extremely popular with the reading public, and because he defended Russia’s right to rule over Poland. Katkov’s articles on the January Uprising won him the public’s favour and increased Moskovskie Vedomosti’s circulation from 7,750 to 10,825 copies over the course of 1863 alone. After six years of immense influence, Herzen was no longer to be the mouthpiece of Russian public opinion. The reading public irrevocably turned its back on him and made Katkov the new voice of the nation.\(^3\)

The debates these two journalists conducted on the Polish question can be analyzed in the context of a developing public sphere that enabled the formation of a consciously national Russian public. Their articles on the Polish Uprising penned during the first half of 1863 reveal how their views of history, state, and nation differed, and how their stance on this particular issue was informed by Russian intellectual tradition. A secondary aim of this paper, therefore, is to situate their ideas within the broader intellectual debates of the time in order to examine how the intelligentsia presented these issues to the emerging reading public. The outcome of the Herzen-Katkov debate must also be acknowledged. As Russian public opinion sided with Katkov, one can regard 1863 as a moment of choice for the Russian public. When confronted with two

\(^2\) Due to the illegality and uncertainty in the distribution networks of Kolokol, estimating the readership of this newspaper is difficult. At the peak of its popularity, Kolokol was printed in a first edition of 2,500 copies and often went into a second edition to reach totals ranging from 4,000 to 5,000. By the end of the fatal year of 1863, its circulation had dropped to a mere 500. These figures are taken from Edward Hallett Carr, *The Romantic Exiles: A Nineteenth-Century Portrait Gallery* (New York: Octagon, 1975), 212; Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution: A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1960), 104; Edward Hallett Carr, *Studies in Revolution* (London: F. Cass, 1962), 66; Z. P. Bazileva, “Kolokol” Gertsena, 1857-1867 G. (Moscow: Gos. izd-vo polit. lit-ry, 1949), 251. It should be noted that Kolokol’s scarcity meant that its readership was actually much larger than its circulation figures indicate. Gleason has also argued that copies of legal periodicals were generally read by one to three people, and that the number of readers for each copy of Kolokol printed in London was significantly higher, as student organisations in Europe and Russia set up libraries of censored works and were dedicated to reproducing copies of the Free Russian Press’s publications. Abbott Gleason, *Young Russia: The Genesis of Russian Radicalism in the 1860s* (New York: Viking, 1980), 95.

opposing discourses on issues of statehood and nationhood, what kind of 'imagined community' did Russians choose to be?

VIEWS OF HISTORY: RUSSIA'S PLACE IN THE WORLD-HISTORICAL PROCESS

The 1830s were a period of political ferment and intellectual effervescence in Russia. The young Belinsky, Bakunin, Granovsky and Stankevich were studying at the University of Moscow and organized clandestine reading groups, in which both Herzen and Katkov were active. Ever since Stankevich's circle discovered Hegel, his philosophy of history had taken a hold on Russian intellectual life, especially through the works of the Left Hegelians Feuerbach and Cieszkowski. This generation of Russian thinkers commonly adopted a trichotomic approach to history, in which dialectics between past and present achieve a synthesis in the future. Like their famous contemporary Karl Marx, they believed that Hegel was mistaken to see history as arrested in his own time, as there was still one final stage to come in the future. Herzen subscribed to the notion of historical progress through stages, but was wary of the cult of Historical Reason as a force outside of man and disliked Hegel's subordination of the Individual to the Absolute. His own trichotomic philosophy of history overthrew Hegelian inevitability and made room for man's independent action: after the initial 'age of natural immediacy' and the intermediate 'age of thought' comes the third and final 'age of action.' Katkov also viewed the development of historical nations as a process divided into three stages. In his understanding, the first stage establishes primitive family relationships and the second stage sees the development of society and the appearance of a 'spiritual organism' in its embryonic form, which defines the historical purpose of the nation. At the third and final stage, historical nations attain full self-consciousness, characterized by theoretical or speculative activity and the 'contemplation of life.'

Both Herzen and Katkov stated explicitly in their articles that the January Uprising was the beginning of a new stage in Russian history. Herzen argued that “the Polish Uprising has drawn a thick line. In future textbooks, this event will mark the end of one chapter of Russian history and will begin another. There has been a break – it is possible to resume our former life, but the break will be felt, and the line cannot be erased.” Along with an awakened consciousness and a new freedom of speech, Herzen hoped action would follow. Russians had to start acting now, even if they were still in a collective state of semi-consciousness, by denouncing the regime's repression in Poland. For Katkov, the formation of a public sphere and the expressions of patriotism it enabled were clear indications that Russia had reached the final stage of its historical development, one that was characterized by national self-consciousness and the development of intellectual life. Hegelian influences are marked in his suggestion that “the Polish question must

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now enter a new phase. Now, as our own national forces are awakening and as public life begins in our nation's womb, under better political circumstances, the two brother nations can finally square off, and then it will be clear who is stronger and who is weaker. Now that Russia had reached the third and final stage of its historical development, it could triumph over Poland at last.

Intellectuals of Herzen and Katkov's generation had also been preoccupied with the Hegelian concepts of non-historical peoples and historical nations, but did not wholeheartedly accept Hegel's association of historical nationhood with statehood. Although Russia had always had a state, they debated whether or not it could be regarded as an historical nation. In this context, the question of Poland's status as an historical nation was all the more delicate, as Russia's own status was still unsettled. For Herzen, there was no doubt that the Poles were an historical nation, albeit one that had suffered an unusual number of setbacks. An historical nation could not devolve into a non-historical people and any nation that had once had a state had a legitimate historical claim to see this state restored. He also believed that it was the Russians' moral duty to save the struggling Poles once and for all, to allow them to be restored to the commonwealth of historical nations. In his words, “we need to save this great, historical personality, this distressful Poland – it is a moral necessity to save her.” Katkov believed that Russia's status as an historical nation needed more reaffirming than Herzen did. He argued forcefully that “Poland became part of Russian territory through historical necessity. Russia's right to Poland is a strong right. It was bought with Russian blood, as the Muscovite nobility put it in its public address... God's judgement has settled our dispute, and the Kingdom of Poland is forever united with Russian power.” His articles state that granting Poland the status of historical nation with an independent state would be a direct threat to Russia's own status as an historical nation, and put forth the view that divine powers and the forces of history had spoken on the issue of Poland's right to a national state. The Poles' inability to defend their independent state and preserve their territorial unity meant that they could not be regarded as an historical nation and had finally found their rightful place amongst non-historical peoples.

Herzen and Katkov's understandings of history enlighten their stances on the legitimacy of Poland's claim to an independent state. Herzen's argument was based on the premise that Russia's status as an historical nation was secure, and that granting the Poles a state would not endanger Russia's own claim to historical nationhood. In this view, statehood and historical nationhood are equated; Russia had a state and Poland had once had one, therefore both could be regarded as historical nations. Katkov, on the other hand, did not believe that Russia was yet established as an historical nation and consequently portrayed the Poles' claim to independence as a threat to this achievement. Poland had legitimately become part of Russia, and to grant it an independent

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7 This quotation is from Mikhail Katkov, “Prichini zhivuchestii” Moskovskie Vedomosti, March 11, 1863, p. 112. All Katkov articles are from the collection: Sobranie peredovykh statei Moskovskikh Viedomostei: 1863 [1887], (Moscow, 1897), and all translations from Russian are my own. See also “Peterburgskie patrioti” MV, April 11, 1863, p. 164. “Polskoe vozstanie” MV, June 14, 1863, p. 308.
9 This quotation is from Herzen, “Prestupleniia v Polshe - I” March 1, 1863, p. 1295. See also “Resurrexit!” February 1, 1863, p. 1285.
10 This text is from Katkov, “Ottorzhenie Polsi” MV, May 21, 1863, p. 255. He also wrote on this issue in “Slaby ne sily nashi” MV, April 18, 1863, p. 177.
state would undo the process of history. The fact that the reading public sided with Katkov suggests that Russians were not yet fully confident in their status as a great nation destined to play a role in the world-historical process. The argument that granting the Poles an independent state would endanger Russia's position in history proved persuasive.

Views of the State: A Civilization between Europe and Asia

Russian intellectuals of the nineteenth century agreed that their state was deficient, but disagreed as to whether Russia should follow European models or find its own path. This debate began famously in the 1840s, when these opposing opinions crystallized into the worldviews of the Westernizers and the Slavophiles. Although the clear distinction between the two camps had blurred by the 1860s, Russia's civilizational ambiguity remained a philosophical and political problem. Herzen had been a convinced Westernizer in his youth, but the failed European Revolutions of 1848 pushed him towards Slavophilism. His articles on the Uprising clearly show this philosophical transition. He now believed that Russia was endowed with the historical mission of transforming statehood, of creating a new form of government that would be neither European nor Asian. His scornful description of Russia as “our German Asia” ruled by “German-Russian Tatars” recurs in his articles on the Polish question, thus suggesting that the tsarist state's failures were caused by both its Asiatic nature as well as by its adoption of European notions of statecraft. As the editor of Kolokol accused, “the Grand Prince knows that the Polish Uprising will inevitably carry away a number of Russian officers and soldiers, and they will fall in battle with Russians, at the hands of Russians, in expiation of St. Petersburg's German sins.” He thus emphasized how this “German” government was foreign to the Russian people, and therefore could ruthlessly carry out policies that were sure to cost Russian lives.

Unlike Herzen, Katkov never renounced the Westernism of his youth and continued to believe that only states based on a European model were worthy of the name. He was nevertheless aware of Russia's reputation as a barbaric Asian power in both Poland and Western Europe, and considered this perception unfair. He alluded to the precariousness of Russia's status as a Western state and argued that Russia's ability to rule over its smaller Western neighbours is precisely what made it a European state. Katkov feared that “the Poles rose up to tear away from Russia first the Kingdom of Poland, then her Western Provinces from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, pushing Russia into the depths of the Asian steppes and taking her place in the system of European states.” His aggressive stance towards the Polish Uprising was motivated by his belief that an independent Poland would threaten directly Russia's status as a European power.

The loss of Poland and the Western Provinces would cause an eastward shift in Russia's political zone of influence, which would compromise its claim as a Western state.

Katkov and Herzen also addressed the issue of the difficult relationship between the Russian state and the Russian people. Herzen adopted the view that the Russian state was

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foreign, and thus of a different essence than the Russian people; yet he believed that the state alone could have power over the people and power to reform society.\textsuperscript{16} From this impasse emerged the urgency to change the Russian state into an entity that would correspond to the Russian people, and finally be able to truly serve it: “We are left to wish only that Russia as a state be humiliated, weakened, taken apart; to wish that the offended and trampled Russian people begin a new life.”\textsuperscript{17} Herzen's writings on the Polish Uprising emphasized the distance between Russian state and society, and maintained that the tsarist government's actions did not represent the will of the Russian people. For the liberal Katkov, on the other hand, the historico-political process would bring an ever-increasing emancipation of the individual from the state, a liberty embodied by free public opinion. The state was therefore intended to be the guardian of society and not its master.\textsuperscript{18} Indeed, the state seldom figured in his writings on the Polish Uprising, in which the Russian people and public opinion are depicted as the main players while the government is only relevant insofar as it is in unison with these forces. The few references to the Russian state reveal that he believed its legitimacy rested entirely on popular support. He reminded his readers that “we must remember that a state exists only on the basis that every subject is compelled to sacrifice his life for the fatherland. The Russian people has proved more than once its readiness to sacrifice itself to preserve the Russian state. It will prove it again in the future.”\textsuperscript{19} Katkov could not regard the Russian state as truly despotic, as its existence had been preserved by the people’s readiness to defend it. In his view, popular support for tsarist policies in Poland thus suggested that Russians endorsed their government.\textsuperscript{20}

Herzen and Katkov’s respective depictions of empire and nation state are also in conflict, and further demonstrate the opposing visions of the ideal Russia they were offering the reading public. Towards the spring of 1863, as he was aware that his popularity was waning, Herzen began framing his support for the Polish independence movement within a broader revolutionary struggle with imperialism. Placing the Ukrainians and the Finns on a par with the Poles, he clearly stated his belief that nation states were preferable to multinational empires, which were simply a form of serfdom. Herzen asked his readers: “Is our imperial state formation truly necessary? It is, at the moment, a fact. But it has done its time and already has one foot in the grave – this is also a fact. We are trying with all our hearts to help the other foot. Yes, we are against empire because we are for the people!”\textsuperscript{21} He tried to reconcile support of the Polish national movement with Russian national sentiment and argued that Russians themselves would be happier within their own nation state than ruling despotsically over a multinational empire. Therefore, Herzen used his articles on the Polish Uprising to campaign for a revolutionary upheaval and for the accompanying dismantlement of the Russian Empire into nation states.

Katkov’s articles on the Polish question articulate a wholly different view of empire. He was adamant that Poland ought not to be granted political or military independence, yet he did

\textsuperscript{16} Herzen's view of the state is detailed in Malia, 399-402; and Acton, 50.

\textsuperscript{17} The quoted text is from Herzen, “Prestuplenia v Polshe”, February 15, 1863, p. 1295. Also relevant to this issue is his article “Bratskaia prosba”, February 1, 1863, p. 1288.


\textsuperscript{19} Katkov, “O polskom patriotizme” MV, January 29, 1863, p. 60.

\textsuperscript{20} His views on this question are also expounded in “Slaby ne sily nashi,” MV, April 18, 1863, p. 175.

\textsuperscript{21} The incendiary quotation with the original bold font is in Herzen, “Proklamatsia «Zemli i Voli»”, Apr 1, 1863, p. 1318. Also on the issue of imperialism: “Russkie ofitsery”, Apr 15, 1863, p. 1326.
not believe that Russia was threatened by the flourishing of Polish culture within its borders. For Katkov, the entirety of the Russian Empire's territory rightfully belonged to the Russians, but smaller, non-historical peoples could be granted the right to live under their protection. He did indeed more than once claim that Polish culture was thriving in the Russian partition, whereas Poles in Silesia and East Prussia were slowly being Germanized – an independent Poland would surely be swallowed by the Germans within a year. By abandoning Poland, Russians would fail in their historical mission as the protectors of Slavdom. Katkov asked his readers: if Poland were allowed to secede, “wouldn't Russia betray her manifest historical calling of defending the interests of the Slavic world, as far as circumstances and her own interests render it possible, and not to sacrifice it to the German world?”

The multinational empire was thus depicted by Katkov as the ideal form of government, in which strong nations can offer protection to weaker ones. Thus, Herzen and Katkov presented opposite views of the Russian state and its empire in their articles on the Polish Uprising. For the former, the tsarist state was an awkward amalgamation of German and Tatar elements, unsuited to governing Russians, who as Slavs were neither European nor Asian. He adamantly propounded that this foreign government's actions in Poland did not represent the true will of the Russian people, and campaigned for Russians to rise up, destroy this foreign state, and replace it with a new, truly Russian state. Katkov, on the other hand, presented Russia as a European state whose Asian reputation was undeserved. Nevertheless, Russia's status as a European power depended on its ability to rule over Poland and the Western Provinces, thus suggesting that it continuously had to fight for its right to remain a European state. Katkov, moreover, did not depict the Russian state as an autocratic regime and clearly expressed his belief that the Russian people and public opinion were infinitely more powerful forces than the Russian state itself, whose very existence depended on their support. The tsarist state's actions in Poland, and by extension its power in general, were only legitimate insofar as they represented the will of the people. Therefore, Katkov's depiction of Russia as a European state acting in accordance with the Russian people's will was an attractive argument for the Russian reading public. By describing the state as a European empire supported by Russian society, Katkov deftly played on Russians' desire to see themselves as a European people governed by a powerful European state. Katkov depicted imperial power as Russia's birthright and historical destiny. He spoke of an organic political bond between the ruling historical nation and the borders of its empire, independently of the non-historical peoples living within them. This civilizational greatness had already been achieved and simply had to be maintained. Herzen's later articles conversely predicted the end of the age of empire and hailed the coming of the nation state. He depicted Russia as a new civilization called to destroy its current foreign state, dismantle its multinational empire, and replace it with an entirely new form of government. This was an historical mission that few Russians were willing to undertake in 1863.

Views of the Nation: Towards Modernity

Modern theoretical frameworks, as opposed to nineteenth-century conceptions of the 'nation,' can also be used to analyze Herzen and Katkov's depictions of Polish and Russian claims to nationhood. Historians have argued that the 1863 Polish Uprising was a turning point in Polish

22 Quoted text is taken from Katkov, “Peterburgskie patrioti” MV, April 11, 1863, p. 164-6. On this topic as well is the article “Ottorzenie Polshi” MV, May 21, 1863, p. 255.
and Russian nationalist discourses, as both nations adopted more modern forms of ethnic nationalism thereafter. Twentieth-century theories of nationalism can help us uncover modern conceptions of nationhood in their embryonic form in both Herzen and Katkov's writings. Ernest Gellner's theory of nationalism enables us to distinguish important features. He emphasized the role of the intellectual elite and the media in the creation of a national discourse, the adoption of which relies on the existence of a mobile, literate and culturally standardized population. Gellner also argued that modern nationalism is not about the awakening of old forces (folk culture), but rather about the creation of new ones (high culture) – it speaks of Gemeinschaft (community) but emerges from Gesellschaft (society). In order for this elite-created nationalist discourse to be legitimate, it must be successfully brought to and embraced by the masses. For Benedict Anderson, the newspaper enabled a new form of national community to arise, a community of readers aware of one another’s existence and of their simultaneous activity. His analysis also allows for 'official nationalism,' a reaction by imperial power groups to the rise of ethno-linguistic nationalism within their borders. Although official nationalism is most often led by the state apparatus, it can also be fostered by intellectual elites.

Gellner and Anderson's monographs provide guidance to assess whether the Poles were regarded as a nation in the modern sense at the time of the Uprising. Kolokol, receiving information through the Polish underground, reported public displays of support by the civilian population in Warsaw. It depicted the armed conflict as one between the tsarist army and the entire Polish people, rather than with a handful of insurgents. Criticizing skewed coverage of the events in the government-sponsored Russian press, Herzen dismissed depictions of the Poles' national claim as illegitimate, as a purely elite movement lacking popular support. The editor of Kolokol let his sarcasm bite his opponents: “let us suppose that all news in The Invalid are lies, and all reports of The Northern Post are devoid of truth; let us suppose that those 'criminal gangs' represent all of Poland, who wants independence and is ready to die for it.” Katkov, on the other hand, presented the non-existence of the Polish people, or its lack of support for the insurgents, as one of his main arguments legitimizing the tsarist government's actions: “The Polish Uprising is not a national uprising: the people did not rise up, the nobility and the clergy did. It is not a struggle for freedom, but a struggle for power.” The Polish national claim to statehood was thus the product of an elite culture, illegitimate due to its lack of popular support.

Herzen and Katkov's depictions of the potential role of public opinion in Russian politics are strikingly similar and are both reminiscent of Anderson's imagined communities. Herzen's articles on the Polish question highlight the extent to which Russia had changed over the thirty

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26 This quote is from the article Katkov, “Polskoe vozstaniie” *MV*, June 14, 1863, p. 306-7, but this point was as forcefully argued in: “Ottorzhenie Polski” *MV*, May 21, 1863, p. 257; “Po povodu Vysochayshago” *MV*, April 3, 1863, p. 151.
years since the 1830 Polish Uprising, and suggest that the growing public sphere had become a new space for individuals to criticize their government. In 1863, more than the fate of Poland was at stake, this was the moment of truth for all of Russian society, the moment to speak up against tsarist repression. He tried to convince his dwindling readership that “this heroic moral relationship, revealing itself clearly in Russian society, leaves it no choice – not only between the tsar and Poland, but between silence and speech.”

By May 1863, Herzen knew he had lost the favour of the reading public, who irrevocably supported the government's actions in Poland, and his bitterness towards Russian society's moral weakness is apparent. He was witnessing the failure of the Gellnerian moment, when the modern intellectual elite is unable to communicate to the masses the ideal vision of the modern nation it has created.

Katkov also stressed the importance of the emerging Russian public opinion and described the tide of change sweeping across the country. In Hegelian terms, Russia had finally attained the true 'national consciousness' of historical nations. The editor of Moskovskie Vedomosti rejoiced that “everywhere a new life is awakening; all feel a new force and a new mission for the future; everywhere new interests of all sorts are appearing, binding together all parts of the Russian people, all provinces of the Russian Empire. A new, powerful force has arisen – public opinion, universal interest in public affairs.” In other words, Russia had become an imagined community.

Herzen and Katkov's depictions of Polish and Russian nationalism thus reflect modern conceptions of the nation. Kolokol described the Polish Uprising as a truly national movement led by elites but supported by all segments of Polish society, reflecting the Gellnerian model of an elite-created national discourse finding appeal with the masses. On the other hand, his depiction of the Russian national public suggests that it was not yet fully developed, as Herzen believed that only a society composed of individuals willing to criticize the regime and denounce its abuses could be regarded as fully mature. In his perspective, the Polish insurgents and the dissatisfied masses supporting them embodied this ideal modern national public. Despite his best efforts, he failed to rouse the awakening Russian society through his publication venture. Katkov, on the other hand, expounded the notion that the Polish Uprising was not a legitimate national movement, as there existed no Polish people to support it within the Russian partition. In contrast, the Russian public had finally awoken and Russians from all parts of the Empire had collectively spoken in support of the government's actions in Poland. Therefore, the belief that the Russian people, unlike the Polish people, had massively risen to show its support for its elite's national project indicated that Russians had at last achieved a state of modern national consciousness.

Conclusion

Herzen and Katkov's articles on the 1863 Polish Uprising did more than simply denounce or support military repression of the insurgents in Warsaw. They offered the Russian reading public alternative ways to imagine their community during a time of historical change. Kolokol allowed the Russian people to imagine itself as a revolutionary nation of a new kind, a nation that would have the courage to free itself from the bonds of empire and from outdated European

29 Text quoted from Katkov, “Slaby ne sily nashi” MV, April 18, 1863, p. 175-6; but he also mentioned public opinion in “Vliianie patrioticheskikh” MV, May 3, 1863, p. 209-10; “Istinnii i razumnii” MV, May 12, 1863, p. 234.
forms of government, and thus become the leader of a new community of nation states united by solidarity. The Russian people deserved a new state that would be neither Asian nor European, one that could truly represent its Slavic nature. Herzen's articles focused largely on Russia's future: as its past and present offered little to be glorified, its greatness must therefore lie ahead. He wished to usher Russia into a new era of progress. Finally, he did not fail to explain how the January Uprising could lead to the revolution that would bring Russia into a new stage in its history. By rising up against tsarism, the Poles were inviting Russians to join them in their fight for the freedom of the people, both Polish and Russian. In this worldview, national sentiments were secondary to universal ideals. Herzen, the father of Russian socialism, had already moved beyond the stage of national consciousness and spoke of class consciousness and international solidarity. His references to the 'universal' people as opposed to the specifically 'Russian people' perhaps meant little to Russian readers, and his notions of statehood remained abstract. By speaking too strongly of Gesellschaft, Herzen failed to provide the feeling of Gemeinschaft that Russians craved.

Katkov's popularity suggests that the image of the Russian nation he put forth was more representative of popular mood, of the way Russians wanted to imagine their national community in 1863. If Herzen spoke principally in universal terms, Katkov clearly spoke in national and European ones. He explained at length the ways in which an independent Poland would be a threat to Russia's status as an historical nation and as a European power. His discussion of the awakening national public opinion also betrays his use of Europe as the yardstick of political and national consciousness, as the European press’ comments on Russian national feelings were seen as the ultimate consecration. The Russian state itself was not central to Katkov's analysis and he instead focused on the Russian people and public opinion, deftly combining Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. Unlike Herzen, his references to Russia's past were positive and faithful to the Romantic nationalist tradition, glorifying Russia's present place in history instead of hoping for a bright future. Therefore, the popularity of his articles indicates that Russians had no wish to do as Herzen urged and march ahead of Old Europe on a distinct historical path. Katkov's Russia was part of this Old Europe, the Europe of powerful multinational empires and politically aware national communities. This was the type of imagined community Russians wanted to be in 1863.
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