

ATTITUDE OF THE POLISH SOCIALIST PARTY AND POLISH SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PARTY TO THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917

The crisis in the international socialist movement found the Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna — PPS) of Russian Poland and the Polish Social-Democratic Party (Polska Partia Socjalno-Demokratyczna — PPSD) of Galicia and Teschen Silesia in the right wing of the split Second International. They both greeted with enthusiasm the outbreak of World War I, fully supported the Central Powers and attempted to create Polish military forces to fight Russia. Only a few of their leaders opposed this political line. Both the PPS and the PPSD joined inter-party coalitions.

After the armed forces of the Central Powers occupied Russian Poland the PPS sought an understanding with them. But due to their occupation policy and disdain of contacts with the left political groupings, that party gradually shifted to moderate opposition. Without changing its basic position it began to criticize the occupation policy and to attack Polish right-wing groups who collaborated with the occupants. With some reservations regarding its limited character, the PPS took a positive position on the Proclamation of November 5, 1916 which provided for the creation of a Polish Kingdom by the Central Powers. And PPS representatives entered the Provisional Council of State formed by the occupants.

However, certain changes began to appear in the political line of that party even before the outbreak of the February Revolution in Russia. It left the inter-party grouping of adherents of the Central Powers mainly because of the mood of its labour elements, their aversion to the occupants and to the so-called inter-party “national consolidation.” The PPS now felt impelled to accent its independence, although it didn’t sever relations with the left grouped around Józef Piłsudski who was oriented towards the Central Powers.

In Austrian Poland the PPSD proceeded with a Galician version of “national consolidation” with the creation of the “Supreme National Committee” and in 1916 entered the Polish fraction of the Vienna parliament. It remained faithful

to its orientation towards the Central Powers and the inter-party coalition until March 1917, although it also criticized their Polish policy and the attitude of Poland's right parties favoring these powers.

The political line of the PPS and the PPSD was based on two main assumptions: 1) that the war was and would remain but a contest of strength between the powers, and 2) that in this situation it was in the interests of the Polish nation and working class to support the Central Powers. They reasoned that this would create more favorable conditions for promoting the welfare of the nation and the working class than would the support of Russia. Hence the February Revolution could not but undermine these assumptions and create a crisis for the policy based on them.

The developments in March 1917 exerted a decisive influence on shaping the post-war revolutionary working class movement. Although still beset by obstacles, the road was cleared for the emergence of an independent and democratic Poland.

In Russian Poland the crisis of the prevailing assumptions was immediately reflected in the attitude of the labour membership of the PPS.¹ In Galicia the corresponding change of attitude was not so rapid in the PPSD, since there the radical sentiments were much less pronounced than in the Russian Poland.² The influence of the February Revolution found expression rather in the general activation of the working class.

Indirectly the February Revolution provided a decisive impetus to the political evolution of both parties in 1917. In the PPS it stimulated participation in the Legion crisis, the launching of a political struggle against the occupants, radicalization of the social program and the internal activation of the left grouping. In the PPSD it influenced the projection of the slogan for a united, independent Poland, adoption of the May Resolution by the Polish fraction and abandonment of the Austrian orientation — though not without much vascillation.

But the direct reaction of both parties to the outbreak of the Russian Revolution was a very moderate one. For the conflict between the different currents in the revolution grew more intense, the further destiny of the revolution was uncertain and the forces of counter-revolution were strong. Although they didn't formulate it in so many words, both parties approached the conclusion that the Russian Revolution was not significant for Polish destinies.³

¹ See *Sprawozdanie okręgu warszawskiego PPS dla Centralnego Komitetu Robotniczego za okres 1 III - 15 V 1917*, Archives of the Party History Bureau at the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party (abbr. AZHP), PPS 114, XXI - 33, poz. 1.

² S. Łańcucki, *Wspomnienia*, Warszawa 1957, p. 152.

³ "Jedność Robotnicza," March 25, 1917, No. 13, pp. 1 - 2. But in a private letter to his wife Herman Diamand, one of the leaders of the PPSD evaluated the situation differently. He thus wrote on March 18: "The Russian Revolution influences everyone, even the internal political conceptions of all countries and the perspective has completely changed." See *Pamiętnik* of Herman Diamand, Kraków 1932, p. 168.

In its first more elaborate pronouncements the PPS press considered four possible variants of development of the situation in Russia: 1) stabilization of the liberal bourgeois government, 2) radicalization and turning to the popular masses as the base of power, 3) victory of the counter-revolution, 4) an ultra-nationalist military dictatorship which would not however abolish all the democratic gains.⁴ The second variant was regarded as the least probable. The PPS adopted the following resolution in defense of its prevailing political orientation: the PPS welcomes a democratic Russia but fights for independence; an annexationist Russia, though democratic, remains an enemy. The PPSD leader Kazimierz Czapiński evaluated similarly but less precisely the perspective of development of the Russian Revolution.⁵

The attitude of both parties developed more fully only after the message of the Petrograd Soviet of workers and soldiers delegates to the Polish nation and the Proclamation of the Provisional Government on the Polish question. The leaders of both parties responded with official letters addressed to the Russian socialists. The PPS leaders underscored the international significance of the Russian Revolution and indicated that not the imperialist powers but "the peoples fraternized in liberty" would issue victorious from the war.⁶ The PPS communique postulated that Russia renounce the Tsarist Partition of Poland and it linked the slogan of Polish independence with the claim not only of Polish but also of Lithuanian lands (actually also of Byelorussian, in the historical sense in universal use at the time). It further declared its equal lack of confidence in the Russian liberal bourgeoisie as in the German and Austrian governments.

The PPSD leadership transmitted a message to the Petrograd Soviet and published a proclamation addressed to "the Polish working people of town and country." While stressing the significance of the Russian Revolution to an even greater extent than the PPS leaders, the PPSD continued to emphasize its support of the Central Powers in the name of Polish independence and blankly demanded the federation of Poland and Lithuania.⁷

A characteristic feature of all comments and proclamations devoted to the Russian Revolution is that they recognized only two aspects: as an internal Russian occurrence and as an international event with a potential effect on Polish independence. The above cited formulation in the PPS leaders communique treated the revolution as an isolated phenomenon, without considering it from the viewpoint of its influence on the development of the world revolution.⁸

⁴ "Jedność Robotnicza," April, 1917, No. 14, p. 1.

⁵ "Kultura Polski," March, 1917, No. 3, p. 129.

⁶ *Materiały archiwalne do historii stosunków polsko-radzieckich*, vol. 1: *Marzec 1917 - Listopad 1918*, Warszawa 1957, pp. 417 - 418.

⁷ Archiwum Państwowe m. Krakowa i Województwa Krakowskiego, IT. 1324; Biblioteka Narodowa, Ms. 5277; AZHP, PPS 23. vol. 3.

⁸ This was expressed with a special clarity in the PPS central organ "Jedność Robotnicza," April 8, 1917, No. 15, pp. 1 - 2.

The standpoint of both parties on the different fractions of the Russian revolutionary movement was soon to undergo a change. But they consistently emphasized their lack of confidence in the Provisional Government and their sympathy for the socialists split into several groupings. They at first tended to regard the Petrograd Soviet and Russian socialists as one united entity.

A positive evaluation of the Bolsheviks is to be found in articles of PPS publicists. Niedziałkowski for instance, stressed their favorable position on Polish independence.⁹ Perl extended his sympathy to Kerensky's policies, but also recognized favorably the significance of Lenin's anti-war slogans.¹⁰ In June an article in the PPS press praised Kerensky but also positively evaluated the Petrograd Soviet and its leaders Chkheidze and Plekhanov on an equal plane with Lenin¹¹.

But by July and August articles appeared with sharp attacks on Lenin.¹² In September Perl for the first time criticized Kerensky, thus breaking with the tradition of regarding him as "a great friend of Poland", but he didn't spare the Bolsheviks.¹³

The ideology of the PPS leaders corresponded much more closely with the fundamental line of the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks than to that of the Bolsheviks. This is why it was precisely in July when the former two came to grips with the party of Lenin that an aggressive tone against the Bolsheviks appeared in the PPS press. But the principal role in shaping the PPS leaders' attitude to the Russian parties continued to be played by the question of Polish independence.

The PPSD leaders didn't engage in evaluations of the internal Russian situation, though they reaffirmed from time to time their positive opinions of the revolution.¹⁴

The triumph of the October Revolution compelled both parties to take a new look at the Russian situation. Three basic factors influenced the crystallization of their viewpoint. The first was the radicalization of the working masses in Poland (partly also the non-proletarian strata), who expressed their sympathy for the Russian revolutionary movement as well as a desire for broad class action on Polish soil.¹⁵ The second was the attitude of the Bolshevik Party on the Polish question. The third factor was the question of peace.

These factors make understandable the position of these parties, ideologically at the opposite pole of Bolshevism and part of its opponent, the right wing of the international working class movement.

⁹ *Ibidem*, April 22, 1917, No. 17, p. 1.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, May 27, 1917, No. 21, pp. 1 - 2.

¹¹ "Nowiny Socjalistyczne," June 1917, No. 1, pp. 3 - 4.

¹² "Jedność Robotnicza," July 22, 1917, No. 30, pp. 2 - 3; August 5, 1917, No. 32, pp. 3 - 4, 7.

¹³ *Ibidem*, September 9, 1917, No. 37, pp. 2 - 3.

¹⁴ Though careful in his formulations, only K. Czapiński expressed his sympathy for the right-wing socialists. See "Kultura Polska," June - July, 1917, No 7 - 8, pp. 288 - 297.

¹⁵ The situation was thus evaluated by the Austrian Nachrichtenabteilung. See L. Grosfeld, *Polskie partie polityczne wobec nowej sytuacji stworzonej przez rewolucję październikową*, "Z Pola Walli," 1958, No. 1, p. 43.

The radicalization of the Polish working masses was directly stimulated by the tidings of the Revolution, and in particular by the stream of reemigrants from Russia beginning with January 1918. But signs of the radicalization were already evident in 1916 especially in the former Russian Poland. Its sources were the situation in the country and the position of the Polish working class. Moreover, the February and October revolutions strongly influenced the mass movements in the Central Powers which in turn reacted on the sentiments of Polish society. The great wave of strikes and demonstrations in January 1918 played a basic role in radicalizing the working masses and in shaping the policies of the PPS and PPSD also toward the Russian Revolution.¹⁶

Between November 1917 and February 1918 the statements of the PPS and PPSD were clearly favorable to the Bolshevik Revolution, although with an occasional shade of criticism.¹⁷ They pointed to the ambiguity of Kerensky's policy especially on the question of peace, to the peaceful intentions of the Bolsheviks and expressed complete approval of their condemnation of imperialism and annexations. But in accord with their own ideological principles they directed their criticism against the split in the Russian socialist movement and advocated an understanding between the Bolsheviks and Kerensky. But they polemised with bourgeois voices condemning the Bolsheviks for applying terror. The activity of the Bolshevik government was explained as dictated by political and economic necessity evoked by the sabotage of Russia's owning classes.¹⁸ Even on the question of the conflict between Soviet Russia and the Ukrainian nationalists the first comments were favorable to the Bolsheviks whose policy they justified by pointing to the link between the Ukrainian nationalist movement and Russian reaction.¹⁹

That attitude, which practically justified—though as a tragic and regrettable episode — even the repression of other Russian socialist parties, should not overshadow the fact however that the Russian Revolution was regarded essentially only a democratic one, while its socialist character was treated as a passing phase.²⁰ Furthermore, in this period the PPSD leaders were much more critical of Bolshevik measures, especially the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly, which they regarded as violating the democratic principle.²¹

¹⁶ This question is presented more fully in the present author's study *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna w latach 1917 - 1919*, Warszawa 1962, pp. 92 - 99.

¹⁷ See "Jedność Robotnicza," November 18, 1917, No. 47, pp. 4 - 5; November 25, 1917, No. 49, p. 5. The Bolshevik victory was hailed with particular enthusiasm by the PPSD. See "Naprzód," November 14, 1917, No. 262, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, December 23, 1917, No. 295, p. 1; "Jedność Robotnicza," December 9, 1917, No. 50, p. 8; "Chłopska Dola," II, 1918, No. 1, pp. 2 - 3.

¹⁹ "Jedność Robotnicza," December 30, 1917, No. 53, p. 5.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, January 1, 1918, No. 3, pp. 2 - 3; January 6, 1918, No. 1, pp. 1 - 2.

²¹ "Naprzód," January 24, 1918, No. 20, p. 1.

Reference has been made above to publicistic pronouncements, i.e., of a more or less propagandistic character. The possibility of comparing these statements with positions taken in closed circles is very slight. Only in early February did information become available on the views expressed by the PPS and PPSD leaders at a closed conference of the so-called independence movement parties.²² Only two leaders of the latter party spoke on the Russian question: Daszyński and Moraczewski. The latter played a special role as leader of the group of decided rights connected in both parties with the Piłsudski tradition. These two leaders didn't expect the Bolsheviks to retain power. Daszyński regarded the civil rights acquired by the proletariat and the 8 hour day as the basic attainments of the Russian Revolution.

But even if it's assumed that only propaganda statements are available, it would still be incorrect to think that the attitude to the Russian Revolution was essentially negative, or different than expressed in their press, due to the deep ideological differences between the right-wing Polish socialist parties and the Bolsheviks. Actually, the Polish socialist parties regarded the Bolshevik Revolution as a purely political, not an ideological phenomenon. The basing of the internal practice of the Bolshevik government on Lenin's ideological premises was something Strange to them. As indicated above, they regarded the victory of the Bolsheviks as a temporary phase and therefore as positive, on that assumption.

The Soviet government was Russia's first to consistently recognize Poland's right to independence. For the PPS and PPSD this was a political fact of paramount importance. This fact could not but exert an impact also on the position of the capitalist powers on the Polish question and would retain its political weight even in the event of collapse of the Soviet power. Still another motivation operated alongside the conviction that the Soviet government was a temporary phenomenon. That was the fear of a Bolshevik type revolution in Poland allied with the Russian Revolution. This motivation was to exert great force later. For the present, the PPS and PPSD leaders sought to exploit the sympathy of considerable sections of the Polish working class for socialist Russia, and first of all to capitalize on the Soviet position on peace and Polish independence.

The position of the two parties on the essential questions of Poland's relations with the new Soviet government did not change. True, they made occasional declarations on the Polish and world revolution, but their political programs continued to feature the demand for independence, and emphasized the slogan of a Polish-Lithuanian federation.²³ The parliamentary democratic republic remained the ultimate aim of their program on State structure.²⁴ As concerns fundamental social

²² J. Holzer, *Narada krakowska z lutego 1918*, "Przegląd Historyczny," vol. 3, 1958.

²³ *Uchwały Rady Partyjnej PPS ze stycznia 1918*, "Robotnik," III, 1918, No. 287, p. 6.

²⁴ "Jedność Robotnicza," [November 18, 1917, No. 47, pp. 1 - 2; January 13, 1918, No. 2, pp. 1 - 2; January 20, 1918, No. 3, pp. 1 - 2.

reform, the only concrete demand advanced — since the first half of 1917 — was the division of the landed estates among the peasants, by decision of the Sejm (Polish parliament).

The PPS leaders also began to take an active interest in the problems of reconstructing the international socialist movement after the war. Niedziałkowski favored rebuilding the international in its pre-war form (though without “anarchistic elements” of the Radek type and “typical imperialists²⁵”). Whereas the more left Sochacki anticipated unity in an atmosphere of sharp international class conflict and the separation of some leaders from the socialist movement.²⁶

From the end of December 1917 the PPS devoted much attention to the question of Poland’s representation at the Brest conference and the determination of Poland’s borders. It tied the second question directly to Polish-Russian relations. In that period the PPS fully maintained its position of federating Poland and Lithuania.²⁷

The standpoint of the PPSD continued to be more moderate. Its leading group headed by Daszyński didn’t abandon their Austrian orientation. While the PPS didn’t as yet consider the question of the Russian example as a pattern for Poland, in the PPSD this question was raised in a decidedly negative manner.²⁸

The peace treaty concluded at Brest on February 9, 1918 between the Central Powers and the Ukrainian Central Council deeply shocked Polish society because of the proviso to join the Chełm area to the Ukraine. This directly contributed to the increased aversion towards the Central Powers and Ukrainian nationalism and indirectly to a feeling of sympathy with the Russian Revolution, against which the above treaty was directed.

The reaction of the PPS leaders to the Brest treaty was to appeal to international working class solidarity, particularly on the part of the proletariat of the Central Powers and Ukraine.²⁹ The central organ of the PPS emphasized the anti Soviet edge of the treaty and expressed sympathy for the Bolshevik Revolution.³⁰ The treaty aroused deep indignation also in the PPSD and the general violent reaction caused its leaders to finally abandon their Austrian orientation. But no expressions of solidarity with the Russian Revolution appeared in the PPSD press, as it did in that of the PPS.

I omit in the present paper the problems connected with the activity of PPS organs within Russia. Nor do I consider the ramified political operations conducted

²⁵ “Kalendarz Robotniczy PPS na rok 1918,” 1918, pp. 95 - 99.

²⁶ “Jedność Robotnicza,” January 6, 1918, No. 1, pp. 2 - 3.

²⁷ Declaration of the PPS and three other Parties of December 25, 1917, *Archiwum Państwowe m. Krakowa i Województwa Krakowskiego*, vol. 108.

²⁸ “Naprzód,” December 19, 1917, No. 291, p. 3 - 4; January 13, 1918, No. 11, p. 2.

²⁹ “Ojczyzna i Postęp,” No. 103, (“Z Dokumentów Chwili,” No. 93), February 25, 1918, pp. 19 - 21.

³⁰ “Robotnik,” III, 1918, No. 287, pp. 1 - 2.

in Russia and the Ukraine by the emissaries of the Polish so-called independence movement, which included PPS leaders. These actions were connected to a minor degree with that party's political activity and were coordinated by a secret center set up after Piłsudski's arrest by his closest collaborators.

It's impossible however to omit a problem of great importance to Polish political parties. In March 1918 commenced the return of Polish immigrants from Russia *en masse*. The PPS organizations in Russia undoubtedly underwent a far-reaching radicalization process, and a considerable part were under direct Bolshevik influence.³¹ Returning from Russia were also former Austrian prisoners of war who were previously connected with the PPSD. Police records in the former Russian Poland and in Galicia confirm that a considerable part of the re-emigrants were under Bolshevik influence.³² Comprehension of the causes of the political changes in both parties in the first half of 1918 requires consideration of the position of these re-emigrants.

But to return to the question of the standpoint of the two parties on the Soviet power. Beginning with the spring of 1918 the questions of the form of struggle for power and the manner of exercising power came to the front. No longer was the question of Polish independence the dominant one, but the nature of the social system.

The PPS publicistic statements concerning the Russian Revolution may be divided into two basic groups. The first is represented by the articles of Perl and Niedziałkowski published between March and October. The second consists of a series of articles by Zaremba, a recent PPS leader in Russia.³³

The first group of articles was basically critical of the ideology and policies of Bolshevism — although in an objective and at times even a friendly tone. Niedziałkowski sharply criticized the Kerensky government, but considered it necessary to counter its political conception by proposing a united front of Russian “revolutionary democracy.” He attributed the responsibility for the lack of such a united front to all the socialist parties: Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries. His fundamental postulate was the creation of an “all-socialist” government. In August Perl harshly criticized the lack of democracy in the Bolshevik constitution and in the following weeks broadly analyzed the ideological and political foundations of Bolshevism, mixing approval with sharp criticism. He thus acknowledged Bolshevism as a phenomenon of high historical significance, approved the taking of power by the Bolsheviks and considered that even if they should fail to maintain power they

³¹ *Materiały archiwalne...*, vol. 1, p. 123 - 130; “Naprzód,” April 14, 1918, No. 85, 3 - 4; Biblioteka Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Papers of Jan Stecki, (abbr. Bibl. KUL PJS) vol. 532, pp. 1 - 35.

³² Bibl. KUL, PJS, vol. 577, 127; T. Spiss, *Ze wspomnień c.k. urzędnika politycznego*, Rzeszów 1936, pp. 64 - 66.

³³ “Jedność Robotnicza,” March 24, June 2, July 7 and 14, August 11 and 25, September 1, 15, 22, 29, and October 6, 1918, No. 12, 22, 27, 28, 32, 34, 35, 27, 38, 39, 40.

would still constitute an impetus to social development. He at the same time criticized the Bolsheviks for their attitude to democracy (dispersal of the Constituent Assembly) and to the other socialist parties. He regarded the "school of democracy" as the necessary road to the rule of the proletariat. He was sceptical on the workers control of production and on the perspective of economic development under Russian conditions. Perl also considered that in practice the Bolsheviks, especially in the Ukraine, violated the principle of national self-determination.

That series of articles published over a period of about six weeks, ended in early October. This should be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that their final conclusions were more critical of Bolshevism than were the earlier ones. For despite the latter, the ultimate conclusion questioned the role of Bolshevism in society's development toward socialism.

Zaremba's series of articles was of another character. They were sympathetic to the Soviet government, approved many of its measures and acknowledged others as necessitated by the sabotage of the bourgeoisie. He decidedly condemned the political line of the Social-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks and held them responsible for the atmosphere of uncompromising struggle in the Russian socialist movement.

In this period the question of the territorial program, i.e., the fate of Lithuanian, Byelorussian and Ukrainian lands was almost completely forgotten. But Sochacki attempted a new look at the question back in March with his appearance against symptoms of Polish annexationism.³⁴ He cited as an example the desire to attach to Poland the Lithuanian parts of the Suwałki District and Ukrainian Eastern Galicia.

An important ideological question at the time which reacted on the attitude to the Russian Revolution was the future of the socialist international. As previously, the sympathy of the socialist leaders was on the side of international centrism.³⁵ Only the Union of Independent Socialist Youth, close to the PPS, adhered to the Zimmerwald and Kienthal tradition, but it wasn't differentiated into centre and left.³⁶

The Russian Revolution exerted a limited influence (at least as judged by the preserved materials) on PPS policy pertaining to the internal questions of the Polish labour movement. The fight against the SDKPiL (Social-Democracy of the Polish Kingdom and Lithuania) and the PPS-Left continued, although some re-emigrants from Russia were said to favour an understanding between the three parties. Reports of the PPS participating in July 1918 at an inter-party conference in Warsaw, attended also by the SDKPiL, by the PPS-Left and the Bund are contradictory.³⁷ Most probably the PPS either didn't participate or withdrew while it was in session.

³⁴ "Jedność Robotnicza," March 3, 1918, No. 9 p. 2.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, March 24, April 7, May 7, June 2, 1918, No. 12, 14 (13) 18, 22,

³⁶ "Głos Niezależny," May 1918, No. 1, pp. 13 - 16, 24 - 29.

³⁷ Archiwum Państwowe m. Krakowa i Województwa Krakowskiego, vol. 1, p. 634, 648.

The conception of an inter-party conference was said to have originated with a former PPS official in Russia Tadeusz Źarski, who when the Warsaw conference failed attempted local inter-party agreements. Other former leaders of the PPS Russian organization also participated in this attempt. Źarski's activity is said to have resulted in such agreements in August 1918 in the Mława, Ciechanów and Przasnysz party organizations.³⁸

Following the crisis over the Brest Treaty questions connected with the Russian Revolution didn't attract much the attention of the PPSD at first. Fundamentally part of the leadership counted on a return to the Austrian orientation, while the party occasionally expressed a negative attitude to the Russian Revolution.³⁹

But such a policy had to arouse opposition, as is shown by the discussion at the 14th congress of the PPSD (May 18 - 20, 1918). Opening the congress Zygmunt Marek devoted several hot remarks to Piłsudski, but also to the Russian Revolution.⁴⁰ A resolution was voted to address greetings to the Russian proletariat. "The slogans of the Russian Revolution" were raised at the congress by Źarski, who most probably attended while on the way back from Russia.

It would be difficult however to find in the two main reports, by Daszyński and Diamand, ideas even remotely related to those slogans of the Russian Revolution. Both reporters subordinated social problems to the interests of the nation as a whole. Even the demands of the left-wing, grouped around Bolesław Drobner and Helena Landau-Bauer, only indirectly reflected the Russian experience. The congress resolution condemned alliances with bourgeois parties and the policy of collaboration with imperialist governments, committed itself to social revolution and working class rule and advocated international proletarian solidarity and recognition of the right of nations to self-determination. Drobner's resolution — the only one from the left adopted — to set up Workers' Councils as party bodies bore some analogy to the Russian experience. Such party Councils of course — although explained by the existence of only one workers party in Galicia — could increase the memberships participation in determining party policy, but they differed fundamentally from the Russian Soviets (Councils) of workers delegates. Moreover, the Councils were established in Galicia by the PPSD in October 1918, against the protest of the left-wing that they were intended to check the desire for broad non-Party Councils of workers' delegates on the pattern of Russia and former Russian Poland.

It may be said in general that the left-wing of PPSD was inspired by the left democracy of Austria (a basic part of the centrist grouping in international social democracy). Of course, the image of the Vienna left was also influenced by the

³⁸ *Materiały archiwalne...*, vol. 1, pp. 332 - 334.

³⁹ "Naprzód," March 6, 1918, No. 53, p. 1; May 1, 1918, No. 99, p. 2.

⁴⁰ For information of the congress proceedings see "Naprzód," May 19, 223; and June 2, 1918, No. 113, 115, 116; "Głos Robotniczy," July 14, 21, 25, 1918, No. 42, 46, 48, 49.

Russian Revolution, which directly — although it's hard to define the extent — shaped the revolutionary mood, but not the concrete views, of the left-wing of the PPSD.

There is much less accurate information available on the 14th congress of the PPS (September 14 - 17, 1918), held later under the shadow of the collapse of the Central Powers. There is no doubt that the impact of the Russian Revolution found clearer expression here. First of all, the party left appeared here in full strength and initiative since the outbreak of the war. And the re-emigrants from Russia played a most important role in the left-wing from the viewpoint of activity and numerical strength.⁴¹ The content of almost all resolutions adopted felt the weight of left influence.

This was the first time that PPS resolutions treated the question of war in such elaborate form as the result of conflicting imperialist interests and as a symptom of the crisis in the capitalist system. The period opening-up then was regarded as one of social revolution leading to the realization of socialism through the class struggle of the international proletariat. The PPS was to concentrate all socialist forces in Poland to accomplish the social revolution and the take power, particularly in the event of the outbreak of revolutions in the bordering countries.⁴²

The left current at the congress certainly had its influence on the line of the territorial program. The frontiers of the "border areas" were to be delineated on the basis of self-determination by the peoples involved. On the question of the historically Lithuanian lands the congress limited itself to the proposition that their destiny should be left to the will of their inhabitants — without allusion to the previous stand of joining Lithuania to Poland. The party leadership was to establish the closest possible relations with the socialist parties of other countries, especially in the neighbouring states.

Other questions in connection with the course followed by the Russian Revolution found expression in the political life of the PPS only at the end of October 1918 during the meeting of the Party Council. The discussion on setting up a Council of Workers Delegates was stimulated not only by the influence of the Russian Revolution but also by the popularity of the Soviet idea among working class circles of the PPS and by the fear that the left working class organization would take over that idea. It appears that no-one at the Party Council meeting questioned the proposition of forming Workers Councils. The debate rather concerned their character and manner of their organization. Some participants favoured the Russian model of broad non-party workers councils. Others advocated that the councils should be PPS party organs. Neither side obtained a majority and a decision on the

⁴¹ "Kronika Ruchu Rewolucyjnego w Polsce," vol. 4, 1938, No. 3 (6), p. 238.

⁴² "Robotnik," October 1918, No. 290, pp. 2 - 4.

question was deferred. In practice, under the pressure of events, various party centres later made different decisions on the question, in November 1918.⁴³

Thus, before the emergence of the independent Polish state the relation of the PPS and the PPSD to the Russian Revolution and experience was basically negative in the sphere of ideology. But while evaluations differed, that relation was not without sympathy in respect to the Bolsheviks' Polish policy — judging by the attitude of the leaders of both parties. Whereas the PPS-Left sought to tie sympathy for revolutionary Russia with attempts to transfer to Poland at least some of its experience.

With the formation of an independent Polish state both parties became ruling parties, representatives of the new Polish government. If their changed outlook was not expressed in the brief episode of the Lublin Peoples' Government, it could already be detected by November 20 in the Moraczewski government declaration and by the 25 of the same month in Moraczewski's statement at a government meeting. In their domestic policy the ruling socialist parties decidedly separated themselves from the Russian course.⁴⁴ In foreign policy the government accented its friendship for the Western powers.

On the matter of their relation to the Entente, the PPS leadership maintained an attitude of complete reserve, contrary to the government's wishes. This was undoubtedly due to the opposition of its left inclined membership and sympathisers to the Entente.⁴⁵ Whereas the central organ of the PPSD carried an article at the beginning of December 1918 which advanced for the first time a thesis to be repeated many times thereafter.⁴⁶ The relation between Poland and the western Allied powers was defined from the viewpoint of mutual reason of state, entirely separated from the ideological and social problems of the socialist movement. The main question was the attitude to the rebuilding of a "White" Russia, which was considered ruinous to Polish interests. This was counterposed by the conception of Russia's dismemberment.

In the first period of its existence the Moraczewski government faced no direct need to define its relation to Soviet Russia. German troops were still stationed in the areas east of Poland, and there was no common frontier. The PPS press also maintained silence. Attacks on the Soviet system appeared only in the PPSD press.⁴⁷ And there is meager data on the attitude of the members and sympathizers of both parties to the Soviet Russia at the time.⁴⁸

⁴³ *Ibidem*, June 29, 1919, No. 231, p. 2; AZHP, PPS 305, vol. 116 (before the regulation, none discovered afterward).

⁴⁴ Archiwum Akt Nowych, Protokoły Posiedzeń Rady Ministrów R.P., vol. 4, k. 395; "Robotnik," November 20, 1918, No. 305, p. 1; November 24, 1918, No. 213, p. 1; "Niepodległość," vol. XV, p. 411.

⁴⁵ See AZHP, PPS 305/VI, vol. 12/XII, pp. 1 - 4.

⁴⁶ "Naprzód," December 4, 5, 1918, No. 271, 272.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, December 4, 1918, No. 271, p. 1.

⁴⁸ The minutes of a meeting of one of Warsaw district PPS organizations confirm sympathy for the Russian and German revolutions. AZHP, PPS 305/VI, vol. 12/XII, pp. 1 - 4.

The government and both parties at first maintained silence also on the question of territorial demands. A government declaration called only for the liberation of Lvov but expressed confidence in harmonious relations between Poland and the "free and equal nations" around her. These conceptions reflected the particularly strong desire in the PPSD for an amicable settlement of the Polish-Ukrainian controversy. The Ukrainian question was regarded as a subject of competition between Poland and Russia.⁴⁹ It was hoped that an amicable solution would lead to the union of Ukraine with Poland. This decidedly anti-Russian conception speculated moreover on the collapse of the Soviet government and the rebuilding of a "White" Russia.

An ideological-political program conflict erupted at the PPS Warsaw party conference of December 1, 1918. Two basic trends developed there. The right regarded as unrealistic the perspective of revolutions in the Allied countries and proposed a friendly policy toward their governments. They wanted the prompt convocation of parliament and attached little importance to the Workers Councils. The left anticipated an early outbreak of the socialist revolution in Western Europe and demanded a revolutionary policy toward the Allied states. They were against summoning parliament and advocated rendering the Workers Councils participation in ruling. Although the left displayed important strength, the right-wing scored a victory.⁵⁰

The main reports at the 15th PPS Congress, convened on December 8, 1918, represented the viewpoint of the right group. But Perl decidedly opposed Poland letting herself be drawn into a war against revolutionary Russia.⁵¹ In an article reviewing the proceedings of the Congress Niedziałkowski again presented the thesis of the previous territorial program.⁵² Not only was Eastern Galicia regarded as an area of Polish territorial claims, but the need was formulated for joining Lithuania and Byelorussia to Poland.

There is a regrettable lack of data on the position of the PPS left-wing on the question of relations with Russia during the Congress. But it's generally known that the left carried on considerable activity.

From the middle of December to mid-January the political pressure of the right parties — which started in November — on Moraczewski's government intensified. The same happened in connection with the negotiations between the Polish National Committee at Paris and the Chief of state — Piłsudski. It's undoubtedly these conversations which led to the acceptance of certain decisions on foreign policy questions.

⁴⁹ "Naprzód," November 27, 1918, No. 271, p. 1.

⁵⁰ AZHP, WBK 103, vol. 1/XII, 1918, k. 5-9; "Robotnik," December 3, 1918, No. 330, p. 1.

⁵¹ For press report of the meeting see "Robotnik," December 9, 10, 11 and 12, 1918, No. 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 346.

⁵² "Robotnik," December 15, 1918, No. 352, p. 1.

The extreme anti-communist and anti-Soviet appearance of the PPS leader and Minister of Foreign Affairs Leon Wasilewski at a press conference probably resulted from these conversations.⁵³ The government's pro-Allied policy was accompanied by the severance of diplomatic relations with Germany.

Pro-Allied overtones began to appear now in PPS publications, simultaneously with sharpened animosity to Soviet Russia and to communism.⁵⁴ But whereas the attitude to Polish communists was uniformly negative, with respect to Russian communism there were occasional expressions of a soft approach, not without a shade of an at least partially sympathetic evaluation.⁵⁵ The distinctly negative attitude to the Soviet Union was to a great degree connected with the claim to Lithuanian, Byelorussian and Ukrainian territories. A conviction arose that a conflict over this question was inevitable and efforts were intensified to counteract the federalist conception, which was revealed several months later. The great joy expressed by PPSD organs at the initial successes of the Ukrainian nationalists in battles with the Bolsheviks and the projected conception of the commonness of Polish-Ukrainian interests reflected the same assumption of the inevitability of war.⁵⁶

The situation after the attempted coup d'état organized by the right on January 4-5, 1919 against the Moraczewski's government definitively determined the viewpoint of both parties on the question of the course of the Russian Revolution. At the left conference on January 10 the opposition adopted a political declaration which raised the demand for a proletarian revolution, the establishment of a socialist government represented by Soviets of delegates and the socialist parties.⁵⁷ At the same time the PPS and PPSD leaders decided to resign from the government, since it could only retain power by "Bolshevik methods." The victory of communism in Poland was considered to be synonymous with the end of Polish independence.⁵⁸

The relation of the PPS and PPSD — soon to be united into one, the Polish Socialist Party — to the Russian Revolution and the Soviet state has its historical sequel in the years that followed. Without doubt the events of the Polish-Soviet war of 1920 had a tremendous influence on that history. But it appears that all the basic elements of their position, all their argumentation, were already ripe at the beginning of 1919.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, December 18, 1918, No. 357, p. 2.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, December 18, 1918, No. 357, p. 1; December 24, 1918, No. 368, pp. 1-3; January 5, 1919, No. 7, p. 1.

⁵⁵ "Kalendarz Robotniczy PPS na rok 1919," 1919, pp. 17-24; "Robotnik," January 2, 1919, No. 2, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁶ "Naprzód," December 18, 1918, No. 283, p. 1.

⁵⁷ See "Sztandar Socjalizmu," January 14, 1919, No. 11, p. 2; "Górnik," January 12, 1919, No. 4, p. 2.

⁵⁸ "Niepodległość," vol. XV, pp. 404-411; "Robotnik," January 14, 1919, No. 19, p. 1; January 17, 1919, No. 25, p. 1.

The first basic area of the attitude to "Bolshevism" was that of Poland's reason of state, as both parties understood it. This is reducible in the first instance, though not exclusively, to the question of winning and consolidating Polish independence. At first the PPS and PPSD hailed the Russian Revolution with satisfaction. For they were fully conscious of the fact that both from the viewpoint of its objective situation and because of the Bolshevik position on Polish independence, the Soviet government was most efficacious for that independence. The leaders of both parties were undoubtedly sincere in their commitment against the rebuilding of a "White" Russia.

But "reason of state" comprised for the PPS and PPSD leaders also the territorial program of a "powerful Poland" embracing also non-Polish areas which were under the influence of the Russian Revolution. The question of the territorial affiliation of Byelorussia and the Ukraine thus emerged as the basic issue of the war which was to erupt in several months, and came to a head in 1920.

The second basic area, partly linked with the first, was the relation to the ideological program and political course of the Russian Revolution. The PPS and PPSD were traditionally connected with the right-wing of the Second International. Though for national considerations they accented towards the end of the war their sympathy for social-democratic centrism and their antipathy for the German annexationist socialists. In the name of a Polish program completely distinct from their revolutionary neighbour, and under the banner of the reformist road to socialism, they spurned the application of the Russian course to Poland. But because of the international character of the communist movement they rejected that course universally, hence also for Russia. It's characteristic that this area of evaluation of the Russian Revolution played a secondary role until the formation of the Polish state, but it grew in significance after that. Questions of a theoretical character at the turn of 1917-1918 became basic propositions of PPS and PPSD practice by November 1918.

The official party position in both these areas was rejected by the left-wing of the PPS because they refused to regard it from the "reason of state" viewpoint. Unlike the emerging Polish communist movement they put to the fore the traditional socialist ideal of international solidarity, in which they saw no obstacle to Polish independence. Because they adhered to the conception of the revolutionary struggle for socialism, they declared their solidarity with the point of departure of the Bolshevik course.

The outcome of the conflict became evident two years later. Some left-wing adherents were compelled to leave the PPS and were gradually absorbed into the Polish communist movement. Others submitted to the line of the party leadership.

Such was the evolution of the ideological and political line of the PPS. Though periodically confronted with continued inner-party opposition, it stamped the basic character of the party as negatively disposed to the Soviet course and to the Soviet state as an international political phenomenon.

(Translated by Jerzy Syskind)