

**Title:** For Their Freedom and Ours: Herzen's Polish Agenda  
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January 2013 marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a major Polish uprising against tsarist rule. Russian émigré writer Alexander Herzen risked – and lost – most of the Russian readership of his newspaper *Kolokol* as a result of his staunch support for the Polish cause. His words and deeds served as template for Russians ashamed of their government's suppression of other nationalities, e.g. at the time of the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Despite this, the depth and consistency of his pro-Polish feelings have been questioned since the 1860s. The introduction to a 2005 conference volume (Ransel and Shallcross, *Polish Encounters, Russian Identity*) emphasized that "Herzen's sympathy had its limits" (13) because he preferred Orthodox piety and socialism to Catholicism and western commercialism. Martin Malia noted Herzen's "extreme reluctance to support the Polish revolt of 1863" because of his preference to cooperate with Alexander II rather than back radical change (*Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism*, 385).

My talk will juxtapose Herzen's numerous published statements on the Polish question - in *The Bell* and in his memoir *My Past and Thoughts* - with relevant observations from his extensive private correspondence. In this way I hope to arrive at more nuanced account of Herzen's commitment to the liberation of Poland.