
Recovering

Nonviolent

History

Civil Resistance
in Liberation Struggles

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Maciej J. Bartkowski



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Poland: Forging the Polish Nation Nonviolently, 1860s–1900s

Maciej J. Bartkowski

The third and final partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795 brought to an end the existence of the Polish state. Partitioned between Russia, Prussia, and the Habsburg Empire, it would take more than 123 years for Poland to reemerge as an independent nation-state in 1918.

At the time of partition, no sector of society put Polish identity above class interest. Political rights had been confined to a privileged class, the *szlachta*, who could elect and limit the powers of kings.¹ This class had abused and exploited peasants for centuries while impeding the rise of a merchant class. Therefore, class animosities were strong, permitting the partition powers to incite events such as the 1848 “Galicia slaughter” when peasants killed more than 1,000 nobles. In 1870, it was estimated that only around a third of the Polish-speaking population considered themselves Polish.²

In such circumstances, the development of Polish identity and a Polish nation was by no means inevitable. Late-nineteenth-century processes such as industrialization, urbanization, and demographic growth of the Polish-speaking population do not by themselves account for the emergence of a common Polish identity and a growing demand for statehood. Social and economic changes, together with the often repressive policies of the occupying powers, helped to create a propitious environment for mass-based mobilization. But the nature of this mobilization, either subservient and passive or restive and nationalistic, was determined largely by the new way that the struggle for independence was waged: a deliberate rejection, at least for a period of time, of armed resistance in favor of novel nonviolent methods of defiance.

In this chapter, I argue that Poles developed philosophically refined and, in practice, sophisticated forms of nonviolent resistance in their struggle for national survival and independence. This nonviolent resistance took shape soon after a failed violent national uprising of 1863–1864 and, for more than five decades, it became the main weapon of defiance and a remarkably effective means of building collective identity among the Polish-speaking population. Although Poles did not end the partition by their nonviolent disobedience and confrontation—World War I did that—neither were they defeated or culturally annihilated as the partitioning powers intended. This cultural resilience in the face of severe oppression was based on ingenious mass nonviolent mobilizing, organizing, and actions, all of which instilled a deep sense of national awareness.

Eulogized Violence in Polish History and National Remembrance

General neglect of the role of nonviolent resistance does not result only from a historiographical focus on the role of political and intellectual elites, geopolitical changes, or social and economic transformations. It also is the consequence of the dramas of war, armed conflict, and dominant narratives of glorified violent resistance. Polish historians, essayists, poets, film- and opinionmakers, and politicians (mostly men) have been attracted to mesmerizing stories of militant conspiracies, plotting, army mobilizations, military campaigns, victorious battles, and heroic violent resistance, particularly against more powerful enemies, leading to unavoidable but glorious defeats. These stories have been cherished and apotheosized through collective remembrance. Valor is attached to knightly or soldierly virtues and unquestioned martyrdom for the Polish fatherland and the country's freedom. Unsurprisingly, therefore, as Adam Michnik remarks, Poles "identify most closely with the tradition of uprisings."³ The nineteenth-century romantic literature of romanticism presents Poland as a Christ among nations, enduring injustice and persecution, and sacrificing itself on the altar of the struggle for freedom so as to rise again, regain its independence, and free other subjugated nations. In that sense, immense suffering, victimization by pernicious neighbors, immediate sacrifice, and violent heroics—symbolized by the suicidal charge of Polish cavalry against German tanks in 1939—have defined Polishness and Polish patriotism and are believed to have contributed to the nation's resilience and perseverance.

Discussion about the significance and meaning of national tragedies and sacrifices has been renewed by the crash of the presidential plane on April 10, 2010, which killed dozens of leading contemporary Polish political leaders and intellectual figures. They were flying to commemorate one

of Poland's most emotive anniversaries—the 1940 Katyń massacre where Soviet secret police executed 21,000 Polish officers. In 2010, as hundreds of thousands of Poles went to the streets in an emotional outpouring of grief and solidarity, commentators reported an overwhelming sensation of patriotism and the rise of a new Polish political community: “Poles, brought together by violent death and destruction, could finally unite in pain.”⁴ This victimhood fuels an enduring belief that defeats, sacrifice, and martyrs are necessary to bring about greater rewards—such as independence after 123 years of unceasing struggle or a genuine community of Poles that emerged out of the April 10 tragedy. Time and again, the Polish national identity is redefined and reformed by national catastrophes—partitions, wars, and tragic accidents.

The tradition of armed resistance is ingrained in Polish culture, not least in the capital itself: Warsaw. Its numerous monuments, many erected after 1989, quintessentially represent the way Poles remember and retell their history. Monuments for fallen heroes dominate the commemorative landscape: for the brave Polish soldiers who fought and died at Monte Cassino in 1944, the decisive battle in Italy; for the 1944 Warsaw Rising; for the fallen and murdered in the East, including those executed at Katy; and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier regularly visited by Polish notables. A conspicuous bronze figure is the Little Insurgent, a boy soldier wearing an oversized adult helmet and clenching a German Sten gun—this is near to where thirteen-year-old “Antek” was killed.

In 2005 the Warsaw Rising Museum opened, which uses modern, multimedia historical exhibitions to “recreate the atmosphere of fighting Warsaw.”⁵ Here, officials from the Central Anticorruption Bureau, the Internal Security Agency, and the Border Guard take their solemn oaths of office. As the spokesperson for the Internal Security Agency explained, they chose the museum because “Poles associated this place with heroism and patriotism of all those who gave their lives for the fatherland.”⁶ The appropriateness of linking the work of these agencies with a violent and a destined-for-defeat insurrectionary act where many children, outgunned, fought the German Army has not been questioned.

Through all these monuments, places, and commemorative rituals, Poles immortalize their heroism in armed struggles. Furthermore, in so doing, other stories of no less courageous and patriotic acts are suppressed. A participant in the nowadays forgotten nonviolent resistance during the German occupation of Warsaw recalls,

Underground teaching on all levels of schooling was the most admirable work accomplished by Polish society [during the war]. Neither tracts [*sic*], nor violence, nor sabotages were as productive as this last manifestation of the national consciousness. It saved our society from a catastrophe equal at least to the destruction of Warsaw: the loss of five graduating

classes of engineers, architects, doctors, teachers, and students who managed to pass their baccalaureate exams [despite the German occupation and war].⁷

Historians such as Norman Davies refer to “an amazing network of clandestine classes, which eventually undertook the education of a million children.”⁸ Yet Warsaw has no monument to commemorate those who risked death to organize classes. Their daily heroism remained anonymous and largely forgotten.

Just as nonviolent resistance to German occupation is ignored in Polish historiography and by the public at large, so too is the role and legacy of nonviolent resistance to the partition. Adam Michnik encapsulates well how militaristic tradition eclipses the “less glamorous” achievements of nonviolent resistance:

An attack from the battle of Samosierra [*sic*]⁹ is more photogenic than the tedious organization of education or the modernization of agriculture, not to mention the construction of a network of sanitary facilities. But let us remember that we would not have been able to organize our statehood had it not been for the work done in the spirit of “organicism” and “accommodation.” . . . And let us remember that our grandfathers often had to pay a high price for their decision to undertake these tasks, risking moral reproach from their antagonists.¹⁰

Michnik also writes about Poles who see only in black and white: either one takes up arms and fights for the fatherland or one yields to the oppression and abandons the struggle entirely.¹¹ This binary choice excludes the option of defiance through nonviolent organizing and nonviolent direct action.

Philosophical and Historical Foundations of Nonviolent Resistance: The Birth of Organic Work

After partition, Poles engaged in armed struggle by allying with Napoleon against the partitioning powers, by conspiring and leading the violent uprising of November 1830, by joining militarily in the People’s Spring of 1848, and by rising again in January 1863 to be crushed by the Russian Army. Following this violent defeat and its disastrous consequences,¹² many viewed regaining Poland’s independence as unrealistic in the foreseeable future. This led to a decisive shift away from ad hoc armed revolts toward strategies of long-term constructive activism and organizing as a way to continue the struggle by other, nonviolent, means.

Nonviolent action found its context in the newly emerging social philosophy of positivism as adapted in Poland. Polish positivism offered a

rational explanation for nonviolent resistance and its strategic, long-term use and eventually superseded a romantic vision of armed struggle for Poland's independence.

Influenced by their Western European counterparts, Polish positivists saw the nation as a social organism that, to survive and grow, had to be healthy and well nourished. National survival, particularly within the borders of foreign states, was endangered by continuous militant conspiracies and failed violent actions. For positivists the new strategy for reasserting national existence, vigor, and hope for eventual liberation was to accumulate intellectual, cultural, social, and economic strength. The best-educated and most intelligent, not the mightiest, would eventually survive and win. Aleksander Świętochowski, a leading Polish positivist, emphasizes the superiority of mental over physical strength: "No Krupp could make such armaments as would kill Copernicus and no Moltke could vanquish Mickiewicz or Matejko."¹³ Knowledge and work became a new strategy for unity, perseverance, and resistance that were to help weave various Polish-speaking groups, most importantly peasants, into a national fabric.

This rise of positivism was paralleled with the emergence of the Cracow historical school, which argued that internal factors—weak and ineffectual government and a general economic and social malaise—rendered the country extremely vulnerable. Consequently, neighboring powers saw the opportunity for conquest and territorial expansion.

Placing the causes for Poland's downfall squarely on the domestic front meant that a remedy could also be found in internal changes and reforms. As Józef Szujski, a leader of the Cracow historical school, explained, "If the nation as a state fell, it was from its own guilt [and] if it raises, it will be from its own work, its own reason, its own spirit."¹⁴ The school further maintained that a successful armed insurrection not only was unlikely, but it would be short-lived without a proper political, social, and economic basis. Although often criticized for religious, social, and political conservatism and loyalty toward the Habsburgs, the school helped lay down the ideational foundations for moving away from the destructive violence of armed uprisings toward constructive nonviolent strategies.

The positivist thoughts supported by the ideas of the Cracow historical school were put into effect through a new type of nonviolent defiance known as "organic work" or "work at foundations" that emphasized social and economic development, cultural learning, and preservation of language, tradition, and historical memory. It was a strategic and pragmatic choice as nonviolent methods began to look more feasible than failed armed struggles. Organic work from self-discipline and intellectual self-improvement, to national education of the masses and social, economic, and political self-organization was a nonspectacular project whose outcomes were not immediately discernible and, in contrast to insurrectionary conspiracies, often

faced no immediate threat of repression. Forms of organic work were undertaken in all three parts of divided Poland, both openly and secretly, legally and illegally. The two common elements were its nonviolent character and the constructive nature of resistance. The objective was to generate solely Polish economic, social, and intellectual capital and to sustain, protect, and promote Polishness: language, culture, tradition, and history. Polish dreams of independence were now channeled through nonviolent practical tools of self-organization that would preserve, solidify, and eventually expand the cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and historical boundaries of being a Pole.

Organic Work in Austrian, German, and Russian Poland

Various initiatives in the spirit of organic work took place soon after partition, but they were not widespread nor were their scale and eventual impact comparable to developments in the 1870s and later. The failed 1863–1864 rising was a watershed. Polish society, exhausted with the armed struggles and their continuous defeats but committed to defending the core of its identity, now concentrated on harnessing its strengths internally to withstand de-Polonization. Through the creation of parallel economic, social, and educational institutions and the protection and expansion of cultural and national practices, Poles carried on their defiance throughout the partitioned country while actively seeking to awaken a unified national identity among all Polish-speaking groups.

Organic Work in Austrian Poland

Austrian Poland (Galicia) was the least economically developed territory, the most conservative in terms of social hierarchies, with strong loyalties toward the Habsburg Empire and a relatively low level of national consciousness, particularly in rural areas. The major shift toward embracing nonviolent forms of defiance occurred at the end of the 1870s, veiled in legal education activities and nonconfrontational and open forms of cultural and national festivities fostering Polish identity.

Vienna tightly controlled the education curricula in Austrian Poland, forbidding teachers to use their own materials to teach about national history and banned prepartition maps of Poland. In 1882, organicists launched the Agricultural Circle Society that quickly grew into a movement. It organized civic education and opened reading rooms while supporting self-organization among Polish-speaking villagers by opening Christian stores and credit associations.¹⁵ The agricultural circle movement organized festivities to commemorate historic anniversaries and promoted social behavior

aiming to reinforce the social and national fabric. Its strict antialcohol rules in village circle rooms were the first challenge to the dominance of taverns in village life. The agricultural circle movement's promotion of self-improvement among Galician peasants is credited with their growing identification with the Polish nation.¹⁶ Peasants gained access to patriotic literature, history books, Polish-language newspapers, and also information on how to set up and run reading rooms.¹⁷ Another mass education organization—the People's School Society (PSS)—was established in 1891. It grew rapidly and, by 1913, had more than 300 branches with 42,000 members. It reached out to roughly 5 million illiterate Polish-speaking peasants in Galicia, building libraries and setting up rural primary and secondary schools as well as seminaries for teachers. It incorporated the work of Polish nationalist novelists and poets in the curricula and organized national celebrations.¹⁸ On the surface they were apolitical, but in fact self-help organizations such as the agricultural circle movement or the PSS signaled the growth of a new national consciousness.¹⁹

An additional participatory form of action after 1863–1864 was commemorations that brought together Poles from different social strata: intellectuals, peasants, and laborers from all parts of the divided country. The mass celebrations of national traditions, famous Polish historical and contemporary figures, mass remembrances of glorious historical events and military victories, and people's mourning during anniversaries (e.g., partitions of the Polish state or failed armed uprisings) were often accompanied by educational activities such as lectures, theatrical performances, publications of books or historical monographs, exhibitions of memorabilia, or church services. They were an alternative form of patriotic activism to counter the denationalizing and de-Polonizing policies of the partitioning powers, instead creating a sense of one community united by shared history, language, traditions, and culture. Commemorations were a “constructive, creative, yet intensely national variant of organic work—an attempt at national modernization, Polish style.”²⁰

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to document the myriad commemorative events, but it is worth highlighting two examples. Naturally, Austria and Germany could not object to commemorations of the bicentennial of the Relief of Vienna in 1883 by Austrian, German, and Polish forces under Polish king Jan III Sobieski. For Poles, however, celebrating this important national military victory was a reminder of their country's past glory, independence, and might that stopped Ottoman invasion of Europe. More than 12,000 peasants came to Cracow to celebrate the bicentennial, some leaving their village for the first time. They saw the Polish royal castle and heard speeches and lectures about Polish history. Both a national and a religious celebration, Polish-speaking Catholic peasants paid homage to the Polish monarch whose military genius had saved Christianity.²¹

The second example is the centennial of the failed 1794 uprising led by Tadeusz Kościuszko against Prussia and Russia. After the victorious Battle of Raclawice, where a peasant battalion armed with scythes overran Russian artillery positions, Kościuszko ennobled a number of peasants, promoting Bartosz Głowacki to become the standard bearer, a symbol of the armed rising. During the centennial commemoration, numerous plays, sketches, art exhibitions, and a reenactment of the Battle of Raclawice acknowledged the peasant volunteers' readiness to sacrifice for the Polish nation. Thousands of Polish-speaking peasants visited Cracow to take part. In Lviv, under the cover of an exposition of technological advances and agricultural developments in Austrian Poland, the organizers displayed a national trope: Wojciech Kossak and Jan Styka's enormous painting, *The Raclawice Panorama*, showing peasants with scythes leading the charge against the Russian cannons. In four months, more than a million people visited the exposition and an estimated 200,000 people viewed *The Raclawice Panorama*.²² The PSS organized peasant group visits, including funding the trips of more than 6,000 schoolchildren. During one of many pilgrimages to *The Raclawice Panorama*, 3,000 peasants passed a resolution demanding universal and direct voting rights—a year later the Polish Peasant Party was established.

This tactic of mass commemoration required the adroit use of nationally significant anniversaries that would influence peasants and other social groups to identify as Polish citizens, cognizant of their national identity, duties, and political rights, while doing so in a low-risk, nonviolent way that reduced the likelihood of repression. Commemorations were a pedagogical tool for Polish speakers who previously did not identify with the nation. The strength of this newly acquired national identity came into clear display during World War I when peasants constituted the majority of Polish volunteers.²³

Organic Work in German Poland

In German Poland, the nonviolent resistance was similarly advanced through building a number of civic institutions independent from the authorities and thus countering Germanization policies known as *Kulturkampf* (the struggle for land and minds) and strengthening national awareness among the Polish population.

In 1872, organicists founded the Society for Peasant Education with the goals of offering alternative education and increasing national awareness of Polish language, history, and culture. It established nearly 120 libraries all over German Poland, distributed books and other reading materials, and set up day nurseries. The German authorities dissolved this organization, leading Polish organicists in 1880 to found the Society for Folk Reading Rooms,

whose activities conformed to German legal restrictions. Within three years, this society had set up almost 400 rural and 85 urban libraries and supplied them with 79,000 Polish-language cultural, literary, and religious books. By 1890, almost 1,000 libraries were established with the society's help. In addition to the society's work, organicists set up more than 100 reading circles in German Poland.²⁴

In 1886, German chancellor Otto von Bismarck allocated 100 million marks to buy out indebted Polish landowners in German Poland and replace them with Germans. In response, Polish organicists made plans to buy back the lands for Poles. Thanks to parcelation institutions, beginning with the Polish Land Bank in 1888, within a decade Poles were able to acquire more land than the Germans. A famous example of resistance to the German land grab is the story of the Polish peasant Michał Drzymała. In 1904, German authorities refused to allow him to build a permanent residence on his new property. Therefore, Drzymała turned his caravan-trailer into his home and, to abide by German law, moved it a few centimeters each day to show that it was not permanent and, therefore, did not require a permit. The resulting legal battle lasted for more than four years and ended when Drzymała sold the land and purchased another with an already built house that did not require a building permission. By then, British, French, and US newspapers made a mockery of the German institutionalized and legalized land discrimination policy against Poles while Drzymała and his caravan became a symbol of creative nonviolent resistance to the German expansionist policies.

Various Polish economic and financial institutions were created in rural areas to counteract German economic expansion. The number of Polish credit cooperatives rose from 25 in 1868 to 76 in 1891, reaching 204 by 1913 with close to 126,000 members—almost half of them peasants.²⁵ They offered Poles more favorable interest rates than German banks and so helped modernize and expand both the rural and urban economy in German Poland.²⁶ Organicists pushed for the establishment of Polish industrial societies with both political and national objectives to strengthen the middle-class economic basis in order to compete effectively with German entrepreneurs. The industrial societies proliferated and, by 1914, there were almost 170 societies in the region of Poznań alone with almost 11,000 members.²⁷

The number of peasant agricultural circles increased from 45 in 1875 to 60 with 10,000 members in 1900, reaching 310 with 17,000 members by 1910, some 40 percent of all Polish-speaking rural landowners—the new social cadre of peasant activists.²⁸ Next to facilitating information exchange about crop-growing and agricultural trade, including selling agricultural products and delivering fertilizer, coal, and seeds to the Polish farmers, the circles also advanced knowledge about legal, credit, tax, and inheritance issues that aimed at countervailing German administrative, juridical, and economic efforts to uproot Polish-speaking peasants from their land. In addition,

6,000 dairy cooperatives and 6,000 credit banks were set up to support the cultural, social, and economic development of the Polish village.²⁹

Concurrent with the growth of Polish economic, social, and educational institutions, the Polish-language press also grew and its total annual print in German Poland doubled in the first decade of the twentieth century to 400,000 copies per year.³⁰ Evidence of the impact of increasingly muscular nationalist press could be clearly seen in the school strikes in 1901–1907 (discussed below).

By 1914, an estimated one in four adults belonged to a Polish economic, social, cultural, or political institution in the largest region of German Poland, Wielkopolska.³¹ Overall by 1913, Polish organic institutions reached 140,000 members of the adult population of Wielkopolska—although the total number of Poles influenced by such institutions was higher since younger Poles were exposed to organic education without being counted as members.³² Through these activities, the organizers and their beneficiaries “learned that they could attain specific economic, cultural, and social goals through a group effort that relied on legal, practical actions rather than . . . revolutionary violence.”³³

School Strikes in German Poland

The school strikes that broke out in German Poland beginning in 1901 were the largest form of coercive nonviolent defiance in the partitioned lands. The years of 1906–1907 were the peak of the strike, with more than 93,000 children staying away from school.

This resistance to Germanization had been built through decades of less confrontational mobilization. As far back as 1871, 110,000 people signed a petition against German plans for schools while 160,000 signed a petition in support of Polish language in elementary schools. When in 1885 the government ordered all subjects to be taught in German, including religion and Polish-language classes, 60,000 people signed a petition that demanded church (rather than state) oversight of religion classes and teaching of the Polish language. These petitions, together with open public meetings to discuss education policies, were lessons in citizens’ self-organization to defend the rights to their own language. They generated greater awareness among Polish speakers of the necessity to defend Polish education and were an important prelude to the school strikes. The conflict was further intensified as the Polish Catholic Church was drawn into the dispute to defend the use of Polish in religious instruction. Poles became ready to replace legal methods of petition with more disruptive, illegal, nonviolent resistance through school strikes.

The first major strike in 1901 took place in the town of Września. First, parents refused to buy the German-language religious texts. When school

officials bought them, pupils refused to use the books or answer questions in German. The defiant pupils prayed in Polish instead of German and “refused to attend the ceremonies commemorating the German victory over France at Sedan.”³⁴ German teachers and Poles loyal to the German authorities punished the children, including with corporal punishment. During a mass caning, when townspeople heard the children’s screams, about 1,000 people, mainly women, entered the schoolyard and protested. German police forced the crowd to leave, and later twenty-one protesters, including seven women and three teenagers, were sentenced to prison terms and financial penalties.

Far from subduing the public, these harsh sentences backfired, converting the Września affair into a national symbol of the Polish resistance and sacrifice in defense of the Polish language. Soon, celebrated poems and essays about children’s heroism were published³⁵ while donations came from Poland, Europe, and the United States to cover legal fees, provide support for the prisoners’ families, and gifts for the beaten pupils—an example of solidarity across partitioned borders.³⁶ Pro-Września protests took place in other parts of Poland, including at the German consulates in Warsaw and Lviv. The international public also noticed the brutality of the German oppression through press coverage in France, Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Italy, Argentina, and the Vatican. This in turn contributed to an increase in international support for Poles’ right to self-determination.

Despite the backlash, the German authorities remained inflexible, thus paving the way to a much larger wave of school strikes in 1906–1907. The first strike began in October 1906 and involved an estimated 70,000 pupils from 950 state schools, including 20,000 in Pomerania and 47,000 in Wielkopolska (more than half of those pupils were required to study religion in German).³⁷ Eventually, 93,000 children from over 1,600 schools in German Poland joined the school strikes.³⁸ The fruits of more than a half century of organic work among the peasant population were reflected in the strikers’ class background. Close to 90 percent of the striking pupils came from families of peasants and agrarian workers while around 10 percent from families of craft and industrial workers.³⁹

The Polish-language press in German Poland played an important role in preparing the ground for general school strikes and sustaining the mobilization. In 1906 they printed sample petitions for parents to use in protest at German religion classes, then published a call for a general organizational meeting of all provinces in German Poland to discuss new forms of resistance—a meeting ultimately attended by more than 2,000 people despite police stopping many participants en route. Once the strikes broke out, the Polish press published regular reports on the ongoing protests in different parts of German Poland. Because schools often demanded proof of parents’ acquiescence to their children’s strike, newspapers printed examples

of parental consent notes for pupils to give to teachers. The press praised striking pupils and encouraged others to follow their example while also urging nonviolent discipline and calmness in pursuing the strike and unity and resolve in recognizing that only with broad participation could it succeed.

Despite the size and scope of participation, the authorities stood firm. Various Polish politicians were skeptical about the success of the school strikes, recognizing neither their value nor power. Meanwhile, German repression was taking its toll. Some parents lost custody of striking pupils, some pupils were expelled, and many were denied school diplomas. Newspapers faced huge fines, which undermined them financially. By late spring 1907, the strikes were dying out.

It took the Germans more than a year to tame this wave of strikes and only by deploying a set of extraordinary measures. The Polish press presented the eventual end not as a defeat, but as the moment when the Polish public had fulfilled its patriotic obligation. Indeed, for many strikers the struggle was no longer about the means to reach a specific objective, but an end in itself with great symbolic value. In that sense, the strikers achieved a moral victory.⁴⁰ This also had serious tangible consequences. The Polish language became a unifying force as never before. No armed insurrection had mobilized such a diverse group of people: young and old, girls and boys, women and men from villages and towns across the region. The protest against the German religion classes became a movement for preserving Polish identity and politicized a swathe of the Polish-speaking population.⁴¹

These strikes serve as a yardstick of much deeper changes at work in Polish society through organic work and in defense of Polish culture and identity. They were followed by a new surge of social and cultural activities, including the growth of Polish sports, religious, and clandestine education associations that were to be the backbone of the reborn Polish society after World War I.

Organic Work in Russian Poland

The policies of czarist Russia after the failed 1863–1864 uprising aimed at either preventing the emergence of Polish national identity or uprooting it altogether. In order to win over Polish-speaking peasants and weaken the Polish landowning class (the most nationally aware group), Russia abolished serfdom in Russian Poland in 1864. Pressing forward with the Russification of its western lands, in 1866 the government made Russian the mandatory language of instruction in state and private schools for selected subjects. A year later it extended this requirement to all subjects except Polish language and religion. Finally, in 1885, all types of schools were required to teach everything except religion in Russian. Polish not only was banned

in school corridors and yards, but in all public places. Polish shop signs had to be removed, and Polish newspapers and libraries were closed.⁴²

In Russian Poland, underground, illegal classes secretly offered teaching in Polish language, history, and literature, thus becoming the centerpiece of the organic work and nonviolent resistance. In 1894 a woman activist, Cecylia Śniegocka, set up the Association of the Secret Teaching. Within ten years, 2,000 children were taking secret classes in Warsaw that constituted half of all pupils in government-controlled primary schools in the city.⁴³ By 1901, according to Russian government sources, a third of the Polish population in Russian Poland at some point had received secret teaching that enabled them to read and write in Polish.⁴⁴

A prominent form of secret higher education was the “flying university” that developed in the mid-1870s. Academics offered lessons in private premises on both science and humanities with emphasis on Polish history, culture, and language. More than 5,000 men and women passed through the flying university in Russian Poland in the 1880s, including the future Nobel Prize winner Marie Curie-Skłodowska.⁴⁵

Russian Poland’s tradition of resistance through clandestine organizing and teaching, self-education circles, and mutual assistance organizations laid the ground for the 1905 movement to boycott the state school system. More than 20,000 students, mostly young women and girls, actively joined the boycott.⁴⁶ They demanded restoration of Polish as a language of instruction and a representative, democratic, and participatory system of education with societal rather than governmental control. Urban civil resistance spilled over to rural areas where thousands of new village schools were created through the initiative of Polish-controlled local and communal municipalities. Literate peasants began to offer secret instruction in Polish grammar and religion. Confronted with growing social unrest, in October 1905 the czarist government permitted the establishment of private schools with Polish as the language of instruction for all subjects except Russian language, history, and geography. Unable to win further concessions, the movement faced brutal antistrike measures—martial law and curfews that closed down higher education institutions, dismissal of 142 teachers, mass expulsion of students, and severe movement restrictions imposed on students who remained enrolled under the threat of large financial penalties or prison sentences.⁴⁷ Consequently, the movement switched to using the existing legal system to create a network of Polish private schools as an alternative to the Russified state system.

In 1906 drawing on both the experience and tradition of the flying university, Polish Motherland Schools (PMS) were launched to establish Polish private schooling in Russian Poland. By the start of the school year, the PMS boasted 680 registered schools and 70,000 enrolled students.⁴⁸ Soon these numbers increased to almost 800 schools and nearly 120,000 pupils,

and the next year a further 450 private schools requested registration. Then, the Russian government cracked down and closed the PMS themselves. In response, Polish organicists began the establishment of parallel underground schools. Despite the arrest of hundreds of teachers, repressive government policies failed to crush this movement. Poles saw the state school system as a tool for Russification, thus parents often continued their boycott of the state schools by sending their children to private elementary and middle schools and commerce schools. By 1914, 18 percent of all elementary school pupils (70,000 children) attended more than 800 private schools.⁴⁹ At the same time, private middle schools enrolled 38,000 pupils, more than 60 percent of the total in Russian Poland.⁵⁰

Even in the oppressive environment of Russification, Russian Poland nevertheless organized its commemoration movement, albeit more limited than in Austrian Poland. The 1898 celebration of the centenary of Adam Mickiewicz's birth and the idea of honoring this national bard with a bronze statue aroused public enthusiasm. In just two months, over 100,000 people donated 200,000 rubles for the statue; more than 80 percent of these donations were from private individuals from mainly the middle class and peasantry.⁵¹ This monument was built not only to celebrate Mickiewicz's poetry, but also to honor a national symbol of freedom and resistance. The dedication itself, with plays and speeches, evoked national pride among peasants and workers.⁵² The czarist government had been obstructive about the event—imposing censorship, limiting the tickets available, and cordoning off the celebration area—yet more than 12,000 people attended the official ceremony. The self-organization of the citizens' committee to build the monument, the fund-raising drive, and the dedication ceremony were seen by a contemporary commentator as

the most wonderful, sublime and invigorating signs of collective existence, . . . one of the great victories in the unceasing . . . battle for the existence of the Polish nation. Under the oppression of the strictest police surveillance . . . , under the oppression of censorship . . . , this miraculous plebiscite took place with lightning speed, in the face of which the mighty state stood amazed, helpless, and lacking courage to prevent and suppress.⁵³

Women and Organic Work

Organic work and particularly overt and secret education activities gave women a much more prominent presence in the Polish nonviolent resistance than during the romanticized period of armed insurrections.

Women and girls played a leading role in Polish underground education in Russian Poland and during the school strikes under the German and Russian partitions. Women led an estimated 40 percent of the education movement's activities associated with the education movement in Russian

Poland. Because in the household women were largely responsible for educating children, they were now active in generating, distributing, and using elementary education materials and leading parent self-help organizations.

The emphasis of positivism on constructive nonviolent organizing through economic, social, and intellectual development highlighted a role for women that went beyond maternity or the tragic archetype of the Mother-Pole (*Matka Polka*) whose son sacrifices his life to fight oppression. The positivist Mother-Pole was an educator of her own children as well as a social activist, teacher, organizer, and writer who educated others, particularly illiterate peasants—a role that placed women in direct confrontation with the partitioning empires and their de-Polonization policies.⁵⁴

Conclusion

Vast parts of the Polish-speaking population with little or no Polish national identity might have been assimilated among the three empires that divided their country. That this did not happen was largely the result of a mass nonviolent constructive program that became the main strategy of defense and resistance when armed uprisings proved futile against militarily superior enemies.

The nonviolent strategy of organic work ensured national and cultural survival and successfully politicized masses in all three parts of Poland. Under the harshest conditions in Russian Poland where the onslaught of Russification covered all spheres of public life, the organicists carried out their work mainly through underground, secretive, and illegal institutions and activities. In German Poland, the constitutional and economic parameters of the system allowed organicists to build legally permitted social and economic institutions to counter German de-Polonization policies. Germans often harassed Polish organizations and, while permitting Polish entrepreneurship, waged a total cultural war against Polishness and banned all Polish educational initiatives. Nonetheless, Germanization of education failed to diminish the rising wave of Polish national sentiment or stop open resistance in Polish schools. Finally, in Austrian Poland—the most liberal of the partitions where Poles seemingly had some loyalty to their occupier—Polish conservatives used nonviolent organic work to prevent open violent confrontation. Eventually, the organic work in Austrian Poland did more to turn Poles, particularly peasants, into a nation than all of the previous armed risings.

Nevertheless, eulogized violence in Polish tradition and history have reinforced the perception of organic work as a form of “less assertive patriotism,”⁵⁵ as a tool of loyalist accommodation with the foreign power, and even as a betrayal of the generations of Poles who joined armed resistance

and gave their lives in national risings. The continuing glorification of military resistance paradoxically enough can be attributed to the successes and achievements of nonviolent movement that after all relied on cultural forms of resistance (e.g., commemorations) and parallel institution building (e.g., patriotic education). These both often shaped and propagated the attitudes of admiration for the tradition of armed resistance that further romanticized past violent struggles and inadvertently helped overshadow its nonviolent popularizers.

A critical attitude toward organic work is particularly perplexing given the extent to which the nineteenth-century nonviolent resistance and its constructive program of creating and running parallel institutions served as an inspiration for future generations of Poles faced with oppression.⁵⁶ The conspiratorial experience of organizing and running secret education became ingrained in the collective memory of the national resistance. It was recalled during traumatic events such as the German occupation of 1939–1945 and during communist rule, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s when widespread illegal education (including the reestablishment of the flying university) ensured the truthful reading of national history, culture, and tradition. In fact, working at the base of society became the imperative nonviolent strategy of the anticommunist opposition. Solidarity leaders drew parallels between their nonviolent efforts to liberate the society from the control of the communist government and the nonviolent strategies of nineteenth-century organicists to undermine the authority of the partitioning powers.⁵⁷

Bohdan Cywiński's influential *Genealogy of the Defiant* (1971) studied the fin-de-siecle (defiant ones) and made parallels between their nonviolent defiant attitude and practice against the czarist government and the then contemporary resistance to communism.⁵⁸ That book inspired thousands of Poles and showed clearly how a century-old tradition of nonviolent resistance—although generally underappreciated in the national annals—could play a vital role in shaping the thinking, and determining the strategies and actions, of a new generation of unarmed resisters struggling with no less oppressive autocratic rulers than their indomitable predecessors who lived under partitions.

Without nonviolent resistance, Poles could not have taken charge of their national destiny after World War I or changed the geopolitical situation in their favor during the 1980s. It would have been equally implausible to integrate partitioned lands after 1918 and establish statehood so swiftly without the base of social, economic, and cultural development constructed through organic work. Although nonviolent resistance has been widely used by different generations of Poles against both external occupation and domestic dictatorship, this form of struggle is still awaiting much-deserved recognition of its role in not only defending, but essentially reimagining, the Polish nation.

Notes

1. The szlachta, comprising landowning gentry and nobility, was estimated at 10 percent of the Polish-speaking population in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, several times higher the politically active population in other parts of Europe.

2. Tadeusz Lepkowski, *Poland: The Birth of the Modern Nation, 1764–1870*, quoted in Patrice M. Dabrowski, *Commemorations and the Shaping of Modern Poland* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 12.

3. Adam Michnik, *Letters from Prison and Other Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 173. Michnik, as well as being an intellectual leader of Solidarność, is a conscientious student of nineteenth-century Polish history.

4. “Polaków łączy tylko ból” [Only Pain Unites Poles], interview with the literary critic and historian Stefan Chwin, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, May 2, 2010, http://wyborcza.pl/duzyformat/1,127291,7830585,Polakow_łączy_tylko_bol.html, accessed May 3, 2010.

5. From the website of the Warsaw Rising Museum, <http://www.1944.pl/en>.

6. Dominika Olszewska, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, February 6, 2010. http://wyborcza.pl/1,75248,7533860,Konspiracyjne_przysiegi_w_muzeum.html, accessed February 6, 2010. This practice had previously been secret.

7. Quoted in Jacques Semelin, *Unarmed Against Hitler: Civilian Resistance in Europe, 1939–1943* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 80.

8. Norman Davies, *God's Playground: 1795 to the Present. A History of Poland*, vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 345.

9. In the 1808 Battle of Somosierra, Napoleon sacrificed his Polish cavalry in a charge on Spanish cannon. This charge is immortalized in various Polish paintings and history books.

10. Michnik, *Letters from Prison*, 174.

11. Adam Michnik, *Polskie Pytania* (Paris: Cahiers Littéraires, 1987), 183.

12. During the 1863 uprising, several thousand Poles were killed, a further 1,000 were executed, close to 40,000 were sent for penal servitude to Siberia, and more than 10,000 chose immigration. This was on top of massive material destruction, property expropriation, and land confiscation. See Lech Trzeciakowski, “Ziemie polskie pod panowaniem państw zaborczych (1815–1918)” in *Dzieje Polski*, ed. Jerzy Topolski (Warsaw: Polskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1975), 446–611; and Stefan Kieniewicz, *Historia Polski 1795–1918* (Warsaw: Polskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1983), 267.

13. Aleksander Świętochowski quoted in Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 72. The German arms manufacturer and the Prussian army commander cannot compare with a great Polish scientist, poet, and painter.

14. Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*, 54.

15. The number of Christian stores set up reached 149 in 1847, 525 in 1891, and 911 in 1898. Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village: The Genesis of Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland 1848–1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). Between 1901 and 1913, agricultural circles almost doubled to 2,000 while their membership grew from 41,000 to 85,000 Polish-speaking peasants. Andrzej Zakrzewski, *Od Stojałowskiego do Witosy* (Warsaw: KAW, 1988), 49.

16. Dabrowski, *Commemorations*, 108–109.

17. By 1914, the agriculture circle movement had almost 2,000 village reading rooms. Kieniewicz, *Historia Polski*, 404.

18. In 1903 the People's School Society arranged 145 celebrations, and more than 1,000 by 1913, all having borne some sort of national symbols and subtext. See Dabrowski, *Commemorations*, 109.

19. Norman Davies refers to the memoirs of Galician peasant Jan Słomka, *Pamiętniki włościanina, Od pańszczyzny do dni dzisiejszych* (Towarzystwo Szkoły Ludowej, 1929 [1912]) in order to illustrate the process of national awakening among Galician peasants. In Słomka's youth, "only the gentlemen were regarded as Poles. On learning to read, however, and by participating in the work of the Peasant Movement in Galicia, Słomka became enthusiastically aware of his own Polish identity. He became a pioneer of rural education, and ended his life as the respected mayor of his village. . . . When he was born (in 1842), only a small minority of the population of the Polish lands would have consciously belonged to the Polish nation; when he died (in 1929), the great majority would have done so." See Davies, *God's Playground*, 220–221.

20. Dabrowski, *Commemorations*, 15.

21. *Ibid.*, 61.

22. *Ibid.*, 118.

23. Zakrzewski, *Od Stojatowskiego*, 61.

24. Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village*, 117, n. 3.

25. Zakrzewski, *Od Stojatowskiego*, 47.

26. Stanislaus A. Blejwas, *Realism in Polish Politics: Warsaw Positivism and National Survival in Nineteenth Century Poland* (New Haven: Slavica Publishers, 1984), 49.

27. Kieniewicz, *Historia Polski*, 406; Blejwas, *Realism in Polish Politics*, 48–49.

28. Stefan Kieniewicz, *Dramat Trzeźwych Entuzjastów: O Ludziach Pracy Organicznej* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1964), 163; Kieniewicz, *Historia Polski*, 406.

29. Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village*, 117, n. 3.

30. *Ibid.*, 407.

31. *Ibid.*, 406.

32. Witold Jakóbczyk, *Przetrwąć nad Wartą* (Warsaw: KAW, 1989), 74.

33. John Kulczycki, *School Strikes in Prussian Poland, 1901–1907: The Struggle over Bilingual Education* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 23.

34. At the height of the protest in Września, more than 120 twelve- to fourteen-year-old pupils refused to use German in the religious class. *Ibid.*, 52.

35. See Maria Konopnicka, "O Września" (About Września) and Władysław Reymont "W pruskiej szkole" (In a Prussian School), quoted in Kulczycki, *School Strikes*, 67.

36. Some of this money was also used to smuggle three convicted people out of German Poland to Austria-Hungary. *Ibid.*, 62–63.

37. *Ibid.*

38. Kormanowej and W. Najdus, eds., *Historia Polski 1900–1914*, vol. 3, part 2 (Warsaw: Polska Akademia Nauk, 1972), 555.

39. *Ibid.*, 557; Jakóbczyk, *Przetrwąć nad Wartą*, 67.

40. For the German authorities, this was in any case a "Pyrrhic victory" without formally changing policy; in practice further efforts to displace the Polish language in schools ceased because of pupils' lack of progress using German materials. Consequently, a considerable number of pupils in lower grades continued to receive religious instruction in their native language. See Kulczycki, *School Strikes*, 218.

41. According to Kulczycki, the school resistance "proved a hothouse for the growth of Polish nationalism [and gave] the emotional warmth of concreteness to abstract membership in the Polish nation." *Ibid.*, xvi, 82.

42. Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*, 81.

43. Edmund Staszyński, *Polityka Oświatowa Caratu w Królestwie Polskim: Od Powstania Styczniowego do I Wojny Światowej* (Warsaw: PZWS, 1968), 197.
44. Henryk Wereszycki, *Historia Polityczna Polski 1864–1918* (Warsaw: Ossolineum, 1990), 91. Government statistics are probably an underestimate as czarist officials were often bribed to ignore illegal activities. In reality, secret self-education circles existed in most state schools in Russian Poland.
45. *Ibid.*, 85.
46. Robert E. Blobaum, *Rewolucja: Russian Poland, 1904–1907* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 169.
47. *Ibid.*, 177.
48. Staszyński, *Polityka Oświatowa*, 202.
49. *Ibid.*, 207.
50. *Ibid.*, 209; Blobaum, *Rewolucja*, 169.
51. Kieniewicz, *Historia Polski*, 394; Edward Strzelecki, “Sprawa Pomnika Adama Mickiewicza w Warszawie,” in *Z Dziejów Książki i Bibliotek w Warszawie*, ed. Stanisław Tazbir (Warsaw: PIW, 1961), 436.
52. Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*, 100.
53. Witkiewicz, Polish artist and art critic, quoted in Dabrowski, *Commemorations*, 149.
54. Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village*, 43.
55. Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*, 53.
56. Michnik, *Polskie Pytania*, 126.
57. *Ibid.*, 83–84; Michnik, *Letters from Prison*. See also Adam Bromke, *The Meaning and Uses of Polish History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 54, fn., where he recalls a conversation he had in 1978 with one of the leaders of the opposition movement who linked their choice of nonviolent defiance against the communist government with the nonviolent, organic strategies of the nineteenth-century positivists in Russian Poland.
58. Bohdan Cywiński, *Rodowody Niepokornych* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Wiezi, 1971).

Appendix: Conflict Summaries

This appendix has been compiled by the book's editor, Maciej Bartkowski, based on the information presented in the corresponding chapters of the book. Cases are arranged alphabetically. (Any omissions in the tables are either of the editor's own making or the information was not available.)

Key

Method and Type of Nonviolent Action

Nonviolent intervention

Disruptive

Creative

Noncooperation

Political

Economic

Social

Protest and persuasion

Length of the Campaign

Short: 1 day up to 4 weeks

Medium: 1 month up to 1 year

Long: More than 1 year

Level of Participation of People

Low: 1–100 people or less than 20 percent of the population

Medium: 100–1,000 people or between 20 percent and 50 percent of the population

High: More than 1,000 people or more than 50 percent of the population

Poland							
Main Campaigns	Action	Method/Type	Date	Length	Level of Participation	Direct Impact	Long-Term/Overall Impact of Civil Resistance
Education campaign in Austrian Poland	Forming of the Agricultural Circle Society	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>	1882	Long	High	Launching patriotic education movement in rural areas Civic education offered to Polish-speaking villagers Promoted social behavior that reinforced the social and national fabric Organized festivities to commemorate historic anniversaries	The strength of the newly acquired national identity was displayed during World War I when peasants constituted the majority of Polish Army volunteers Experience of organizing and running secret education became part of Polish collective memory of the national resistance and was used during the German occupation of 1939–1945 and during communist rule Cultural forms of resistance as well as patriotic education further romanticized past violent struggles and inadvertently overshadowed Polish tradition and the practice of nonviolent resistance
	Opening Christian stores and credit associations	Protest and persuasion	1882 onward	Long	High		
	Establishment of People’s School Society	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>	1891	Long	High	Reached out to 5 million illiterate Polish-speaking peasants Built libraries and rural primary and secondary schools Incorporated the work of Polish nationalist novelists and poets in the curricula Organized national celebrations	
Commemorations campaign in Austrian Poland	Mass celebrations of national anniversaries, military victories, and famous Polish historical and contemporary figures	Protest and persuasion	1880 onward		High	Brought together Poles from different social strata (intellectuals, peasants, workers) and instilled in them emotional attachment to Polish history, tradition, and culture	
	Mass mourning during anniversaries of Poland’s partitions or failed armed uprisings	Protest and persuasion	1880 onward		High		
	Educational activities during commemorations, including lectures, theatrical performances, exhibitions, and church services	Protest and persuasion	1880 onward		High		
	Formation of the Society for Peasant Education	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>	1872		High	Established nearly 120 libraries, distributed books and other reading materials, and set up day nurseries German authorities eventually dissolved the organization	
Campaign for indigenous, grassroots-led socioeconomic development in German Poland	Establishment of Society for Folk Reading Rooms	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>	1880	Long	High	Within three years, the society had set up close to 400 rural and 85 urban libraries and supplied them with 79,000 Polish-language cultural, literary, and religious books By 1890, almost 1,000 libraries were established More than 100 reading circles were opened	
	Setting up Polish economic and financial institutions in rural areas to counteract German economic expansion	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>	1885 onward	Long	High	Polish credit cooperatives rose from 25 in 1868 to 76 in 1891, reaching 204 by 1913 with close to 126,000 members—almost half of them peasants Helped modernize and expand both the rural and urban economy in German Poland Within a decade, Poles were able to acquire more land than Germans	
	Establishment of Polish industrial societies	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>		Long	High		The strength of the newly acquired national identity was displayed during World War I when peasants constituted the majority of Polish Army volunteers Experience of organizing and running secret education became part of Polish collective memory of the national resistance and was used during the German occupation of 1939–1945 and during communist rule Cultural forms of resistance as well as patriotic education further romanticized past violent struggles and inadvertently overshadowed Polish tradition and the practice of nonviolent resistance
	Establishment of Peasant Agricultural Circle	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>	1875 onward	Long	High	Teaching legal, credit, tax, and inheritance issues to countervail German administrative, juridical, and economic efforts to uproot Polish-speaking peasants from their land Peasant agriculture circles increased from 45 in 1875 to 60 with 10,000 members in 1900, and reached 310 with 17,000 members by 1910	
	Growth of Polish-language press	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>		Long	High	Influenced school strikes in 1901–1907	
School strikes in German Poland	Gathering signatures and preparing petitions against Germanization of schools	Protest and persuasion	1871 onward	Long	High	Petitions were lessons in citizens’ self-organization They generated greater awareness among the Polish-speaking population of the necessity to defend Polish education and built up a momentum for the school strikes	
	Wrzeźnia strike where school children refused to use books, answer questions, and speak German during prayers and religion classes, and commemorate the German victory over France at Sedan	Noncooperation/ <i>Social</i>	1901	Medium	High	Children were punished with mass beatings Thousands gathered near the school when they heard children screaming and later twenty-one protesters were sentenced to prison terms and financial penalties The punishment of children and harsh sentences backfired and Wrzeźnia became a national symbol of the Polish resistance in defense of the Polish language Increased international support for Poles’ right to self-determination Inflexibility of German authorities paved the way to a larger wave of school strikes	
	Student strikes	Noncooperation/ <i>Social</i>	1906–1907	Medium	High	93,000 children from over 1,600 schools in German Poland were on strike	
	Work of the Polish press to publicize and inform about school strike	Protest and persuasion	1906	Medium	High	Printed sample petitions for parents to use in protest against German religion classes Printed examples of parental consent notes for pupils attending a strike to give to their teachers Published regular reports on the ongoing protests in different parts of German Poland Praised striking pupils and encouraged others to join	
Commemoration movement in Russian Poland	Erecting a bronze statue for a national bard, Adam Mickiewicz	Protest and persuasion; Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>	1898	Short	High	In two months, more than 100,000 people donated money for the statue 12,000 people attended the official ceremony despite police restrictions	
Resisting Russification in Russian Poland	Offering illegal classes in Polish language, history, and literature	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>	1885 onward	Long	High	By 1901, according to Russian government sources, a third of the Polish population in Russian Poland at some point had received secret teaching	The strength of the newly acquired national identity was displayed during World War I when peasants constituted the majority of Polish Army volunteers Experience of organizing and running secret education became part of Polish collective memory of the national resistance and was used during the German occupation of 1939–1945 and during communist rule Cultural forms of resistance as well as patriotic education further romanticized past violent struggles and inadvertently overshadowed Polish tradition and the practice of nonviolent resistance
	Creation of the Association of the Secret Teaching	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>	1894	Long	High		
	Development of the flying university	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>	1870s onward	Long	High	More than 5,000 men and women passed through the flying university in Russian Poland in the 1880s, including the future Nobel Prize winner Marie Curie-Skłodowska	
	Boycott of the state school system	Noncooperation/ <i>Social</i>	1905		High	Thousands of new village schools under the Polish-controlled local municipalities were set up Czarist government in October 1905 permitted the establishment of private schools with Polish as the language of instruction except Russian language, history, and geography By 1914 more than 100,000 primary and secondary school children attended private schools, continuing the boycott of Russian-controlled state schools	
	Polish Motherland Schools (PMS) launched	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>	1906		High	Russian government cracked down on and closed PMS Polish organicists built parallel underground schools in response to the Russian government crackdown	