

TO AMERICANS, FRIENDS OF UNIVERSAL LIBERTY!

Positive news of a general uprising of the whole Polish nation against the barbarous oppression of the Russian despotic Government has reached us by the last telegraphic dispatches; and not the least doubt can now exist in our minds, that all the Polanders, without distinction as to their social position or religion, are endeavoring to throw off the yoke of the iron rule of the country. The time has therefore arrived for this Society of Polanders here organized to address you American brethren, the pioneers of enlightened universal freedom, to show your sympathy for the oppressed nation now fighting for their liberty.

Remember that the present is not the uprising of the comparatively small portion of the Polish nation called the Nobles, to regain their superannuated privileges; but all Polanders, even women and children, are spilling their blood in torrents to gain a national independence, based upon the same equal rights, which your fathers, led by Washington, have so gloriously achieved for this, the country of freemen.

Has Poland an undeniable right to a national independence and self-government? She has. And why? Because she possesses all the elements of a distinct and civilized people.

1st. She has her own language, which differs from that of her sisters—the Russian, the Crechish and the Illyrian—as much as the Italian tongue differs from the Spanish or Portuguese.

2d. She has her own literature, eminent writers in every branch of it, and great men in all the sciences, as the copious libraries of Cracow, Leopold, Posen and also those of London, Paris and Leipzig can testify. The principal libraries—those of Warsaw and Wilna—were confiscated and transferred to Russia.

3d. Poland has her written history, the pages of which teem with the great and patriotic deeds of her sons.

4th. As the evidence of her power and achievement, she possessed, in the days of her nationality and glory, territory embracing 892,000 square miles and 20,000,000 of inhabitants.

5th. Above all, the Poles have an unbroken

5th. Above all, the Poles have an unbounded love for universal freedom and hatred for tyranny and oppression, not only of their own race, but of all freedom-loving nations.

Have you seen an uprising of a people against oppression, since your memorable Declaration of Independence in 1776 to the present time, without a Polish Legion fighting with them for their cause? Led by Kosciusko, Pulaski, Dombrowski, Bem, Dembinski, Wysocki, Kaminski and Mieroslowski, they bled for the freedom of America, France, Hungary, Italy, Germany and Turkey.

A distinct language, literature, history, and an unbounded love for universal and enlightened freedom—all these elements of a free nation the Poles possess. Therefore they have a right to be a free nation, and therefore they have an undeniable right to drive from their beloved country the ignorant soldiery, the barbarian instruments of the Russian Government, which by all the means of a Machiavellian policy is making the greatest exertion to annihilate the Polish nationality, and to convert the Poles to blind adherents and obedient soldiers in the execution of the gigantic plan of Czar Peter, the builder of Petersburg—that is, to conquer the whole of Europe and Asia.

Americans, listen to proofs of the truth of our statement that the Russian Government has, since the subjugation of Poland, tried all means of an unrelenting, cruel and crafty policy, to insult and annihilate her nationality. It abolished the Polish emblem, the emblem which adorned Sobieski and his warriors in the battle for Christianity before the walls of Vienna. It confiscated the Polish libraries; it abolished the Polish high schools, the monuments of Poland's former glory, the witnesses of her advanced civilization. It prohibited the teaching of the Polish language in the public schools; it diminished instead of increasing their number, and forced the Polish youth desiring a higher education to travel to the distant universities of Russia.

It deported mercilessly thousands of Polish families into Russia and replaced them by Russian colonists.

It ordered the predominance of the Russo-Greek Church in Poland, that marriages between persons of different creeds should be made by Russian priests, and that their children should embrace the Russo-Greek religion.

And at last it began by a most arbitrary and barbarian execution of conscription laws to rob Poland of the best of her sons.

American brethren, would *you* suffer a similar oppression? Are the Poles right to strike the blow against such tyranny?

Napoleon the First prophesied after his downfall, that even in this century the whole of Europe would become either republican or subject to the Cossack knout. The great battle between these two principles has now commenced. The Poles, led by Dembinski, Wysocki, Langiewicz and Mieroslowski, began it. They have scarcely any other arms than scythes; but they began it with the heroic determination to "conquer or to die"—(words written by a Polish lady to her son in the United States Army).

Other freedom seeking nations will soon come up to the deadly strife. Our neighbors, the indomitable Hungarians, the brave Germans, the fiery Italians—all are ready and watching impatiently for the signal of their patriotic leaders to join the fight for universal freedom. All the European nations, the Russians not excepted—as their recent popular demonstrations in Petersburg and Moscow clearly prove—express the greatest sympathy with the Polish cause. In France and England all kinds of means are devised to provide the heroic Poles with arms.

Americans—citizens of a mighty republic, standing in the front rank of civilized nations—we are certain that you also will unanimously manifest your sympathy for Poland by an energetic disapproval of the barbarous and treacherous measures adopted by a despotic Government to suppress the just and holy endeavors of Poland's sons to regain her national independence. She will regain it and throw off the yoke imposed upon her by the ambitious dynasty of the Romanoffs. Poland shall become free, because her sons are hardy and not afraid to fight and die for liberty; because her daughters are as patriotic as they are lovely; and because the public opinion of the civilized world—that mighty advocate of universal freedom—proclaims Poland's cause a just one.

For the Committee of the Society of Polanders in California.

CASIMIR BIELAWSKI, President.

T. W. ANDRZEJOWSKI, Secretary.
San Francisco, April 21, 1863.