



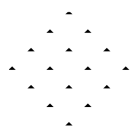
Manifest Tymczasowego Rządu Narodowego - Tekst angielski

The vile government of the invader¹, infuriated by the resistance of the victims it torments, has decided to inflict a resolute blow against them – seizing tens of thousands of their most valiant and most zealous defenders², clothing them in the despised uniform of the Muscovites, and driving them off thousands of miles to eternal destitution and perdition. Poland is neither able nor willing to submit without resistance to this ignominious and rapacious act and, under the penalty of infamy among her posterity, she shall wage vigorous opposition. Hosts of gallant youths, self-sacrificing youths, swept up with an ardent love for their Homeland and with an unfaltering faith in justice and in God's assistance, have vowed to shake-off the accursed yoke, or die. Therefore sally forth, O Polish Nation! Sally forth as they have! Following the horrendous dishonour of bondage, after the unspeakable tortures of oppression, the Central National Committee³, which presently is your only legal National Government, summons you to the field of final battle, to the field of glory and victory, which it shall give you, and swears by the name of God in Heaven that it shall so do, for it knows that you who were but yesterday a penitent and avenger, must now become, and indeed shall be, a hero and a giant. Yes, you shall wrest your liberty and your independence through the greatness of courage, and the sacredness of sacrifices that no people has yet ever inscribed in their historical annals. With no remorse, weakness, or hesitance you shall give your Homeland, now being born anew, all the blood, life, and property that she may call upon. In return, the C[entral] N[ational] C[ommittee] pledges to you that the strengths of your courageousness shall not be squandered, your devotions shall not be for naught, for the helm it is taking hold of shall be wielded with a strong hand. The Committee shall break through all the impediments, smash the barriers asunder, and pursue and punish before the severe though just tribunal of our offended Fatherland every case of disfavour, or even lack of ardour, toward the sacrosanct cause. Upon the first day of our openly coming forward, at the very moment when the holy struggle commences, the C[entral] N[ational] C[ommittee] declares all the sons of Poland, without any distinction of faith or race, descent or station, free and equal Citizens of the country.

¹ On behalf of the Russian tsar, the authority in the Kingdom of Poland was wielded by his viceroy (namiestnik).

² On the night of January 14–15, 1863, at the initiative of margrave Wielopolski, who headed the government of the Kingdom of Poland, an extraordinary conscription for the tsarist army (Polish, branka) was carried out – a move that was meant to prevent the outbreak of the uprising.

³ The Central National Committee was the secret leadership of the camp of radical democratic activists known as the 'Reds'. Set up in mid-1862 in Warsaw, the organization worked on preparing an armed struggle for Polish independence.



From this moment onward, the land which the agricultural folk has hitherto possessed on condition of paying rent or via serfdom to their masters, shall unconditionally become their own property and legal inheritance to their descendants. The land-holders, if thereby aggrieved, shall be compensated from the general funds of the State. And all the village tenants and day-labourers joining the ranks of the defenders of the country or, in the event of honourable death on the field of glory, their families shall receive, out of the National estate, an apportionment of the land protected from the enemy. To arms, then, o Nation of Poland, Lithuania, and Ruthenia! To arms! For the hour of our mutual liberation has sounded, the old sword has been drawn from its sheath, the sacred standard of the Eagle, the Pahonia, and the Archangel¹ unfurled.

And now, we address you, o Nation of Muscovy. Our traditional motto being freedom and the brotherhood of peoples, we pardon you even the murder of our Fatherland, and even the blood of Praga² and Oszmiana³, the outrages in the streets of Warsaw, and the tortures of the dungeons of the Citadel⁴. We pardon you, because you, too, are miserable, sad, tortured, and being murdered. The dead-bodies of your children are swaying from tsarist gallows. Your prophets are freezing in the snows of Siberia. But, if at this resolute moment, you do feel inside yourselves no compunction for the past, no holier aspirations for the future; if, in struggle with us you give support to the tyrant who kills us and treads upon you – woe unto you! For, in the face of God and the world entire, we shall curse you to the shame of eternal subjection and the torment of eternal slavery. We shall challenge you to a dreadful combat of annihilation, to the final battle of European civilization against the savage barbarism of Asia.

Warsaw, on the 22nd day of January 1863.

Conformity with the original-copy is sworn by the Lithuanian Committee, as the interim Provincial Government in Lithuania and Byelorussia.

Translated © by Tristan Korecki, Philip Earl Steele

¹ This was the first time in history that the historic Ruthenian emblem of St Michael the Archangel was added to the shared emblem of Poland and Lithuania. Done by the National Government during the January Uprising of 1863–4.

² This refers to the slaughter of civilians in Praga, Warsaw's right-bank district, committed by Russian troops in 1794 during the Kosciuszko Insurrection.

³ In 1831, during the course of the November Uprising, Russian soldiers killed some 500 people in the Dominican Church in Oszmiana, including women, children, and the priest celebrating the Service.

⁴ The Citadel (Cytadela) is a fortress that was built in Warsaw on the order of Tsar Nicholas I after the defeat of the November Uprising. The complex's Pavilion 10 housed an investigation prison for political inmates. Prisoners were executed on the embankments outside the Citadel.