

Rising Subjects: Forging the Political During the 1905 Revolution in Russian Poland

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Submitted to
Central European University
Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology and Social Anthropology

Budapest, Hungary
2017

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I hereby also state that a part of the findings presented in this study were already presented as journal articles (some of them co-authored) but fragments and findings included in this study are of my own authorship.

Wiktor Marzec

SUMMARY

The 1905 revolution in the Russian-controlled Kingdom of Poland was one of the few bottom-up political transformations and general democratizations in Polish history, probably paralleled only by the “first” Solidarity movement in the early 1980s. As the political upsurge ultimately brought about defeat of the popular classes that were rising for political recognition and economic alleviation, it is not in direct political or social outcomes where one should look for its major significance. Considering the general issue of polity being established, I argue that it was a watershed of political modernity in Poland. This project corroborates such a hypothesis through an analysis of various discourses comprising a change within the public sphere, militant subjectivities, and political languages. Deftly integrating historical sociology, conceptual history and historical discourse analysis, the dissertation sheds a light on the historically changing realm of the political.

The general objective is to explore how spaces and representations of the political have changed through continuous processes of redefinition and re-enactment. In particular, my focus is the presence of certain social groupings in this communicative space, namely the “working class”. I am interested in the transformation of places that workers (both male and female) and work itself may have taken in the political realm and the respective remolding of workers’ selves as political agents. This mirror question concerns the enactment of political participation by “rising subjects” themselves through various, often conflicting, political commitments, from far-left socialism to virulent nationalism.

In order to address these questions, in subsequent chapters I investigate workers acting in the public sphere, the evolving entanglement of biography and politics, the changing regime of political speech, and the transformation of political visibility of workers.

In the first step, I scrutinize nascent forms of political education within party milieus which finally came to the fore in 1905. In particular, entanglement of social processes was a direct intervention of political struggle which induced the emergence of proletarian publics and the intellectual invigoration of workers. Strikes, factory constituencies, political street performances and

new forms of public participation constituted nascent forms of the proletarian public sphere.

Subsequently, I investigate workers' intellectual pursuits and the relationship between the work-centered life context, militant biography and making political claims. An analysis of over 100 narratives provides insight into political mobilization, canonized stages of the proletarian biography, and the impact of revolution on working-class lives and writing across political milieus, from far-left internationalist socialism to militant factory nationalism.

Afterwards, I examine the changing regime of political speech. Language in action materialized in the political proclamations, leaflets, and party newspapers distributed among workers. Assisted by qualitative data mining performed on the complete corpus of party proclamations (socialist and nationalist alike), it is argued that these languages deployed as performative utterances brought a profound intervention into regimes of subjectification. I also ask about the role antisemitism played as a political device assisting the construction of new political identities. When “nationalism began to hate”, antisemitism appeared to be an extremely effective mobilizing device and the Jews started to be perceived as a negative, constitutive point of reference for the construction of national unity among the Poles.

The final part focuses on a transformation of political visibility of both workers and work in the press. After a brief overview on the rise of the “worker question”, I investigate how the rising tension was reflected upon during the revolution. The assumed “place” of workers changed; after initial acceptance if not enthusiasm, but with the demise of revolutionary zeal, counteraction from the industrial bourgeoisie spurred fear of the masses and contempt for their actions.

In conclusion, I present the 1905 revolution as a tipping point for a future pathogenesis of the Polish modern public sphere. Instead of co-opting the popular revolt as a factor facilitating – and later solidifying – political balance and civil institutions, the workers' claims were partially excluded from legitimate public activity. While the revolution spurred the transformation of the political, its results were far from unambiguous. Modern politics is not only about growing popular agency, but also about attempts to control it and the unrestrained reactions against it.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Historians are lone wolves; sociologists more often work in packs. As I traversed both disciplines, even if I wrote alone I tried to consult the results with as many people as possible. There is no better way to improve one's own work and to avoid blind alleys. This study is a product of an organic growth, which meanwhile resulted in many additional article-size studies, a research project which allowed me to gather primary sources, and a book in Polish which presented the initial findings for the purposes of this project. Thus, many ideas came from consultations, talks, conference interventions and private conversations which I am unable to recollect in detail, and it would be too cumbersome to list them here anyway. Many ideas presented in this study were suggested by generous commentators, and many resulted from consultations, reviews or debates around the aforementioned additional products.

I was lucky enough to receive generous support from various institutions apart from my irreplaceable Alma Mater, Central European University, where I remained comfortably seated between my main Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology and Department of History, leniently accepting my conspicuous presence. Ongoing support was offered by my supervisors at CEU, professor Judit Bodnár and professor Balázs Trencsényi. CEU provided me with a basic stipend and the additional research was performed thanks to research grants from the Polish National Science Center (main grant UMO-2012/05/N/HS3/01158 and collaborative project from which I borrowed some primary sources UMO-2011/03/B/HS6/01874). Both were hosted and supervised by Professor Kaja Kaźmierska in the Department of Sociology of Culture at the University of Lodz, Poland. During my work on this study I was also hosted by University of Lodz (Professor Kaja Kaźmierska, Professor Kazimierz Kowalewicz), Eisenberg Institute and Department of History at University of Michigan in Ann Arbor (Professor Brian Porter-Szücs), research center at Humboldt University in Berlin (Professor Andreas Eckert), Center for Interdisciplinary Polish Studies at the Viadrina University in Frankfurt (Oder) and Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna. The thriving academic environment in

all these institutions constantly nourished my thinking. Librarians in all those universities, archivists from the Polish National Library in Warsaw and the state archives in Łódź and in Warsaw were always supportive of my queries.

During the archival work, I was supported by a virtuoso of the archive, Kamil Piskala. With processing of the material, Adam Musiałowicz and Izabela Smuga had their share. Various chunks of this study, conference presentations, separate articles and chapters were at various stages of my work consulted and discussed with many people apart from my supervisors. I am unable to assign any clear priorities or list all meetings, workshops and conferences, and thus I mention in alphabetic order all those whose omission would be ungrateful in respect to their generosity in offering me their time: Agnes Arndt, Volodymyr Artiukh, Jörg Baberowski, Arnd Bauerkämper, Eric Blanc, Robert Blobaum, Howard Brick, Kathleen Canning, John Clarke, Mathieu Desan, Geoff Eley, Jean-Louis Fabiani, Jan Hennings, Stephan Ludwig Hoffman, Jan Ivfersen, Maciej Janowski, Don Kalb, Webb Keane, Mark Keck-Szajbel, Howard Kimeldorf, Jürgen Kocka, Kazimierz Kowalewicz, Aleksandra Kowalski, Grzegorz Krzywiec, Peter Linebaugh, Alf Lüdtke, Brendan McGeever, Alexei Miller, Michael Miller, Daniel Monterescu, Vlad Naumescu, Margrit Pernau, Jan Plamper, Gertrud Pickhan, Kamil Piskala, Brian Porter-Szücs, Kirill Postoutenko, Harsha Ram, Alfred Rieber, Jürgen Schmidt, Marsha Siefert, Ronald Grigor Suny, George Steinmetz, Willibald Steinmetz, Krystian Szadkowski, Kamil Śmiechowski, Balazs Vedres and Kathleen Wróblewski. Last but certainly not least, Paul Barron, Lindsay Curtis, James Hartzell, Sanjay Kumar, David Ridout, and Thomas Rooney on various stages helped me to make my writing understandable.

Marginal parts of this study (but none of the chapters as such) have been (or soon will be) published in various academic journals in various languages. Work on those articles and comments of editors and reviewers of the following journals were also helpful for me: “Arbeit. Bewegung. Geschichte”, “Canadian-American Slavic Studies”, “Eastern European Politics and Societies”, “Folia Sociologica”, “Journal of Historical Sociology”, “Historical Materialism”, “Patterns of Prejudice” and “Praktyka Teoretyczna”.

On all possible levels: academically, intellectually, emotionally and organizationally, this work would not be possible without my most stubborn intellectual companion, co-author, discussant and first reader: my wife Agata Zysiak, and it is to her which I would like to dedicate this study.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Archival sources:

AAN – Archiwum Akt Nowych (Archive of Contemporary Files, Warsaw, Poland)

AGAD – Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych (Main Archive of Old Files, Warsaw, Poland)

APŁ – Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi (State Archive in Łódź, Poland)

AODRR – Akta Osobowe Działaczy Ruchu Robotniczego (Personal Files of the Activists of the Workers' Movement)

APPS – Archiwum Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej (Archive of the Polish Socialist Party)

BN – Biblioteka Narodowa (National Library, Warsaw, Poland)

DŹS – Dokumenty Życia Społecznego (Documents of Social Life)

KGP – Kancelaria Gubernatora Piotrkowskiego (The Chancellery of Piotrkow Governor-General)

KC PZPR – Komitet Centralny Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej (Central Committee of the Polish United Worker's Party)

pdt. – podteczka (subfolder)

PGZŻ – Powiatowy Gubernialny Zarząd Żandarmerii (County Gubernial Head Office of the Gendarmerie)

t. –teczka (folder)

t.os. –teczka osobowa (personal folder)

ZDiPU – Zbiór Druków i Pism Ulotnych (The Collection of Ephemeral Printings and Writings)

ZDU A. Br. – Zbiór Druków Ulotnych Anny Branickiej (The Collection of Ephemeral Printings of Anna Branicka)

Organizations and party bodies:

CKR – Centralny Komitet Robotniczy (Central Workers' Committee)

KR – Komitet Robotniczy (Workers' Committee)

ŁKR – Łódzki Komitet Robotniczy (Łódź Workers' Committee)

ND – Narodowa Demokracja (National Democracy)

NZR – Narodowy Związek Robotniczy (National Workers' Association)

PD – Postępowa Demokracja (Progressive Democracy)

PPS – Polska Partia Socjalistyczna (Polish Socialist Party)

PPS – Lewica – Polska Partia Socjalistyczna – Lewica (Polish Socialist Party – Left)

PPS-FR – Polska Partia Socjalistyczna – Frakcja rewolucyjna (Polish Socialist Party – Revolutionary Faction)

SDKPiL – Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy (Socialdemocracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania)

WKR – Warszawski Komitet Robotniczy (Warsaw Workers' Committee)

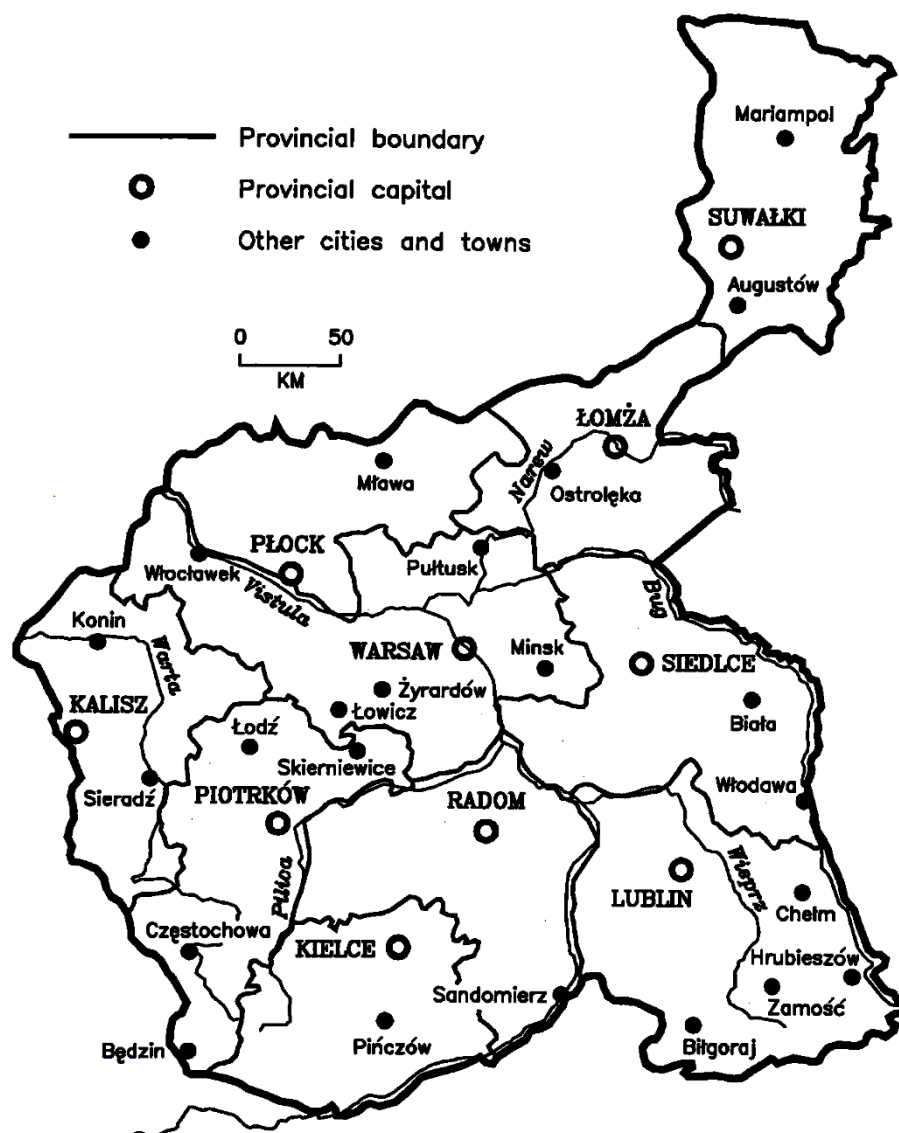


Figure 1. Map of the Kingdom of Poland in 1897. From Robert Blobaum, *Rewolucja: Russian Poland, 1904-1907* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

INTRODUCTION

His eyes are laughing, his face is glaring, he is carrying almost without any effort a huge timber, throwing it across the street, and like in a triumph he straightens his body. He is truly beautiful at that moment. Out of his posture, happiness can be read; it can be seen that he has lived to experience what he had been waiting for for a long time. He was killed on the barricade and he died with happiness.¹

And finally a man of gigantic height and weight approached the podium. His sullen and red face had only one expression: this of dull stupidity. He was ushered on the podium by a young Jew [żydek – diminutive from “żyd”, derogatory expression used among popular anti-Semites], who introduced him as the one who was supposed to speak in the name of the hungry workers. The fat scoundrel hooted: “Down with Poland, down with the white eagle.” (...) The Jew flounced on the podium in convulsions of wild fury or happiness.²

In 1905, new groups of people entered the meager political scene of Russian Poland. Urban workers came out to the streets in protest, which from striking and picketing led to an urban uprising and the construction of barricades. They also embarked on various forms of public debate such as mass meetings and rallies. The above descriptions are reactions triggered by this unprecedented situation. They are memoirs written by eyewitnesses perceiving the new political practice of workers. Vivid creations of memory in both cases, they reveal important political imaginations and emotions. However diametrically opposed, they demonstrate the impact of insurgent democratization on the social imaginary equally well.

The first depiction is about the “politics of the street”. Regardless of whether it is an inscription of memory or mere literary imagination, it captures an excitement with the new. It refers to politics forcefully challenging the existing order and the revolutionary zeal of barricade-building in June 1905 in Łódź. It is about politics of the street used to stake claims otherwise illegitimate in palace

¹ Memory of the revolutionary events written down by one of the witnesses, quoted in: Władysław L. Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1975), 64.

² Anna Skarbek Sokołowska, *Wspomnienia 1882-1914*, Ossolineum, rkps 14137II, k. 160-161, quoted in: Tadeusz Stegner, “Rewolucja w opinii środowisk liberalnych Królestwa Polskiego 1905-1907,” in *Rewolucja 1905-1907 w Królestwie Polskim i w Rosji*, ed. Marek Przeniosło, Stanisław Wiech, and Barbara Szabat (Kielce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej, 2005), 33–34.

courtrooms and factory offices. It also registers a pivotal change in the lives of the revolutionized workers. It does not stress death but the self-assertion of a person embarking on a struggle bigger than personal involvement, and by this act gaining a form of agency and dignity he had been deprived of for all his previous life.

The second one is a rejection, yet refers to a more moderate form of participation – a mass meeting organized by liberals in the building of the Warsaw Philharmonic Concert Hall in November 1905. It describes a semi-authorized rally in a public building with a podium and seats for the participants, where speakers took turns in sharing their political ideas; close to even the most moderate idea of what it meant to practice politics. Nevertheless, the picture presented by a noble woman supporting the liberals is a dense composition of all the means usually mobilized to reinforce political difference and exclusion. An anthropological or physiognomic difference separates the rabble and those deemed legitimate to voice their political statements. The orator she depicts is alien not only in respect to class; he also sticks out as a proxy of an ethnic community carefully policed out of the legitimate polity of the Poles. Every detail of his performance renders his claims usurpatory – after all, a “fat scoundrel” cannot righteously represent “hungry workers”. It is a “Jew” who ushers in the claimant, ultimately testifying to the foreign and hostile origin of the claim. In a paroxysm of the rabble excited with its own self-acclaimed greatness, even the basic emotions, let alone claims, cannot be properly detected. It is not an argument which is uttered, but instead “convulsions of wild fury or happiness”. It cannot be recognized whether it is this or that, nor does it matter at all amidst noise which never does become a voice.

Both depictions touch upon the heart of the problem investigated in this study. The invisible limits of participation are made flesh in a vision of heroic self-assertion and a discourse of class contempt embroidered with ethnic accusation. The bearded oldster from the first quote (incidentally, also a Jew) forcefully questions his assigned place, and the popular classes storming the liberal salon from the second quote are doing exactly the same. They demonstrate that politics is a realm with carefully policed limits. They also expose, however, the fact that those limits might be questioned,

and sometimes moved. Political action is no less than a redrawing of these limits. This is what happened during the crisis of 1904-1907 in Russian Poland, which is usually called the 1905 Revolution, and indeed might be dubbed “the long 1905”. Correspondingly, in undertaking this study I wanted to understand the contentious renegotiation concerning the presence of workers within the political, a communicative space comprised of words and practices. Moreover, a large proportion of the urban working class was already female, thus the redrawing of the political also concerned the gender dimension. All in all, the political sphere was severely reconstructed during the revolution.

The 1905 Revolution in the Russian-controlled Kingdom of Poland was one of the few bottom-up political transformations and general democratizations in Polish history, probably paralleled only by the “first” Solidarity movement in the early 1980s. As the political upsurge ultimately brought about defeat of the popular classes rising for political recognition and economic alleviation, it is not in direct political or social outcomes where one should look for its major significance. The 1905 Revolution introduced a plethora of new issues into the public debate and reconfigured the political field. This insurgent democratization and its corollaries were part and parcel of the broader yet asynchronous transformation of societies and political regimes in modernity. At the same time, it was also an instance of the discontinuous history of plebeian political experience. Therefore, its analysis also addresses broader questions within historical sociology of the political.

The insurgent democratization set the stage for modern politics in the area, and was a tipping point for the ongoing developments of the public sphere. It was a change within the conditions of possibility to practice politics; new stakes, new measures and new lines of divisions emerged which circumscribed any further actions. Modern mass parties loomed large and political languages stabilized, which set the stage for the forthcoming debates and struggles.³ Basic divisions, unbridgeable rifts and mutual perceptions forged in 1905 between parties, ideologies and social

³ As in the case of the ethicized concept of nation, see Tomasz Kizwalter, *O nowoczesności narodu: przypadek Polski* (Warszawa: Semper, 1999); Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth Century Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

groupings set the tone for politics of the interwar Poland.⁴ A birth of protest culture and labor militancy were having their intransigent continuations for years afterward.⁵ A particular class composition of the Polish society and its discursive representation traced the contours of the political sphere in respect to presence and presentation of class.⁶ For instance, decades later, the dissident intellectuals in the period of state socialism acknowledged the intellectual indebtedness and self-conscious imitation of intelligentsia from the turn of the century. They also mimicked earlier tacit assumptions about, and attitude to, “the people”.⁷ This was an after image of the initial political experience of the Polish 20th century.

Bearing in mind the significance of this moment, this study explores the change of the political sphere in Russian Poland during the 1905 Revolution. I am interested in how spaces and representations of the political have changed through continuous processes of redefinition and re-enactment. I want to understand the circumstances that shaped the nascent modern political practice in respect to the presence of the working class – or for that matter, simply the workers – as a social entity, as a political claimant, and as a discursive construction. In order to do this, the political has to be disentangled into several interrelated subdomains, such as those concerning public participation, political discourses, subjective identities and self-definitions, or the relationship between social

⁴ Adam Próchnik, *Pierwsze Piętnastolecie Polski Niepodległej (1918 - 1933). Zarys Dziejów Politycznych* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Robotnik, 1933); Roman Wapiński, *Pokolenia Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* (Warszawa; Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1991); Anna Żarnowska and Stanisław Wolsza, eds., *Spółeczeństwo i polityka: dorastanie do demokracji: kultura polityczna w Królestwie Polskim na początku XX wieku* (Warszawa: DiG, 1993); Magdalena Micińska, ed., *Dzieje inteligencji polskiej do roku 1918* (Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN; Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2008); Paweł Samuś, *Wasza kartka wyborcza jest silniejsza niż karabin, niż armata...: z dziejów kultury politycznej na ziemiach polskich pod zaborami* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2013).

⁵ Padraic Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland: Workers and Communists, 1945-1950* (Ithaca, N. Y.; London: Cornell University Press, 2012).

⁶ Tomasz Zarycki, “Cultural Capital and the Political Role of the Intelligentsia in Poland,” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 19, no. 4 (December 2003): 91–108, doi:10.1080/13523270300660030; Tomasz Zarycki, “Class Analysis in Conditions of a Dual-Stratification Order,” *East European Politics and Societies* 29, no. 3 (August 2015): 711–18, doi:10.1177/0888325415599199.

⁷ Agnes Arndt, *Intellektuelle in der Opposition: Diskurse zur Zivilgesellschaft in der Volksrepublik Polen* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 2007); Roman A. Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity: A Political Sociology of Poland's Working Class Democratization*, *The Roots of Solidarity: A Political Sociology of Poland's Working Class Democratization* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Bohdan Cywiński, *Rodowody niepokornych* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2010); Dariusz Gawin, *Wielki zwrot: ewolucja lewicy i odrodzenie idei społeczeństwa obywatelskiego 1956-1976*, 2013; Michał Siermiński, *Dekada przełomu. Polska lewica opozycyjna 1968-1980* (Warszawa: Książka i Prasa, 2016).

groups. My investigation has led me to stake out several dimensions of change, which can be approached systematically by analysis of the available sources. In an effort to ascertain the constellation that precipitated further developments of the Polish political space, I dissect, as topics of study, the workers' public sphere, the entanglement of biography and politics, the regime of political speech and uses of language, and the construction of the workers as an object of external discourse.

Correspondingly, in the first part of this study I scrutinize nascent forms of political education within party milieus which finally came to the fore in 1905. Strikes, factory constituencies, political street performances and new forms of public participation constituted nascent forms of the working class public sphere. Subsequently, I investigate workers' intellectual pursuits and the relationship between the work-centered life context, militant biography and making political claims. Afterward, I examine the changing regime of political speech (language in action materialized in the political proclamations; leaflets and party newspapers were distributed among workers). I also ask about new uses and abuses of language, taking political antisemitism as an example of a political device assisting the construction of new political identities and an infrastructure of political exclusion. The final part focuses on the political visibility of workers in the press. Here I focus on the interplay of, on the one hand, the acceptance of their new “place” and agency, and, on the other, counteraction from the side of industrial bourgeoisie, fearsome liberals, and nationalists opposing the insurgent democratization.

Insurgent democratization

“Bloody Sunday” in January 1905, when Tsarist soldiers opened fire in St. Petersburg on a crowd carrying icons and portraits of the then-praised Tsar, was not only an event triggering the revolutionary process in Russia proper; it also instantly catalyzed outbursts of rioting in the areas at the fringes of the Russian Empire. In Russian Poland, it built upon the previous unrest, germinating at least for a year before, when dissatisfaction with the economic crisis and the conscription for the

Russian-Japanese war had already caused people to flock to the squares and confront Russian troops.⁸ A complex process consisting of waves of contention and state repression began. It led to uncountable political and economic strikes, to electoral campaigns to the state Duma (a form of advisory parliamentary body introduced in Russia in those days), to bloodshed-causing street demonstrations. Its pinnacle was a quasi-uprising with street barricades, but a tumble brought “fratricidal” struggles between workers.

While the customary name of the 1904-1907 events is the “Russian Revolution of 1905”, a large part of militancy, strikes, street fights and other social unrest actually happened in the urban centers of Russian Poland. Over one third of strikes in the entire empire happened there and they were generally more massive than elsewhere, with up to 90% of workers striking at least once in 1905. These were not only episodic outbursts; by 1906 one fifth of Polish workers had joined a labor union and a similar proportion had joined a political party;⁹ up to one fifth of these numbers concerned women.¹⁰ Though they had a different dynamic, the turmoil and skirmishes also affected the rural population, radicalizing the landless peasants and farm workers.¹¹

The mass rioting expressed already-accumulated tensions and dissatisfaction. In the first phase it was a general resistance and refusal of further participation in a system of oppression. Directly after the initial general strike of January 1905, the Warsaw governor-general admitted that “workers, having ceased to work, did not raise any claims”.¹² However, an amorphous refusal gradually changed its character, a certain structure of revolt began to crystallize, and various, alternating sets of demands emerged, along with symbolic points organizing the struggle. Without a doubt, there were social

⁸ Reasons for unrest and unfolding of revolutionary events is presented in Robert Blobaum, *Rewolucja: Russian Poland, 1904-1907* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

⁹ Ibid., 72–73.

¹⁰ Paweł Samuś, “Kobiety w ruchu socjalistycznym Królestwa Polskiego w latach rewolucji 1905-1907,” *Rocznik Łódzki* LVI (2009): 94; Robert Blobaum, “The ‘Woman Question’ in Russian Poland, 1900-1914,” *Journal of Social History* 35, no. 4 (2002): See also; Marta Sikorska-Kowalska, “Polskie ‘Marianny’. Udział kobiet w rewolucji 1905-1907 roku w świetle wydarzeń w Łodzi,” in *Rewolucja 1905-1907 w Królestwie Polskim i w Rosji*, ed. Marek Przeniosło, Stanisław Wiech, and Barbara Szabat (Kielce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej, 2005).

¹¹ Richard D. Lewis, “Revolution in the Countryside: Russian Poland, 1905-1906,” *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies* 0, no. 506 (January 1, 1986), doi:10.5195/CBP.1986.26.

¹² Quoted in: Stanisław Kalabiński and Feliks Tych, *Czwarte powstanie czy pierwsza rewolucja. Lata 1905-1907 na ziemiach polskich* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1976), 116.

grievances present among peasants-turned-workers migrating to the cities and the impoverished petty craftsmen. The tsarist state was not a liberal dreamland and did not offer much welfare support or political freedoms. What it delivered in abundance, however, was harsh military policing and an ineffective administration, which was widely perceived as foreign and occupational by the local population. Adding insult to injury, factory officials and foremen were often German and owners were often German or Jewish, while the working population was Polish or Jewish. Such an intersectional regime of domination facilitated an equally complex solidarity of resistance. In the imperial situation characterized by a multi-ethnic population and uneven access to power, the cultural cauldron was a fertile hotbed for social struggle tightly interwoven with national liberation and ethnic animosities.

When those emotions erupted, every political organization was one step behind. “None of the political parties that would later claim to have organized or initiated the events of 1905 really deserve the credit (or blame) for doing so. It would be better to say that they were poised to take advantage of events that they could neither fully predict nor control”, as Brian Porter-Szűcs comments.¹³ Nevertheless, the membership in all types of political parties was rising rapidly. They grew from tiny, cadre organizations to mass membership parties, reaching approximately every fifth worker in the Polish Kingdom.¹⁴ Parties and labor unions directly mobilized at least 150,000 people, most of them for the very first time.¹⁵ By any means it was a unidirectional mobilization. Class-based, internationalist Social Democracy in the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPiL) competed with the more nationally oriented Polish Socialist Party (PPS), and among Jewish workers with the Bund. They were soon rivaled by the sheer Polish nationalism of the National Democracy and its labor

¹³ Brian Porter-Szűcs, *Poland in the Modern World: Beyond Martyrdom* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 44.

¹⁴ In the end of 1906, three main socialist parties were as numerous as 55000 (PPS), 35000 (SDKPiL), Bund (30000), giving in total 15% of workers in Polish Kingdom, whereas directly before the revolution all three of them had no more than 1500 members. The NZR has reached about 25000 members. Christian labor organizations gathered another 20000. For data, see Teresa Monasterska, *Narodowy Związek Robotniczy, 1905-1920* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1973), 34–40; Anna Żarnowska, *Geneza rozłamu w Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej, 1904-1906* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1965), 457–65; Anna Żarnowska, “Rewolucja 1905-1907 a aktywizacja polityczna klasy robotniczej Królestwa Polskiego,” *Z pola walki*, no. 2(70) (1975): 12–21; See also Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*, 10–32.

¹⁵ Samuś, *Wasza kartka wyborcza jest silniejsza niż karabin*, chap. 1; Blobaum, *Rewolucja*, 113.

branch, the National Worker's Association (NZR).¹⁶ A fierce political struggle between parties competing to build new political identities, be they class, nation, or various combinations of the two, wreaked havoc.

The bid for the new political claimants made real what was only disputed before.¹⁷ The futures for the Polish people had been imagined by party ideologues and writers from intelligentsia milieus. The intelligentsia with all its particularities of in-between social position, educational resources, blocked upward mobility and vocational ethos played an important role in radical politics and in the elite's response to it. The “masses”, however, didn’t want to wait until the intelligentsia would lead and educate them, and went out into the streets. The assumed political community could no longer be postponed or deferred; there was no time left for any visions of a future reconciliation of tensions within it. Political constituencies had to be mobilized and disciplined in the here and now.

Thus, the 1905 Revolution is perhaps best understood not as a party bid but as a transformation of politics as practice. It was the democratic dimension of mass politics, and not elite party gatherings or even conspiratorial agitation of the intelligentsia leaders, which circumscribed the contours of the broader social experience of the revolution.¹⁸ Even a brief look at the existing historical research overwhelms the reader with the multiplicity of political organizations, labor committees and unions, and associational life which put a cornerstone for modern civil society. The tsarist Manifesto of October 1905, with constitutional reform and preventive censorship abolished, heralded a new era in the Kingdom's public sphere. The liberalized law on associations from March 1906 spurred on the development of all types of voluntary organizations, including trade unions. The authorized and underground press loomed large and both commercial and political titles mushroomed. They addressed the unprecedented growth of interest in public matters.¹⁹ The revolution encouraged new

¹⁶ Synthetic panoramas of competing ideologies were presented in Porter-Szücs, *Poland in the Modern World*, chap. 2; Blobaum, *Rewolucja*, 80–114.

¹⁷ Brian Porter, “Democracy and Discipline in Late Nineteenth Century Poland,” *The Journal of Modern History* 71, no. 2 (1999): 346–93.

¹⁸ Blobaum, *Rewolucja*, 189.

¹⁹ Zenon Kmiecik, *Prasa polska w rewolucji 1905-1907* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Nauk, 1980); Jerzy Myśliński, *Polska prasa socjalistyczna w okresie zaborów* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1982); Kamil Śmiechowski,

groups of society, in particular the urban working class, to actively participate in the public sphere. The events, for better and for worse, ushered the Polish Kingdom into the age of modern politics.²⁰ It was not allowed, however, to remain there.

The revolution failed and was bloodily suppressed, leading to a vast array of social disintegration processes and political repression measures. Elusive political gains on the tsarist state level, such as those gained in the “October Manifesto,” were soon canceled after the tsarist regime regained some vigor. In his seminal depiction, Robert Blobaum bemoans the demise of the nascent civil society in these words:

[M]artial law (...) did much to arrest, if not reverse, the development of civil society. That society (...) perhaps had been brought to a premature blossom by the revolution. Like a warm, early, but also stormy spring, the revolution fostered the sudden budding out of a multitude of associations, societies, and organizations (...). These bodies, intermediate between state and society (...) were strained, sometimes violently, by their too-rapid growth and by the pressures of popular participation, in unprecedented numbers, by many whose only experience had been that of subjects and not that of citizens.²¹

Inasmuch as tsarist repression was certainly the case, one may wonder what was hidden under the wording of the phrase “pressures of popular participation”. Whereas parties and organizations undoubtedly had a lot of trouble trying to master the sky-rocketing participation growth, it could hardly be a key factor of their dispersal and ultimate failure. Similarly, another important voice on the topic, Scott Ury concludes his outline of the theory of “democracy and its discontents” (as the title of his book chapter goes) with the somewhat surprising conclusion that “[w]hile democracy may have brought many blessings, it also came with at least one curse that would scar Polish society for generations: political antisemitism.”²² What both authors exclude, albeit in different registers and for

Łódzka wizja postępu: oblicze społeczno-ideowe “Gońca Łódzkiego”, “Kuriera Łódzkiego”, “Nowego Kuriera Łódzkiego” w latach 1898-1914 (Łódź: Księży Młyn Dom Wydawniczy, 2014).

²⁰ Żarnowska and Wolsza, *Spółeczeństwo i polityka*; Samuś, *Wasza kartka wyborcza jest silniejsza niż karabin, niż armata...*

²¹ Blobaum, *Rewolucja*, 286–87.

²² Scott Ury, *Barricades and Banners: The Revolution of 1905 and the Transformation of Warsaw Jewry* (Stanford University Press, 2012), 216.

different reasons, is that it was not the tragedy of popular participation, but rather the elite's reaction to it, which prevented civil society from “blossoming” and redirected popular anger against “the Jews”.²³

The post-revolutionary regression in civil activities can be explained neither by the unambiguously repressive nature of the tsarist regime, which relentlessly suppressed any emerging civic institutions, nor by the inherent incapacities of the Polish people. The tsarist administration was not the only agent frightened by the emerging self-determination of the people and the democratic surge. A reluctant and later hostile reaction to it was also harbored among propertied strata, growing nationalist milieus, and a significant part of the intelligentsia. The nationalists feared the revolution was carrying a Trojan horse, capable of destroying the true nation. It also questioned the procession of progress as envisioned by the liberal intelligentsia, which was ready to educate the masses but reluctant to accept their political agency. These dual effects triggered by the revolution, democratization and contraction, are important to note when tackling the conundrum of the changing political investigated here. They have not been, however, paid due attention in the existing scholarship.

Plural narratives of the revolution

Scholars have faced difficulties in squaring this revolution with any unidirectional narrative. Perhaps the main reason was indicated by the leading scholar of the topic, Abraham Ascher, who noted “the incredible complexity of the events that composed the upheaval and the ambiguity of the outcome of 1905”.²⁴ This complexity contributed to the swinging historiographical visibility of the revolution. From the onset, the events of 1905 were part and parcel of conflicted, partisan memory cultures.²⁵ Well-embedded in them, historians of interwar Poland tended to emphasize above all the

²³ Wiktor Marzec, “What Bears Witness of the Failed Revolution? The Rise of Political Antisemitism during the 1905–1907 Revolution in the Kingdom of Poland,” *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 30, no. 1 (2016): 189–213, doi:10.1177/0888325415581896.

²⁴ Abraham Ascher, “Interpreting 1905,” in *The Revolution of 1905 and Russia’s Jews*, ed. Stefani Hoffman and Ezra Mendelsohn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 15.

²⁵ The best literature review of Polish historiography of the 1905 Revolution is presented in Anna Żarnowska,

importance of 1905 for the creation of the Polish state after 1918. What accompanied such a presentation was an overestimation of the role played by the right-wing faction of the PPS and its leaders. They had been the closest to the insurrectionist goals and now occupied leading positions in the recreated Polish state. The correspondent historical writing was saturated with highly militarized imagery, stressing the quasi-tactical maneuvers of the party squads and resulting sacrifice. The chief protagonists of this genre usually ended on the tsarist gallows or in Siberian exile as heroic martyrs of the national cause.²⁶ The mass movement and its broad social impact were hardly considered.

The pendulum swung towards more class-oriented narration after the war. Amidst enthusiasm towards new socialist Poland, some attempts to examine the broader social impact of the revolution were undertaken.²⁷ They were abruptly abandoned when historiography began to stiffen into party-sponsored Stalinist orthodoxy. While class was stressed as an important line of division, there was no space left for an actual social analysis. Because SDKPiL was the party most closely affiliated with the Russian social democracy, it was anointed as an official ancestor of the present “communist” party, and now it was its role which was overestimated.²⁸ It took some time to loosen this stultifying grip and supplement the scarce reservoir of available primary sources.²⁹ Only from the 1960s onwards did scholars consider new types of sources and examine the impact of the revolution on broader groups

“Spojrzenie na rewolucję 1905 r. w polskiej historiografii - garść refleksji,” *Kwartalnik Historyczny* CXIII, no. 4 (2006): 59–94.

²⁶ For obvious reasons I will refer only to exemplary positions out of a bigger body of literature below. See Waław Lipiński, *Walka zbrojna o niepodległość Polski w latach 1905-1918* (Warszawa, 1931); Stanisław Martynowski, *Polska bojowa* (Łódź: Nakładem autora, 1937). There were notable exceptions, however, such as the studies of Adam Próchnik, see later writings later collected in Adam Próchnik, *Studia z dziejów polskiego ruchu robotniczego*, Pisma (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1958).

²⁷ A main example of a broader social approach is the presentation of 1905 in synthesis published in 1946, see Henryk Wereszycki, *Historia Polityczna Polski: 1864 - 1918*, Wyd. 2. krajowe, i roz. (Wrocław: Zakład Narod. Im. Ossoliń, 1990).

²⁸ Tadeusz Daniszewski, ed., *SDKPiL w rewolucji 1905 roku: zbiór publikacji* (Książka i Wiedza, 1955); Tadeusz Daniszewski, *Z dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 roku na ziemiach polskich: szkic popularnonaukowy* (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1955); Stanisław Kalabiński, *Antynarodowa polityka endecji w rewolucji 1905-1907* (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1955).

²⁹ Paweł Korzec, ed., *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 1* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1957); Paweł Korzec, ed., *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 2* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1958); Paweł Korzec, ed., *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 2* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1964); Natalia Gąsiorowska-Grabowska and Stanisław Kalabiński, eds., *Źródła do dziejów klasy robotniczej na ziemiach polskich*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1962).

of society than party members.³⁰ As a result, the scale of the mass movement and the corollary processes transforming culture and intellectual aspirations gained considerable attention. The revolution was, however, still presented above all as an important stepping stone for the “workers’ movement”. As the nationalist legitimization of the state had grown, the revolt was again reintegrated in the tradition of national insurrections – now, however, with a more empirically grounded awareness of the massive social base being a hotbed of the social and national movement alike.³¹ Summoning more empirical evidence was possible due to a significant effort in collecting, processing and publishing primary sources. Consequently, the 1970s and 1980s witnessed numerous studies of smaller scope, albeit incorporating new methodological sensitivities and exposing the multidimensional influence of the revolution for the Polish society and culture.³² The main lines of controversy were drawn. Opinions differed regarding the role of particular parties, relationships between leadership of the parties and rank and file members, and last but not least, interplay between the parties and the mass social movement.³³ Additional polemics concerned the participation of various social groups and the impact of the revolution among their members.³⁴ More theoretically-

³⁰ Anna Żarnowska, “Zasięg i wpływ PPS w przededniu rewolucji 1905 r.,” *Przegląd Historyczny* LXVII, no. 2 (1960): 351–85; Żarnowska, *Geneza rozłamu w Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej, 1904-1906*; Anna Żarnowska, “Klasa robotnicza Królestwa Polskiego w rewolucji 1905-1907,” *Z pola walki*, no. numer specjalny (1976): 61–77; Elżbieta Kaczyńska, *Dzieje robotników przemysłowych w Polsce pod zaborami* (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1970).

³¹ An important early attempt to navigate between those two poles is a book explicitly asking if it was a “fourth uprising” or a “first revolution”, Kalabiński and Tych, *Czwarte powstanie czy pierwsza rewolucja. Lata 1905-1907 na ziemiach polskich*.

³² Władysław L. Karwacki, *Związki zawodowe i stowarzyszenia pracodawców w Łodzi (do roku 1914)*. (Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1972); Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*; Żarnowska, “Rewolucja 1905-1907 a aktywizacja polityczna klasy robotniczej Królestwa Polskiego”; Żarnowska, “Klasa robotnicza Królestwa Polskiego w rewolucji 1905-1907.”

³³ The literature on political parties is presented in detail in Chapter 1; for the question of party-masses interaction see Elżbieta Kaczyńska, “Tłum i margines społeczny w wydarzeniach rewolucyjnych (Królestwo Polskie 1904-1907),” *Dzieje Najnowsze* 15, no. 1–2 (1983): 221–30; Elżbieta Kaczyńska, “Partie polityczne a masowy ruch robotniczy,” *Przegląd Historyczny*, no. 1–2 (1990): 125–38.

³⁴ This concerned above all the mobilization of peasants, see Jan Molenda, *Chłopi, naród, niepodległość: kształtowanie się postaw narodowych i obywatelskich chłopów w Galicji i Królestwie Polskim w przededniu odrodzenia Polski* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 1999). Also the actual involvement of the intelligentsia and their political choices were scrutinized, see Józef Miąso, *Uniwersytet dla Wszystkich* (Warszawa: Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1960); Andrzej Szware, “Rewolucja 1905 roku na ziemiach polskich. Refleksje o historiografii i postawach inteligenckich elit,” *Artes Liberales. Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Humanistycznej im. Aleksandra Gieysztora* 1, no. 1 (2006): 25–36; Micińska, *Dzieje inteligencji polskiej do roku 1918*; Andrzej Mencwel, *Etos lewicy: esej o narodzinach kulturalizmu polskiego*, Wyd. 2 (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo “Krytyki Politycznej,” 2009). The literary and cultural resonance of the revolution was scrutinized separately among literary scholars, see Maria Janion, ed., *Literatura polska wobec rewolucji* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971).

sound contributions were slowly germinating but could not come to full fruition.

Interesting attempts such as comparisons within European labor history, or contextualizations within historical sociology of revolutions and mass movements, were abruptly aborted in new historical circumstances.³⁵ The reasons were the political turmoil and renationalization of historiographical priorities after 1989. In later years, interest in the topic was only sporadically revived. The endeavors in social history lost momentum and yet again historical process was limited to single dates of insurrections and an elite-led history of diplomacy.³⁶ Luckily, the earlier partial findings and the emerging critical reflection on social significance of the revolution did not remain fruitless. It was not in Poland, however, where those fruits ripened.

Previous research was skillfully used in the path-breaking synthesis by Robert Blobaum, which till today remains the main book on the Polish Revolution. Blobaum contextualizes 1905 broadly, demonstrating its overarching impact on politics, culture, and social relationships. From the urban working class, to peasants struggling for national and language rights, to the Catholic Church, the revolution marked entrance into the modern world with political constituencies, labor associations, germinating civic institutions and modern repertoires of conflict. I am pleased to admit my indebtedness to this approach. My aim, however, is to avoid the unilinear narrative about a (failed)

³⁵ For instance Żarnowska dropped the idea for a broader comparison of the material presented in Anna Żarnowska, *Robotnicy Warszawy na przełomie XIX i XX wieku* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1985). Some attempts were presented in Jürgen Kocka and Elizabeth Muller-Luckner, eds., *Arbeiter und Bürger im 19. Jahrhundert: Varianten ihres Verhältnisses im europäischen Vergleich* (München: Oldenbourg, 1986); Anna Żarnowska, *Workers, Women, and Social Change in Poland, 1870-1939* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004). Sociological theorization emerged in works of Elżbieta Kaczyńska, see Elżbieta Kaczyńska and Zbigniew .W. Rykowski, *Przemoc zbiorowa: ruch masowy: rewolucja* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1990). An important study on political culture was published with a large delay, Żarnowska and Wolsza, *Spółczesność i polityka*.

³⁶ A telling example is a general synthesis Andrzej Chwalba, *Historia Polski: 1795-1918* (Kraków: Wydawn. Literackie, 2000). Its author had been a pertinent student of this topic (for instance Andrzej Chwalba, *Sacrum i rewolucja: socjaliści polscy wobec praktyk i symboli religijnych, 1870-1918* (Kraków: Universitas, 1992). There were also exceptions – usually revivals of the topic authored by its older students, see for instance articles in edited volumes Marek Przeniosło and Stanisław Wiech, eds., *Rewolucja 1905-1907 w Królestwie Polskim i w Rosji* (Kielce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej, 2005); Krzysztof Stepnik and Monika Gabrys, eds., *Rewolucja lat 1905-1907: literatura - publicystyka - ikonografia* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2005); Anna Żarnowska, ed., *Dziedzictwo rewolucji 1905-1907* (Warszawa - Radom: Muzeum Niepodległości, 2007). Newer studies on political culture include Samuś, *Wasza kartka wyborcza jest silniejsza niż karabin, niż armata...*, a popularizing publication Wiktor Marzec and Kamil Piskala, eds., *Rewolucja 1905. Przewodnik* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo "Krytyki Politycznej," 2013). and my own Wiktor Marzec, *Rebelia i reakcja. Rewolucja 1905 roku i plebejskie doświadczenie polityczne* (Kraków; Łódź: Universitas; Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2016).

civic modernization, and examine in depth the conflicted political imagination of class. I will return to these incentives below.

Such an aim cannot be pursued when the story of the revolution is staged within a *mise-en-scène* of methodological nationalism. Thus, the knowledge regarding Russian Poland is also significantly supplemented from within Jewish studies and inquiries into the national question on tsarist borderlands, especially by studies of Theodore Weeks.³⁷ It is even more important because in much Polish research the multi-ethnic context with its potentials and frictions was often sidelined. For instance, the powerful transformation of the Polish-Jewish relationships did not figure in the picture with due significance. Attempts to placate this omission, however, easily fell victim to *quid pro quo*. For instance, in *Barricades and Banners*, a book otherwise close in topic and approach to my study, Scott Ury deals with the Warsaw Jewry.³⁸ This is not only the topic but also a methodology of sorts. The focus on a particular group and field (Jewish studies) disavows the social tensions within the group. The result is a book on the 1905 Revolution with very little investigation of class despite the fact that Jewish revolutionaries were revolting not only because of being uprooted from their communities by “discontents of modernity”, but precisely because of class- and status-based grievances. These hardships were multiplied rather than dissolved by their Jewish heritage, as Inna Shtakser argues regarding a slightly different context.³⁹ Nevertheless, all these contributions provide not only a supplementary picture of the growing Polish-Jewish conflict, but deliver interesting material for comparison of general processes of political mobilization.

³⁷ Theodore R. Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism: the “Jewish Question” in Poland, 1850-1914* (DeKalb, Ill: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006); Theodore R. Weeks, “1905 as a Watershed in Polish-Jewish Relations,” in *The Revolution of 1905 and Russia’s Jews*, ed. Stefani Hoffman and Ezra Mendelsohn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 128–41; Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier; 1863 - 1914* (DeKalb, Ill: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 2008); From other authors, see also Stephen D. Corrsin, *Warsaw before the First World War: Poles and Jews in the Third City of the Russian Empire, 1880-1914* (Boulder; New York: East European Monographs; Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1989); Joshua D Zimmerman, *Poles, Jews, and the Politics of Nationality the Bund and the Polish Socialist Party in Late Tsarist Russia, 1892-1914* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

³⁸ Ury, *Barricades and Banners*.

³⁹ Although this work deals with other areas of the Russian empire in terms of approach to the militant subjectivity, it is also of much relevance for some aspects of the study presented here. Inna Shtakser, *The Making of Jewish Revolutionaries in the Pale of Settlement: Community and Identity during the Russian Revolution and Its Immediate Aftermath, 1905-1907* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

Comparison is also possible thanks to works on Russia. Here, however, also negotiating the position of the Polish in 1905 within the broader Russian story is troublesome. As it is clearly visible from the reconstruction above, some of the Polish polemics are parallel to those within the historiography of the Russian Revolution. This parallelism encompasses above all controversies about the role of the socialist parties in spurring on the mass working class movement.⁴⁰ While some historians bent over backwards so as to provide evidence regarding an alleged Bolshevik usurpation of power over unprepared and not really politicized masses,⁴¹ more sociologically-oriented scholarship was able to successfully demonstrate the actually existing and politically-sound working class militancy in Russia.⁴² The major contributions on 1905 Russia in general tend to agree that the labor movement was indeed significantly present. It was, however, a broader myriad of forces which opposed the tsarist autocracy, including the liberal opposition, workers, peasants, soldiers and national minorities.⁴³ Only more detailed works detected the tensions within the Russian society, often pitted as unanimous opposition against the tsarist autocracy.⁴⁴ Moreover, when the scholarly

⁴⁰ I am able to briefly review here only the English-speaking scholarship, leaving aside the Russian and German ones. Including them, with all their due specificities, indigenous developments and controversies would stretch even the most generous limits of patience among readers. For a synthetic presentation of trends within the Russian body of literature, see Ascher, "Interpreting 1905."

⁴¹ For instance Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991); Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891-1924* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1996). See also commentary on the intersection of political commitments and explanatory narrative in Lars T. Lih, "1905 and All That: The Revolution and Its Aftermath," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 8, no. 4 (2007): 861-76, doi:10.1353/kri.2007.0055.

⁴² An early attempt to record the history of the parties as closely interrelated with the actual working class politics is Allan K. Wildman, *The Making of a Workers' Revolution: Russian Social Democracy, 1891-1903* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1967). Later works in this vein are in the realm of labor history proper: Laura Engelstein, *Moscow, 1905: Working-Class Organization and Political Conflict* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1982); Victoria E. Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion: Workers' Politics and Organizations in St. Petersburg and Moscow, 1900-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Gerald Dennis. Surh, *1905 in St. Petersburg: Labor, Society, and Revolution* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1989). A broader social-historical analysis of economy and social forces, with emphasis on labor conflict, is presented in Tim McDaniel, *Autocracy, Capitalism, and Revolution in Russia* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1988).

⁴³ This implicitly confirms Blobaum's thesis about the larger significance of the working class protest in Poland than in Russia proper, which was mentioned at the beginning of this introduction. An early attempt for synthesis goes as far as to accept the opposition of "two Russias" (state vs. society) only with minor restrictions, see Sydney Harcave, *First Blood: The Russian Revolution of 1905* (London; New York: Macmillan, 1964). Later and better documented work is more nuanced but also essentially pits autocracy against multiple and uncoordinated but oppositional social drive, see Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1988). A review of historical positions was presented in Ascher, "Interpreting 1905." A critique of this approach and alternative systematization of existing paradigms, see Lih, "1905 and All That: The Revolution and Its Aftermath."

⁴⁴ I mean here above all the works on the Russian right such as Hans Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Don C. Rawson, *Russian Rightists and the Revolution of 1905*, Cambridge Russian, Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies 95 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). With much benefit for this study, the ambiguities of the working class politics were explored in works dealing with pogrom-

attention moved towards cultural history of labor, subjective motivations and intellectual cultures of militant workers were also examined.⁴⁵ In sum, however, not only was the configuration of forces different than in Poland, as indicated at the beginning of this introduction, but the Russian or imperial political sphere was perpetuated by quite different dynamics regarding the national principle, and also, here of a greater importance, the envisioning of class in politics. Hence, the rising tensions and their mediation were also divergent. Furthermore, the active political parties were also not the same. Apart from the Jewish Bund, present all over the empire, Russian parties were not operating in Poland. With the short-lived exception of the SDKPiL joining the federation, the attempts to federate Polish socialists with the pan-Russian social-democracy failed.⁴⁶ While it is important to consider the 1905 Polish Revolution as entangled in the broader Russian conjuncture, it was nevertheless a process with different dynamics, actors, and outcomes. Consequently, the contributions in Russian history were for me a source of inspiration and comparative material, but did not provide direct insights into the problems I investigate.

Against the backdrop of all this literature, the positioning of my contribution is twofold: (1) I ask about the inherent tension and negotiation taking place on many levels within one language-based political community of the tsarist borderlands. Thus, I do not posit the antagonism between, on the

haunted regions, see Robert Weinberg, *The Revolution of 1905 in Odessa: Blood on the Steps* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Charters Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992). Important remarks on double polarization of Russian society, between autocracy and opposition to it but also between the liberal opposition and popular classes, were made in Leopold Haimson, "The Problem of Social Stability in Urban Russia, 1905-1917 (Part One)," *Slavic Review* 23, no. 4 (1964): 619–42, doi:10.2307/2492201; Leopold Haimson, "The Problem of Social Stability in Urban Russia, 1905-1917 (Part Two)," *Slavic Review* 24, no. 1 (1965): 1–22, doi:10.2307/2492986.

⁴⁵ Above all see newer contributions such as Shtakser, *The Making of Jewish Revolutionaries in the Pale of Settlement*; Deborah Lee Pearl, *Creating a Culture of Revolution: Workers and the Revolutionary Movement in Late Imperial Russia* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2015). Smaller but interesting studies were also included in recent edited volumes on revolution, see Jon Smele and Anthony Heywood, eds., *The Russian Revolution of 1905: Centenary Perspectives* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005); Felicitas Fischer von Weikersthal, ed., *The Russian Revolution of 1905 in Transcultural Perspective: Identities, Peripheries, and the Flow of Ideas* (Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica Publishers, 2013).

⁴⁶ On SDKPiL merger see Georg W. Strobel, *Die Partei Rosa Luxemburgs, Lenin und die SPD: der polnische* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1974). On 1905 and the transformation of the Russian social democracy see Salomon .M. Schwarz, *The Russian Revolution of 1905*, trans. G. Vakár (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1967). For information about Bund see Henry Jack Tobias, *The Jewish Bund in Russia from Its Origins to 1905* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1972); Zimmerman, *Poles, Jews, and the Politics of Nationality the Bund and the Polish Socialist Party in Late Tsarist Russia, 1892-1914*.

one hand, the suppressed people with their democratizing drive, and on the other, the tsarist autocracy, as being a singular one. (2) While examining the circumstances that shaped the nascent modern political thinking, speaking, and actions in respect to the working class, I rescale the focus and partially enter into new terrain. Whereas I draw from research on political culture and social modernization whenever appropriate, I am more interested in the transformation and struggle over political imagination that is gauging default relationships between social groups, and assumed regime delimiting their political action and participation. In addition, this allows me to see the revolution through the lenses of broader European trajectories of the modern transformation of the political sphere. Further explorations of the internal tensions marking these trajectories are now in order.

The conflict within

The modern transformation of European polities concerned democratization, citizenship and legitimacy of class-based claims. Their generalization was, however, often followed by contraction, grounded in reaction of particular political agents but also in broader social counter-tendency to seek order after the old foundations had been shaken. This dual dynamic influenced the patterns of emerging national public spheres. As Geoff Eley remarks, “the emergence of a bourgeois public was never defined solely by the struggle against absolutism and traditional authority, but addressed the problem of popular containment as well. The public sphere was always constituted by conflict.”⁴⁷ Accommodating the rising working class within the modern polity was one of the more serious challenges which the European political systems of the 19th century had to face. At the same time, it was a major drive for their encroaching democratization on the institutional, social and imaginary level, as Eley documents elsewhere.⁴⁸ The occurring changes stirred up conflict and often only an

⁴⁷ Geoff Eley, “Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig J. Calhoun, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1992).

⁴⁸ See, respectively, Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy. The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Beverly J. Silver, *Forces of Labor: Workers' Movements and Globalization since 1870* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Robert Castel, *From Manual Workers to Wage Laborers:*

intense social protest was able to move things forward.

The limits of the political was a major stake in this conflict. It defined the realm of the debatable and the set of legitimate claimants. It was the working class who opposed the strongholds of the *ancien régime* which had merged with new bourgeois hegemony often reluctant and fearsome of any concessions.⁴⁹ Consequently, working class formation, coherent class action and labor political identities were crucial factors for the outcome of this confrontation.⁵⁰ At the same time, changes in regimes of the political were crucial for the formation of the working class, and hence its recognition as a political actor.⁵¹ In a modified, but not so divergent, sense “every class struggle is a political struggle”, as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels announced in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.⁵² In this social-political vortex the social question concerning economic well-being was closely knitted with the admittance of the political citizenship for workers. As historical sociologist, Reinhard Bendix explains:

The workers organize in order to attain that level of economic reward to which they feel entitled. (...) These practical achievements of trade unions have a far-reaching effect upon the status of workers as citizens. For through collective bargaining the right to combine is used to assert “basic claims to the elements of social justice”. In this way the extension of citizenship to the lower classes is given the very special meaning that as citizens the members of these classes are “entitled” to a certain standard of well-being, in return for which they are only obliged to discharge the ordinary duties of citizenship.⁵³

Transformation of the Social Question (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003); Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Public Planet Books (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁴⁹ Marc Mulholland, *Bourgeois Liberty and the Politics of Fear: From Absolutism to Neo-Conservatism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁵⁰ Ira Katznelson and Aristide R. Zolberg, eds., *Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1986); Jürgen Kocka, *Arbeiterleben und Arbeiterkultur: die Entstehung einer sozialen Klasse* (Bonn: Dietz, 2015); Marcel van der Linden and Jürgen Rojahn, eds., *The Formation of Labour Movements, 1870-1914: An International Perspective* (Leiden ; New York: Brill, 1990); Marcel van der Linden, “The National Integration of the European Working Class,” in *Workers of the World: Essays toward a Global Labor History* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2008).

⁵¹ McDaniel, *Autocracy, Capitalism, and Revolution in Russia*; William Sewell, “Uneven Development, the Autonomy of Politics and the Radicalization of Workers,” in *The Industrial Revolution and Work in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Lenard R. Berlanstein, *Rewriting Histories* (London, [England] ; New York: Routledge, 1992); Kocka, *Arbeiterleben und Arbeiterkultur: die Entstehung einer sozialen Klasse*.

⁵² Originally, this statement comes from the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, in: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1975).

⁵³ Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship: Studies of Our Changing Social Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 104. See also Barrington Moore, *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt* (White Plains, NY: Sharpe, 1978).

This admittance proceeded differently within various national or imperial polities. Often it faced powerful opposition and counter-blows executed also by the liberal proponents of individual rights. Once opposed to the old autocracies, they nevertheless rejected the collective entitlement and political agency of workers, embarking on “politics of fear”, as Marc Mulholland calls it.⁵⁴ According to Victoria Bonnell, however, “the two battles – for the civil rights and for the collective rights of labor – had been fought (...) simultaneously in Russia during the 1905 revolution and workers played a leading part in advancing both claims”,⁵⁵ elsewhere often made sequentially. As a result, the middle strata of the entire empire with all their regional specificities were initially much more saturated with radical ideas and prone to support working class revolutionary fervor than in Western Europe.⁵⁶ The conflict, and the class struggle from above, came later, not unlike in other instances of European history.⁵⁷ The configuration of forces was, however, quite different. It was from within popular constituencies that many actual incentives to reform came. Nevertheless, the working class public activities were not well-integrated in the liberal political culture of the scarce but influential, bourgeois sociality.⁵⁸ Thus, they faced resistance, present also on the fringes of the Russian Empire,

⁵⁴ Mulholland, *Bourgeois Liberty and the Politics of Fear*; Domenico Losurdo, *Liberalism: A Counter-History*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London; New York: Verso, 2014). On general matrix of separation of publics, see Craig J. Calhoun, *The Roots of Radicalism: Tradition, the Public Sphere, and Early Nineteenth-Century Social Movements* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2012). Comparative studies may be found in Jürgen Kocka, “Die Trennung die bürgerliche und proletarianische Demokratie in europäischen Vergleich. Fragestellungen und Ergebnisse,” in *Europäische Arbeiterbewegungen im 19. Jahrhundert : Deutschland, Österreich, England und Frankreich im Vergleich*, ed. Jürgen Kocka (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck Ruprecht, 1983); Kocka and Muller-Luckner, *Arbeiter und Bürger im 19. Jahrhundert: Varianten ihres Verhältnisses im europäischen Vergleich*; Christiane Eisenberg, “Working Class and Middle Class Associations: An Anglo-German Comparison 1820-1870,” in *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Jürgen Kocka and Allen Mitchell (Oxford: Berg, 1993). It is also argued that the main line of division here is decisive. When working class politics was directed against the state, a broad union-party front was formed (Germany). If the main addressees were factory owners and there were hopes for state cooperation, a non-political labor movement triumphed (England). See Katznelson and Zolberg, *Working-Class Formation*, 28.

⁵⁵ Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion*, 448. More on autocratic capitalism and its impact on state-labor relations see McDaniel, *Autocracy, Capitalism, and Revolution in Russia*.

⁵⁶ Alfred J. Rieber, “The Sedimentary Society,” in *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia*, ed. Edith W. Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow, and James L. West (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1991), 353.

⁵⁷ Mulholland, *Bourgeois Liberty and the Politics of Fear*; Ralph Miliband, “Class Struggle from Above,” in *Social Theory and Social Criticism: Essays for Tom Bottomore*, ed. Michael Mulvey and William Outhwaite, Modern Revivals in Sociology (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

⁵⁸ Surh, *1905 in St. Petersburg: Labor, Society, and Revolution*.

where seemingly the national question might unify various contenders against the tsarist autocracy.

While the presence of the “foreign autocracy” concealed important tensions within the Polish polity, it did not render them obsolete. The revolution with all its corollaries was a pivotal moment in the transformation of the political in Russian Poland. The strained negotiation of the working-class presence in the public sphere epitomized the aforementioned dynamic of democratization and contraction but also internal conflicts and limitations of the forces pitted against old monarchical order. Correspondingly, this study is intended to bring these heterogeneous forces to light and complicate the picture of European democratization and contraction, or revolution and reaction. The imperial situation of Eastern Europe, additionally marked by the national self-assertion of imperial subjects, supplements the findings regarding the strained negotiations of the working-class presence within the national polities of Western Europe.

The Polish public sphere underwent a severe transformation encompassing the renegotiation of the age-old nobility's hegemony. Unlike the entrenched landed elites of the ready-made nation states, the Polish elites could not postulate a neat separation from the people or preach their own interests as the embodiment of universal reason. The 18th century implosion of the Polish Lithuanian-Commonwealth leading to the collapse of Polish statehood and the broadly acknowledged “degeneration” of the Polish nobles' political culture had effectively prevented them from retaking the reigns of national leadership. The modern economic transformation and political repression after the January uprising in 1863 further unseated them from their privileged status. Thus, by the turn of the century, landed elites were put under pressure by the imperial administration and lost credibility among their co-nationals. Industrial bourgeoisie was still scarce and widely perceived as foreign. Urban elites in turn had just begun a process of self assertion in philanthropy and could only make a rather weak attempt at social and urban reforms.⁵⁹ They were too detached from the state to take the lead, and only later could they get involved in the internal conflict with the new contenders. The self-

⁵⁹ Kamil Śmiechowski, “Searching for a Better City: An Urban Discourse during the Revolution of 1905 in the Kingdom of Poland,” *Praktyka Teoretyczna*, no. 3(13) (2014), doi:10.14746/pt.2014.3.4.

proclaimed leader of the Polish society was the intelligentsia, a particular social strata usually composed of the educated offspring of the derailed gentry and neither a bourgeois intellectual elite nor a professional middle-class.⁶⁰ Putting into practice their ethos of social service, they were quite aware of the fact that in order to think about any national revival, they needed to get the popular classes on board. The question was on what conditions, in which direction, and how the new crew would behave if confronted with the rough sea of modern politics.⁶¹

When the benign assumptions about “the people” were challenged, the progressive alliance of the intelligentsia and the popular classes appeared to be a fragile one. In Russian Poland, state policing was even harsher than in Russia, which prevented any “decent” citizen from conspiring with the militant workers. The same concerned those workers who would be willing to embark on any open conversation with the urban elites. Apart from this, there were hardly any developed patterns of bourgeoisie sociality to be imitated and joined by the workers.⁶² Moreover, the state was not a viable addressee of any claims possibly forged in negotiation and supported by other social groups. Had such mediation been possible, the search for support among progressive bourgeoisie would have possibly boosted the incentives for political moderation.⁶³ Simultaneously, the “foreign” tsarist regime inhibited any practical political action within the framework of the state and the accompanying

⁶⁰ Janusz Żarnowski, *State, Society and Intelligentsia: Modern Poland and Its Regional Context* (Aldershot, Hampshire ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate/Variorum, 2003); Andrzej Walicki, *Polish Conceptions of the Intelligentsia and Its Calling* (Department of East and Central European Studies, 2006); Micińska, *Dzieje inteligencji polskiej do roku 1918*.

⁶¹ I have developed this line of argumentation in Wiktor Marzec and Kamil Śmiechowski, “Pathogenesis of the Polish Public Sphere. Intelligentsia and Popular Unrest in the 1905 Revolution and After,” *Polish Sociological Review*, no. 4 (2016).

⁶² As stressed in research on well-formed labor movements and accompanying institutions, see Kocka, *Arbeiterleben und Arbeiterkultur: die Entstehung einer sozialen Klasse*, chap. 6; Thomas Welskopp, *Das Banner der Brüderlichkeit: die deutsche Sozialdemokratie vom Vormärz bis zum Sozialistengesetz* (Bonn: Dietz, 2000); William Sewell, “Artisans, Factory Workers, and the Formation of the French Working Class, 1789-1849,” in *Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1986).

⁶³ As for instance happened in England with radicals successfully petitioning the parliament and actively looking for political alliances. See John Breuilly, “Civil society and the labor movement, class relations and the law. A comparison between Germany and England,” in *Arbeiter und Bürger im 19. Jahrhundert: Varianten ihres Verhältnisses im europäischen Vergleich*, ed. Jürgen Kocka and Elizabeth Muller-Luckner (München: Oldenbourg, 1986). On complex processes of polemical dialogue, renegotiation of moral economy and building alliances in England, see also Marc W. Steinberg, *Fighting Words: Working-Class Formation, Collective Action, and Discourse in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1999).

modes of reasoning. As a result, a quasi-utopian radicalism and unrealistic imaginations about popular politics nourished debates of the intelligentsia and the liberal salon. This further detached it from the political way of thinking,⁶⁴ perhaps much more than in the Western context of earlier opposition against the absolutist state⁶⁵ or even in the context of Russia proper under the Tsar.⁶⁶ All this created a power vacuum under and against the autocratic state. This evacuated space was reoccupied by the industrial working class, which, regardless of its insular presence, defined the situation to a much larger extent than in Russia.⁶⁷ This, however, did not remain unanswered by other social strata, fearful about the overall destabilization of the social order.

This constellation of the state, labor movement, civil society, and changing social structure renders the case of Russian Poland particularly helpful in exploring patterns of European democratization. It is even more so because, so far, it has typically been overlooked in otherwise well-informed comparisons.⁶⁸ The reason was perhaps its peculiar, intermediary and sub-state status or the aforementioned binary imagination unanimously pitting autocracy against the democratizing society. The long inhibited modern transformation combined with uneven yet high-paced industrialization made the 1905 Revolution a much more revealing, intensified confrontation than those known elsewhere. Thus, it is a “laboratory” case allowing one to shed light on dynamics and tensions accompanying the emergence of modern mass politics and admitting workers within the assumed political community. The political as an analytical concept within historical sociology allows me to put these pieces together.

⁶⁴ Michael Freeden, *The Political Theory of Political Thinking: The Anatomy of a Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁶⁵ Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society*, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1988).

⁶⁶ Joseph Bradley, “Subjects into Citizens: Societies, Civil Society, and Autocracy in Tsarist Russia,” *American Historical Review* 107, no. 4 (2002): 1094–1123; Arndt Bauerkämper, ed., *Die Praxis der Zivilgesellschaft: Akteure, Handeln und Strukturen im internationalen Vergleich*, 1. Aufl. (Frankfurt [u.a.]: Campus-Verl., 2003).

⁶⁷ For comparison of the relative “weight” of working class protest in Poland and Russia, see Blobaum, *Rewolucja*; Harcave, *First Blood: The Russian Revolution of 1905*; Teodor Shanin, *The Roots of Otherness: Russia’s Turn of Century. Revolution as a Moment of Truth: Russia, 1905 - 07* (Basingstoke, Hampshire u.a: Macmillan, 1986); Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905: A Short History* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004).

⁶⁸ For instance: Gary P. Steenson, *After Marx, Before Lenin Marxism and Socialist Working-Class Parties in Europe, 1884-1914* (Pittsburgh; Chicago: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991); Eley, *Forging Democracy. The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000*.

The political – a historically changing communicative space

In recent political philosophy, the concept of the political has gained significant prominence. The political is considered irreducible to the empirical domain of politics as its “absent” (or “quasi-transcendental”) ground.⁶⁹ Thus, the political “assumes primacy over the social and now indicates the very moment of institution/destitution of society” – as Oliver Marchart explains⁷⁰ – that is it signifies the principle of integration of the body politic and the domain where it may be questioned. As one of the core proponents of this move, Claude Lefort further clarifies:

[The political] appears in the sense that the process whereby society is ordered and unified across its divisions becomes visible. It is obscured in the sense that the locus of politics (the locus in which parties compete and in which a general agency of power takes shape and is reproduced) becomes defined as particular, while the principle which generates the overall configuration is concealed.⁷¹

While some figures in this once vivid debate aim at “ontological” if not normative renewal or reassertion of the political against politics,⁷² the perspective assumed here seeks to historicize the appearances of the political as culturally and historically reproduced in the symbolic domain of communication.⁷³ While I retain interest in the “process whereby society is ordered and unified across its divisions”, the political is defined as a historically variable communicative space made up of

⁶⁹ Also the scholarship on political thinking surpasses politics as a positively delimitable domain. See Freeden, *The Political Theory of Political Thinking*.

⁷⁰ Oliver Marchart, *Post-Foundational Political Thought: Political Difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Laclau* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 49.

⁷¹ Claude Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press in association with Basil Blackwell, Oxford, UK, 1988), 11. As another key figure of this debate, Ernesto Laclau, states: “the moment of original institution of the social is the point at which its contingency is revealed, since that institution, as we have seen, is only possible through the repression of options that were equally open”. Consequently, “[t]he moment of antagonism where the undecidable nature of the alternatives and their resolution through power relations becomes fully visible constitutes the field of the ‘political’”, Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (London ; New York: Verso, 1990), 34–35.

⁷² Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political, Thinking in Action* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005); Marchart, *Post-Foundational Political Thought*.

⁷³ Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, ed., *Was heißt Kulturgeschichte des Politischen?* (Berlin: Berlin : Duncker & Humblot, 2005).

practices, symbols and discourses, regulating the mode of this unification. The general objective of the corresponding research practice is to explore how spaces and representations of the political have changed through continuous processes of redefinition and re-enactment.

In the broader historical lineage, the modern political was forged as a particular nexus of power and communication, remaining in the vortex of state, law, civil society, the public sphere and other, more tangible institutional forms, such as parliaments or monarchical settings.⁷⁴ Partially because of such depiction of the problem, governments, monarchs, parties, or parliaments, and the activities related to these agents attract the bulk of attention in the existing research.⁷⁵ My study addresses this lacuna by deliberately refocusing toward the more dispersed regimes of class-based political visibility and agency. To tackle the problem, the approach proposed by Willibald Steinmetz and Gerhard Haupt is of much help. They propose:

to study the political as a communicative sphere that is subject to substantial variation in space and time, across different cultures, and in the course of world history. (...) the main objective is to historicize the political itself – the political as a contested concept for one, but, what is more, as a distinct form of human communicative activity conducive to establishing a specific sphere, the political sphere, distinguishable from various other spheres: the religious, the legal, the economic, the scientific, the artistic, and so on.⁷⁶

The emergence of these communicative spheres needs to be investigated as a contingent process. Boundaries between them and their shape or internal structuration are not stable in time. Therefore, a major issue is to explore the changing demarcations of the political, concerning the processes of

⁷⁴ Reinhard Blänkner, “Historizität, Institutionalisierung, Symbolizität. Grundbegriffliche Aspekte einer Kulturgeschichte des Politischen,” in *Was heißt Kulturgeschichte des Politischen?*, ed. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2005). Core synthetic contributions in this broader debate are Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick G Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989); Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*; Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, *Civil Society, 1750-1914*, Studies in European History (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

⁷⁵ Willibald Steinmetz and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, “Introduction. The political as communicative space in history. The Bielefeld approach,” ed. Willibald Steinmetz, Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (Frankfurt a. M. [u.a.]: Campus, 2013), 20.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 21–22.

boundary drawing between the political and other spheres.⁷⁷ In this particular context, my aim is to investigate the paramount transformation affecting the indirect corollaries of the political regime. Thus, I do not deal that much with parliament, the legal setting or the attitude of the state to civil society (albeit these problems lurk in the background). Instead, I focus on the tiered or layered structure of the political as a communicative space, variably accessible for various social groups, and representing them in a patterned manner. The reason for this is threefold: (1) it is an important under-researched dimension of the emergence of the modern political; (2) in Russian Poland the change in the political bringing forth its modern form affected precisely this aspect, and not so much the state structure; (3) the change was stimulated on the streets and during political mass meetings and not in parliament for the simple reason that there was none. The state Duma created during the revolution was a place of debate on pan-Russian politics and national autonomy but not on the problem investigated here. My focus, therefore, is the contingent process of reordering and reunifying society in respect to class and nation, through a revolutionary dislocation. The fierce struggle for its outcome was waged to a large extent within the public sphere.

In particular, I am interested in the transformation of the public sphere by insurgent alternative sub-spheres, new political practices and modes of participation. Inasmuch as the public sphere is – in the seminal depiction of Jürgen Habermas – the “sphere which mediates between society and state, in which the public organizes itself as the bearer of public opinion”,⁷⁸ I am interested in practices of participation of different social groups, and processes of forming public opinion regarding those groups. Customarily, the educated, decent, burgher constituencies assuming the mantle of the general social representation in the face of the state apparatus were placed at the center. Here, on the contrary, they are of interest only inasmuch as they evolve in terms of their social composition and react against new contenders raising their claims from the revolutionary street.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 22.

⁷⁸ Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article,” in *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader*, ed. Jostein Gripsrud and Martin Eide (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), 115.

At the same time, the midpoint of my interest is the Polish public sphere, seen as a realm of political reasoning, discussion and practice, “in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk”, to borrow the apt nutshell definition by Nancy Fraser.⁷⁹ Thus, I limit this exploration to Polish language material constituting the field of effective inter-discourse and interaction.⁸⁰ This decision may appear problematic when facing a multi-language imperial context and transnational and global academic incentives. This limitation notwithstanding, I do not assert that the polity being envisioned in this sphere had stable borders. On the contrary, the intersection of class and ethnicity was often played out in order to police these borders and secure stabilization of the national body politic. For instance, as it will be revealed later, the class-based claims were delegitimized as not appropriately Polish. At the same time, however, class mobilization might acquire undertones of national self-assertion. The class and national elements were played out in different proportions both within the shop floor politics and highly nuanced theoretical approaches saddled between “nationalism and Marxism”, to borrow Timothy Snyder's wording.⁸¹ The focus on single language-based communicative space enables me to read those tensions from within, and uncover layered cultural imaginaries or history of particular concepts active in shaping the debate. It gives me a chance to focus on social rifts within the contested polity and the inner struggle, defining the political.

Having said that, I ascertain this particular case to be particularly revealing when the relationship between the political and the nation state is considered. The modern political in the Euro-centric sense developed inseparably of the “post-Westphalian” state order. Important in this context

⁷⁹ Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Social Text*, no. 25/26 (1990): 56, doi:10.2307/466240; see also Gerard A. Hauser, “Vernacular Dialogue and the Rhetoricity of Public Opinion,” *Communication Monographs* 65, no. 2 (1998): 83–107, doi:10.1080/03637759809376439.

⁸⁰ This does mean, however, that it does not include elements referring to different national or ethnic groups. It is worth noting that language differentiation only partially overlapped with ethnic or national divisions, often blurred and hybrid. This decision is motivated by the economy of research and capacities to compare and trace the process of change, and not in any assumption about boundaries of identity. Thus, for instance leaflets in Polish directed to Polish-speaking German or Jewish workers, or their biographical testimonies were not excluded from the corpus.

⁸¹ Timothy Snyder, *Nationalism, Marxism, and Modern Central Europe: A Biography of Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, 1872-1905*, Harvard Papers in Ukrainian Studies (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997); Andrzej Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of “Western Marxism”* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1989); Wiktor Marzec, “Reading Polish Peripheral Marxism Politically,” *Thesis Eleven* 117, no. 1 (August 7, 2013): 6–19, doi:10.1177/0725513613493992.

is a remark by Chiara Bottici, who notes that:

the success of a definition of politics that reduces it to the state is inseparable from the fact that it clearly reflected the change occurring in political life itself: it is because of the emergence of the modern state – a form of political community characterized by the sovereign monopoly over legitimate coercion within territorial boundaries – that people felt the need for a new word.⁸²

Such an entanglement weighted heavily on the ongoing delimitation of the political, and even more so in conditions of an external state structure. Within empire-states, insurgent national claims were combined with re-appropriation of the conceptual and practical inventions regarding the political initially emerging elsewhere. The political was defined and performed not within the state but partially against it. This opposition not only affected patterns of political reasoning and practice in respect to the state but also those concerning contenders from below. For instance, it influenced the shape of Polish nationalism, which “began to hate” – to paraphrase Brian Porter-Szűcs’ apt expression – because of being funneled into the ethnic, and not civic, framing.⁸³ Its later vitriolic ethnic exclusivity was also perpetuated by the particular confrontation with the masses on the revolutionary streets in 1905 and the inability to endorse the state as a principle of order. Furthermore, the sub-imperial forging of the political severely affected the potential accommodation of class-based demands. Because of the fact that modernity gave birth to the social only because of delimitation of the political, in its separation from both the public and the social,⁸⁴ the entire foundational moment setting those limits in the conditions of non-existing nation-state begs for careful examination. My investigation into the political and the working class presence aims to address this conundrum.

⁸² Chiara Bottici, *Imaginal Politics: Images beyond Imagination and the Imaginary*, New Directions in Critical Theory (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 81.

⁸³ Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*.

⁸⁴ Contrary to the seminal narrative presenting the eclipse of politics by the social, as in Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); see also Bottici, *Imaginal Politics*, 82.

Prismatic views on the political – an outline

In order to shed light on the defined problem, it is not enough to offer a singular view. The tiered nature of the political as a communicative space renders singular presentation insufficient. The practices and speech acts constituting it were performed by different groups of actors and with different, and patterned, perceptions of their places, roles and goals. Processes of redefinition and re-enactment were multiple yet entangled and hence the analysis also proceeds in this mode. The general approach is a problem-driven one, designed to tackle a particular general issue with appropriate means and not with a stable methodological framework.⁸⁵ As I zoom in, however, it is also a source driven study. I apply research strategies to particular, delimited sets of sources in a more selective way, and it is the archive which delimits the realm of the possible in the respective chapters. Thus, this study is composed of several prismatic insights of the core problem with different *foci* and substantially varying corpora of empirical material. It is designed to tackle the main issue from different yet supplementary angles.

Working class publics

Chapter 1 introduces the necessary historical contexts and analyzes emerging practices of the proletarian public sphere. The pattern of proletarianization in Russian Poland is examined in reference to the major debates on labor history, class formation and workers' intellectual practices. Against such a backdrop I examine the vicissitudes of proletarian political experience within the Polish “long 19th century”. In conditions of relatively rapid and insular proletarianization, the nascent political education within party milieus was of much prominence. How it affected the subjective class formation, workers' intellectual agendas, and forms of political participation is at the center of my focus. When strikes, factory constituencies and political street performances came to the fore in 1905,

⁸⁵ Bent Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again* (Oxford, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Jason Glynos and David Howarth, *Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory*, Routledge Innovations in Political Theory 26 (London ; New York: Routledge, 2007).

it was a hotbed for a working class counterpublic, which is public activity aimed to undermine the dominant regime of public participation and often regarded as contentious by the latter.⁸⁶ They were a powerful challenger to the dominant circulation, being roughly a local, largely failed, emulation of the bourgeois public sphere. In this context, I ask whether the claims from the street were partially successful attempts to meaningfully reconstruct the political community. To put it in other words, I am interested in whether “private people putting their reason to use”⁸⁷ – the paramount contributors to the public sphere according to Habermas – could be found outside the proverbial bourgeois salon, or in the local circumstances, outside the intelligentsia-led publishing house. What spurs me to ask these questions is the fact that the political practice of revolution bore traces of bottom-up plebeian experience, emerging according to Martin Breugh in the rifts of age-old apparatuses of domination.⁸⁸ It was often weeded out within contemporary politics and banned from historiographical visibility.

It is worth asking whether in the context of telescoping the struggle for individual and collective rights one can also find alternative, plebeian sources of democratic creativity. Such a field of experimentation and learning would have been possible in social situations where habits were broken, class boundaries were crossed back and forth and questions were asked about fundamental issues. Such forms could have constituted what Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge calls the proletarian public sphere.⁸⁹ My attempt to ascertain its presence and possible influence on the political has led me to investigate the intellectual and political practices of the working class public. The impact of the proletarian public sphere, however, may also be revealed in biographical experiences of those involved.

⁸⁶ This term figures prominently in a slightly different sense more related to actual public reception, in Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

⁸⁷ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, XVIII.

⁸⁸ Martin Breugh, *The Plebeian Experience: A Discontinuous History of Political Freedom*, trans. Lazer Lederhendler (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

⁸⁹ Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*, trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff, *Theory and History of Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

The militant self

Tracing the proletarian public sphere as an emerging practice and experience redirects me to scrutinize working class political biographies. Thus, in *Chapter 2* I focus on actual individuals participating in the aforementioned practices. The 1905 Revolution was a turning point in the lives of many workers in the Russian Empire, radically changing their views of themselves and of their environment. Correspondingly, this chapter is situated within the research practice once called New Labor History, which means that I attempt to look at the worker protagonists from their own perspective, examining the change of the political from within the working-class self.

Within this research tradition, the notion of subjectivity or self was tightly knit with social imaginary⁹⁰ –“countless, and relatively uncharted forms in which 'society' has been understood” in the words of Patrick Joyce.⁹¹ Its change could be registered on the crossroads of linked dimensions of subjectivity: “a subject as a person and as a subject of democracy”.⁹² For instance, a democratic subjectivity stands on the will to “live in a democratic polity, but also in a society and a culture that were also felt to be 'democratic'”, as Joyce explains.⁹³ Accordingly, I am interested in transformation of the working class social imaginary triggered by participation in politics. Some research in this vein has been done on working-class revolutionaries and the changes in their identity as a result of their revolutionary involvement.⁹⁴ In turn, the main focus of my contribution on Polish militants is – in

⁹⁰ Michael S. Melancon and Alice K. Pate, eds., *New Labor History: Worker Identity and Experience in Russia, 1840-1918* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2002); See also William Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Lenard R. Berlanstein, ed., *Rethinking Labor History: Essays on Discourse and Class Analysis* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1914* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁹¹ Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4–5. See also Mark D. Steinberg, *Proletarian Imagination: Self, Modernity, and the Sacred in Russia, 1910-1925* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002). On social imaginary in see Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*.

⁹² Joyce, *Democratic Subjects*, 1.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ In similar context of Jewish militancy in the pale of settlement, these questions were addressed in Shtakser, *The Making of Jewish Revolutionaries in the Pale of Settlement*. On Russian workers militancy and life stories see Reginald E. Zelnik, “On the Eve: Life Histories and Identities of Some Revolutionary Workers 1870-1905,” in *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Ronald Grigor Suny (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1994); Leopold Haimson, *Russia's Revolutionary Experience: 1905 - 1917; Two Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005). Less biographically oriented approaches, also addressing the subjective drives in political militancy are Weinberg, *The Revolution of 1905 in Odessa*; Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms*. On intellectual

correspondence with the overarching theme of this study – the political. In this chapter, however, it is treated strictly as a domain of practice and re-enactment by particular individuals hence simultaneously changed by this practice and intervening in their sense of self.

In this context, I ask about the process of politicization of the self. For instance, the political initiation or conversion are assumedly important events intervening in the relationship between the self and the political. It is informative to know how the political was perceived and re-enacted on personal level during this period. What drove so many people to enter the hard road of politicized autodidacticism, alienating them from their own social milieu and exposing them to the grave danger of state persecution? The political commitment is, in most of the cases, the spine keeping the narrative together. Thus, forms of emplotment – integration of facts as components of specific kinds of plot structures – are also revealing in respect to what kept people involved in politics, i.e. what they drew from it intellectually and emotionally. How was the relationship between the political and other spheres of life (as work or family) negotiated, blurred and redrawn? I am also curious how experience and memories (here impossible to disentangle) varied when narrated by members of competing political milieus. These plural commitments had their textual manifestation in the prolific printed communication of the revolutionary public, saddled between the radical intelligentsia and militant workers.

Political languages in action

Multiple political utterances mobilized people and profoundly modified the presence of language within the political sphere. Thus, **Chapter 3** tackles the mobilizing power of language and its changing agency within the political. Contrary to contributions in conceptual history, it is not an investigation in conscious verbal practice concerning the term “politics” or its derivatives.⁹⁵ It is,

pursuits of Russian workers and autodidacticism see Steinberg, *Proletarian Imagination*; Pearl, *Creating a Culture of Revolution*.

⁹⁵ Like in Willibald Steinmetz, ed., *Politik: Situationen eines Wortgebrauchs im Europa der Neuzeit* (Frankfurt:

however, an historical exercise on the evolving relationship between political speech and political practice on the verge of modernity.⁹⁶ The relationship between what was speakable and what was doable is at the center of my focus.

Political languages in conflict were powerful forces leading people onto the streets and pitting them against each other in an unprecedented manner.⁹⁷ Correspondingly, I scrutinize the changing regime of political speech. Language in action materialized in political proclamations, leaflets and party newspapers distributed among workers. My aim is to investigate political languages as a tool of political mobilization and as a means of ushering political novices into the political realm. This exploration is assisted with a qualitative data mining performed on the complete corpus of party proclamations (socialist and nationalist alike, issued by central committees in Polish, see methodological appendix for details). It is asserted that these languages brought an intervention into regimes of subjectification. I focus on elements of worker-directed discourses such as performative expressions of address, concepts as active means of comprehension, and syntactic renditions of subjectivity. This sheds light on changes in assumed polity, imagined communities and self-placement of the workers in the broader social order. I also ask about other effects of mass political mobilizations and “fighting words” uttered on the streets. For instance, this investigation led me to scrutinize the rising political antisemitism. Antisemitism was a powerful means of reconstruction of identities and the entire political field, and its examination offers an insight into the vortex of political conflict and the role language assumed within the political. Language, however, was not only a mobilizing device, but also a means of reproduction and change of the social order.

Campus-Verlag, 2007). This collection contains studies of some significance to the context investigated here, as the history of concepts also sheds light on the history of practice, see Walter Sperling, “Vom Randbegriff zum Kampfbegriff. Semantiken des Politischen im ausgehenden Zarenreich (1850-1917),” in *Politik: Situationen eines Wortgebrauchs im Europa der Neuzeit*, ed. Willibald Steinmetz (Frankfurt: Campus-Verlag, 2007). See also Kari Palonen, *The Struggle with Time: A Conceptual History of “Politics” as an Activity* (Hamburg: Lit, 2006).

⁹⁶ This problem investigated in another context see Willibald Steinmetz, *Das Sagbare Und Das Machbare: Zum Wandel Politischer Handlungsspielräume. England 1780 - 1867* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1993).

⁹⁷ Political language as relatively stable idiom of political speech is understood as in J. G. A. Pocock, *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Workers in the press

The regime of the political is also maintained in language by the particular distribution of places within. It sits within modes of mutual political visibility of various social groupings. Thus, so as to register its renegotiation, it's not enough to investigate the working class public. To corroborate the assertions about the changing political, an exploration of the external visibility of workers is needed.⁹⁸ Correspondingly, **Chapter 4** is a study of constructing workers as an object of discourse, which circumscribed the limits of their perceived and actual agency.

In order to do this, I analyze the officially recognized, mostly bourgeois press of different political shades. I zoom in on dailies published in the largest industrial center of Russian Poland, Łódź, as it was there where the debate on the workers' public participation assumed the sharpest form. After a brief overview on the rise of the “worker question” (and more broadly the “social question”) in the press, and the place which workers and work occupied in the respective coverage in the last decade of the 19th century, I ask how the rising revolutionary tension made its way to the press. I study how the assumed place of workers changed with the demise of revolutionary zeal, a counteraction from the industrial bourgeoisie and a severe social crisis which followed. How did the “worker question” evolve? How did the approach of the urban elites to the workers shift during the revolutionary upsurge? In this way, the circumscription of the transformation of the political made a full circle, that is from workers' political performance, through their biographical experience of change, to uses and abuses of language within the nascent mass public sphere, to the external perception of the redrawing of the limits of public participation, and reaction against it.

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⁹⁸ Every political subject arising out of an aggregate of individuals has to firstly be imagined, visualized and delimited. This concerns not only the participants of this constituency but also its external “observers”, see Bottici, *Imaginal Politics*, 90–91. This approach is also indebted in: Martin J. Burke, *The Conundrum of Class: Public Discourse on the Social Order in America* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995).

The examined issues gain even more prominence when the historical significance of the moment is considered. As I stated above, this was precisely the time of the emergence of a new type of mass politics in Europe and a foundational conjuncture for the modern public sphere in “Poland”. Political ideologies had to be operationalized and gauged in order to stir mass membership and support.⁹⁹ It was just the beginning of “politics in the new key”,¹⁰⁰ settled in particular conditions of the tsarist borderlands. If political languages in the region were confronted with new challenges for some time already,¹⁰¹ the 1905 revolution meant a significant acceleration of those processes. For those excited by new possibilities, and for those frightened by the menace of social turmoil and the fall of old authorities, the revolution was a confrontation with “the masses”. The masses, however, were not merely existing groups of people who had never been politicized before; above all, “the masses” (as a concept sometimes coded with differed wording) were a product of a particular regime of political (mis)representation. As Stephan Jonsson significantly notes:

[T]he masses have always been produced through the ways in which certain social agents and aspirations have been represented – politically and intellectually – in modernity. Instead of defining the mass as those without representation, we should investigate the mechanisms whereby any given community represents itself, politically, intellectually, or aesthetically, necessarily produces a remainder, a group of agents and aspirations that cannot be accounted for by the dominant mode of representation.¹⁰²

Politics in a new key is also politics of public representation of the interests which were hitherto carefully policed out of the public sphere. It was so not only due to the tangible tsarist police apparatus, which attempted, just as the order-preserving proxies of every state, to prevent contentious claims to emerge in a too turbulent manner. The regime of the representation also excluded the politics of the

⁹⁹ Porter, “Democracy and Discipline in Late Nineteenth Century Poland.”

¹⁰⁰ Carl E. Schorske, “Politics in a New Key: An Austrian Triptych,” *The Journal of Modern History* 39, no. 4 (1967): 344–86.

¹⁰¹ Balázs Trencsényi et al., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe* (Oxford, United Kingdom ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹⁰² Stefan Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy: The Idea and Image of the Masses from Revolution to Fascism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 26.

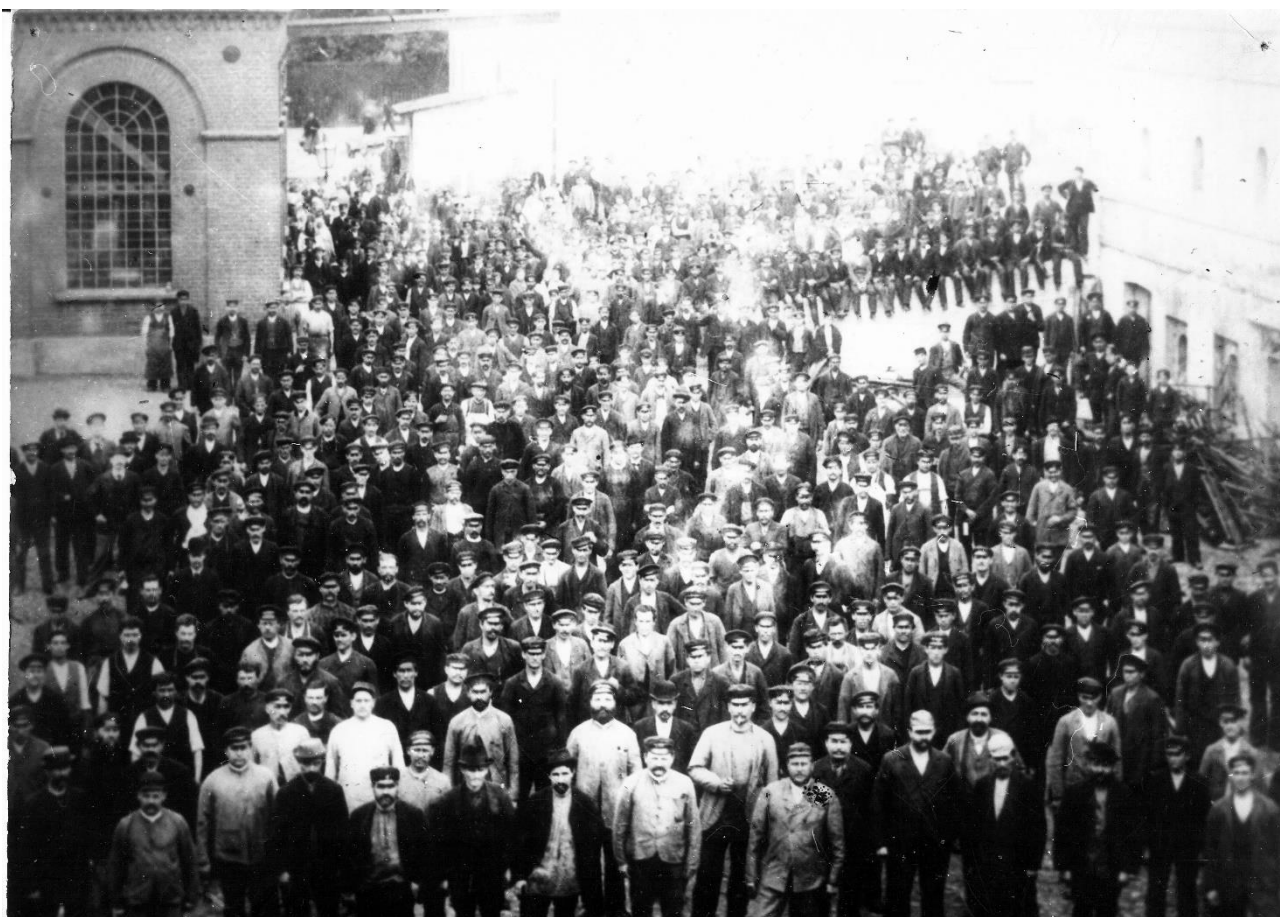
street. Most of the liberal vision of politics and later nostalgic theorizations of the bourgeois public sphere clearly limit public sphere against the “laws passed under the ‘pressure of the street’”. Such laws, according to Habermas, “could hardly be understood any longer as embodying the reasonable consensus of publicly debating private persons”.¹⁰³ It is the logic of representation which sits in the vortex of the transforming political and determines targets of such exclusion. “The act of representing socially significant passions can be seen as an originary mechanism of politics, as the cause of power – comparable to the distribution of presence and absence, rationality and irrationality, civic agency and subalternity within the public sphere”, as Jonsson adds.¹⁰⁴ This “originary mechanism of politics” was activated in the time which may be dubbed a preamble to the age of extremes, when new political ideologies but also uses and abuses of political language gained unprecedented currency and influence in shaping the life of entire populations.¹⁰⁵ It was a time marked by intense testing and contesting of democracy, a crucial oscillation in the 20th century European politics, as Jan-Werner Müller indicates.¹⁰⁶ On the fringes of the Russian Empire it was more a democratic principle within social imaginary than democracy as a form of political organization, which was a bone of contention. Nonetheless, the basic principles of division of the body politic forged at the onset were to have long-lasting, often resilient, afterlives. Also when politics migrated to the *loci* more typical for a parliamentary nation state. Therefore, how the “presence and absence” of workers and ways of “representing socially significant passions” changed “under the pressure of the street” in this foundational moment is of my interest here.

¹⁰³ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 132. An essential critique regarding the core issues of this study is presented in Warren Montag, “The Pressure of the Street. Habermas’s Fear of the Masses,” in *Masses, Classes and the Public Sphere*, ed. Mike Hill and Warren Montag (London ; New York, N.Y: Verso, 2000), 132–45.

¹⁰⁴ Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy*, 27.

¹⁰⁵ The expression comes from Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 2011). On changing role of language see Willibald Steinmetz, ed., *Political Languages in the Age of Extremes* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁰⁶ Jan-Werner Müller, *Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2011).



*Figure 2. Strike in Poznański's factory in Łódź after the announcement of the great lockout.
Collection of Museum of Independence Tradition in Łódź*

CHAPTER 1

WORKERS AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

*The working class (...) won elementary human rights, gained awareness of their power. (...) Till recently, the person and dignity of the worker was not in any way protected against harm. (...) Now it is different! The worker has forced everybody to respect his personal dignity, one already takes his person seriously, his will dictates the conditions of work.*¹

The public presence of workers changed during the massive unrest commonly known as the 1905 Revolution. The fragment quoted above is certainly an overenthusiastic statement of an activist who was involved in pushing this change forward. Its author was a tireless organizer of early labor unions. Being educated as an electrical engineer, Bernard Szapiro was involved in PPS-Left union organizing. Certainly the expressive tone is also intended for performative purposes; it encourages working class readers to take what allegedly belongs to them and to force intelligentsia readers to accept this change. It may not be the direct evidence of the change actually happening, but it testifies what was at stake. Even if the suggested empowerment of workers and their subjectification as “the working class” were not yet accomplished, they were under way to such an extent that readers might take this expression as a meaningful call for action. Similar calls did not remain futile, and newly forged labor unions, made to some limited extent lawful within the tsarist legal framework in 1906, indeed reshuffled the situation for workplace bargaining. It was, however, only one dimension of a more general transformation of the political. This transformation concerned possibilities to argue, participate, and last but not least, to just be in public as workers. It meant renegotiation of the workers' “place” in various domains, from relationships in the factory to the regime of speech. The change encompassed the emergence of a public sphere populated by workers, either as a separate space of

¹ Bernard Szapiro, *Związki Zawodowe Robotnicze* (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Wydawnictw Ludowych, 1906), 5.

articulation or as a conditionally accepted part of a more general public. And indeed, such a working class public sphere was put into practice during the 1905-1907 upheaval.

The public practices at the time of the revolution are presented in this chapter against the backdrop of the social and intellectual history of the industrial working class. In general, my view on the revolutionary public is informed by the once thriving cultural histories of revolutionary politics, ritual and theatralization.² However, it also grows out of various forms of structural and social history, which sets the limits for the development of political communication and initially delimits the shape and actions of respective social groupings.³ Thus, I begin with the brief social history of the urban centers of Russian Poland. Later on, I present evolving practices of informal education and politicization before 1905, so as to sketch the backdrop against which the profusion of revolutionary practices is presented in further sections. The final part deals with resistance that was triggered by the emergence of the proletarian public sphere among other social strata. In sum, the chapter tackles the infrastructure for the changing communicative space of the political. It does so by means of an inquiry into the emerging working class public sphere.

Admittedly, the revolutionary public sphere was by no means limited to workers. The political mobilization, from excitement to hatred and fear, affected the vast strata of urban society. Nevertheless, it was a public sphere of the street, factory hall, “reclaimed” theater: not of a burgher salon or a party gathering. The relationship between those spaces and people usually populating them changed.

² Originally influential works on the French revolution are Lynn Hunt, *Politics, culture, and class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, Ideas in Context (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1991). Similar study of a more similar context, Russia in 1917 see Boris Kolonitskii and Orlando Figes, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917* (Yale University Press, 1999). Some remarks on 1905 see Jörg Baberowski, ed., *Imperiale Herrschaft in Der Provinz: Repräsentationen Politischer Macht Im Späten Zarenreich* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus-Verlag, 2008); Dietlind Huechtker, “‘The Politics and Poetics of Transgression’. Die Revolution von 1905 im Koenigreich Polen,” in *Revolution in Nordosteuropa*, ed. Detlef Henning (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011).

³ Works particularly influential for my approach were Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*; Reinhart Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution: allgemeines Landrecht, Verwaltung und soziale Bewegung von 1791 bis 1848* (München: Dt. Taschenbuch-Verl., 1989); Kocka and Muller-Luckner, *Arbeiter und Bürger im 19. Jahrhundert: Varianten ihres Verhältnisses im europäischen Vergleich*; Jürgen Kocka, *Arbeitsverhältnisse und Arbeiterexistenzen: Grundlagen der Klassenbildung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Bonn: Dietz, 1990); Jürgen Kocka, “Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: The Case of the German Sonderweg,” *History and Theory* 38, no. 1 (February 1999): 40–50, doi:10.1111/0018-2656.751999075.

According to a historian, Geoff Eley, the public sphere is “the structured setting where cultural and ideological contest or negotiation among the variety of publics takes place”.⁴ Without a doubt, the revolutionary proliferation of public, politicized action reconfigured the structure of this setting, if not just allowed the broader “ideological contest or negotiation” to emerge at all. Despite the multiple identifications of the participants during protests, they nevertheless shared a place within a highly politicized yet common public sphere of revolutionary politics. Also, their class background might have differed. It was an unprecedented moment of collision of classes when people were acting together but also against each other. This plurality notwithstanding, the massive participation of new groups of people, mainly urban laborers of various kinds (not limited to the working class in any strict sense) made the pendulum swing heavily in the direction of the proletarian public sphere.

By this term I do not mean just the working class public, or even a counter-public opposed to the long established, elite patterns of participation or bourgeois interests. Those characteristics did apply, but what is more important is the capacity to incorporate and transform forms of public participation in a way directly affecting the participants and their political potentials. In this vein, the peculiarities of the proletarian public were investigated by Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge in their research on plural and oppositional public spheres.⁵ Being contentious towards Jürgen Habermas's classic approach,⁶ the authors scrutinized forms of publics, different from a liberal salon. While historically many forms of counter-public emerged, creating a launchpad for contentious politics and an alternative for the bourgeois public sphere, only some of them fostered the processes of learning and created social situations where habits concerning public performance were actually broken. In a nutshell, Negt and Kluge's proletarian public sphere does not refer to actual organizational forms but to the emergent practice of public questioning of the most fundamental assumptions about the participants of the situation. To borrow another theoretical parlance, Negt and Kluge try to describe

⁴ Eley, “Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century.”

⁵ Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*.

⁶ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.

acts of “polemicization of the commonplace”.⁷ A wildcat strike, factory occupation or collective autodidacticism transform the place of workers, not only within the hierarchical social edifice but also in respect to their customary leadership of the union or party.

While interested in acts of performative redrawing of political boundaries, Negt and Kluge nevertheless consider public spheres as strictly related to subjective experiences, embedded in the class-specific context of life. This argument applies not only as a materialist critique of the bourgeois public sphere; it also concerns the proletarian public sphere. In this case, however, the experiential hotbed for participation is simultaneously and reflexively reconfigured by various forms of public activity. This dialectical interrelation is crucial to comprehend the actual transformation spurred on by the proletarian public sphere. The transformation affects both the participants and the political space they enter. Here, I am interested chiefly in political practices sitting between these two dimensions, constituting the presence of participants within the political. These practices were also mediating the old sedimented culture with a new insurgent one. In the same vein, practices constituting the proletarian public sphere indicate that it is not a failed, derivative or imitative form of bourgeois public sphere but an alternative pattern of turning problems into debatable issues.⁸ It has its own genealogy and principles of organization, but its developments are entangled in a dialectical relationship with the dominant forms of political articulation.

A similar approach was successfully applied to historical material by scholars such as Günther Lottes, who broadly documented the emerging alternative “plebeian” public of the English Jacobins.⁹ It was an actual attempt to question the monopoly of the burgher public, or even a parallel plebeian constituency, fostering new forms of political expressions on the verge of modernity. English radicals

⁷ Benjamin Arditi, *Polemicization. The Contingency of the Commonplace* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

⁸ On alternative history of public practices as forms of popular contention, early strikes, etc. see Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*, 42.

⁹ Günther Lottes, *Politische Aufklärung und plebejisches Publikum: zur Theorie und Praxis des englischen Radikalismus im späten 18. Jahrhundert* (München ; Wien: Oldenbourg, 1979). On plebeian political experience of the English Jacobinism see also Breugh, *The Plebeian Experience*. General context was presented in Edward P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Vintage Giant (New York: Vintage Books, 1963).

forged practices other than premodern tumults, grounding them in broad literacy and informed participation performed in clubs, within corresponding societies and in open air rallies.¹⁰ It was not always possible, however, to create horizontal patterns of negotiation and decision making not interrupted by violence and turmoil. What is even more important is the fact that so as to prove successful, such a sphere had to constantly embrace a dialectics of contention and cooptation in respect to the dominant form of public participation, for instance by petitioning the parliament.

Similarly, in most European contexts, from its very beginning the emerging bourgeois public approached alternative forms of plebeian constituencies. These constituencies were later suppressed and foreclosed, the process often repeated in later historiography also favoring the visibility of the bourgeoisie publics.¹¹ In the case investigated here, the new challengers of mass politics abruptly entered a scene where only nascent and highly specific forms of elite public were developed.¹² This was because of the historical lineages of the Polish noble republic and later tsarist autocracy inhibiting other paths. Thus, initially the distance and exclusion in respect to illiterate working class contenders might have been less fictitious than these against the plebeian public or artisanal radicals elsewhere. Correspondingly, the aforementioned dynamics of inclusion, cooptation and marginalization is detectable in the much different context of the emerging Polish public sphere and during the revolution.

For instance, workers' intellectual pursuits were heavily indebted to, and actually stimulated by, the radical intelligentsia. It was a particular social strata, endemic in Eastern Europe, neither a bourgeois intellectual elite nor a middle-class composed of professionals more common in Western

¹⁰ See also Charles Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995).

¹¹ Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century"; Kocka and Muller-Luckner, *Arbeiter und Bürger im 19. Jahrhundert: Varianten ihres Verhältnisses im europäischen Vergleich*; Craig J. Calhoun, *The Roots of Radicalism: Tradition, the Public Sphere, and Early Nineteenth-Century Social Movements* (Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

¹² Marzec and Śmiechowski, "Pathogenesis of the Polish Public Sphere. Intelligentsia and Popular Unrest in the 1905 Revolution and After."

European societies.¹³ Here it was an underspecified “sphere of the society” with some education,¹⁴ perpetuated, and burdened, by a specific “ethos”, calling or vocation to social service but also important “missionary” attitudes.¹⁵ It was the intelligentsia which played a major interfering and intermediary role between publics. This group was involved in informal education for workers and then launched most of the party politics.¹⁶ Thus, the emerging working class with little public tradition was initially captivated by radical intelligentsia politics, much different from the aristocratic or bourgeois salon. Nevertheless, the working class public soon started to follow a more independent path with their own political practices and alternative ways of debating and making political claims. Even then, however, claims uttered within proletarian public sphere were fueled by political languages acquired from outside (see Chapter 3) and were directed toward the general public. Their success was conditional upon the external recognition (see Chapter 4). Also, on personal level, in order to unfold a political life of sorts, workers were often forced to leave behind their class background. And very often they embarked on political practice precisely to abandon the shackles of the work-centered existence (Chapter 2). Nevertheless, these entanglements did not abolish the potential of transformation of the political presence of workers, which is the topic of this chapter. It is an exposition of material genesis of the nascent public spheres and their actual, historically emerging cultural forms which allows me to investigate the militant biographies, forged identities, polemical trajectories and responses of other social groups in the forthcoming chapters.

¹³ Jonas Frykman and Orvar Löfgren, *Culture Builders: A Historical Anthropology of Middle-Class Life*, trans. Alan Crozier (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987); Jürgen Kocka and Allen Mitchell, eds., *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1993). Therefore in Central and Eastern Europe the term “intelligentsia” is commonly understood slightly different than in the Western world (and often in anglophone academia), where it is sometimes used interchangeably with the term “intellectuals”. However, in local specificity it is analytically more accurate to consider Eastern European intelligentsia as a particular social strata, composed by educated groups of society. In such depictions, intellectuals are just a part of it, see Joanna Kurczewska, “Inteligencja,” *Encyklopedia socjologii* (Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa, 1998). Other authors underline psychological foundations of belonging to intelligentsia. What allegedly characterized this group was the strong self-identity and certain exclusiveness despite close links to other social strata, see Micińska, *Dzieje inteligencji polskiej do roku 1918*, 111–13.

¹⁴ Ryszarda Czepulis-Rastenis, “Klasa umysłowa.”: *Inteligencja Królestwa Polskiego, 1832-1862* (Warszaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1973), 5.

¹⁵ Walicki, *Polish Conceptions of the Intelligentsia and Its Calling*.

¹⁶ Mencwel, *Etos lewicy*; Cywiński, *Rodowody niepokornych*.

Policies of industrial growth

The history of Eastern Europe is often written in a way which underlines differences between East and West. This strategy of differentiating the history of the eastern peripheries of Europe from its Western core-centers may be helpful in tackling the general trajectories of vast arrays of dissimilar territories stretching longitudinally from Helsinki to Istanbul. However, it may be a dubious strategy when analyzing the more detailed, spatialized social history of modernity. Multiple differentials embedded in the capitalist transformation of the world triggered uneven developmental processes on different spatial scales, often entangled within connections not necessarily deployed in their direct vicinity. Consequently, rigid geopolitical frameworks and imagined geographies may manifest their limited explanatory capacity in more zoomed-in research. Places enmeshed in trans-regional commercial networks simultaneously drew extensively from local resources (land, water, laborers). They were isolated socially from their direct surroundings precisely by this integration, which prevented any easy classification. Industrial centers of Russian Poland epitomized this pattern because of the following historical entanglements.

The old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth finally collapsed in 1795. The state territory was partitioned between three imperial neighbors: Austria, Prussia and Tsarist Russia. These partitions were a turning point in the history of the region, where all elements of European modernity developed under the jurisdiction of imperial states.¹⁷ The agrarian structure of the old Poland, its particular role as “the first periphery of Europe”, and the interests of the landed gentry inhibited the urban growth before the collapse of the dilapidated noble republic. Later, these factors also remained triggers of long-term path dependency of industrial underdevelopment.¹⁸ As a result, Polish cities and towns at

¹⁷ For an overview see Anita Prazmowska, *A History of Poland*, Palgrave Essential Histories (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Porter-Szücs, *Poland in the Modern World*.

¹⁸ Witold Kula, *An Economic Theory of the Feudal System ; towards a Model of the Polish Economy, 1500-1800* (London ; New York: Verso, 1987); Marian Małowist, *Western Europe, Eastern Europe and World Development, 13th-18th Centuries: Collection of Essays of Marian Małowist*, ed. Jean Batou and Henryk Szlajfer, Studies in Critical Social Sciences, v. 16 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2010); Jacek Kochanowicz, *Backwardness and Modernization: Poland and Eastern Europe in the 16th-20th Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2006). An interesting presentation of Łódź in the context of global economic entanglements is presented in Kacper Pobłocki, “The Cunning Of Class: Urbanization Of Inequality In Post-War Poland” (Central European University, 2010), <http://etnologia.amu.edu.pl/go.live.php/PL->

the beginning of the 19th century were exceptionally small and rather underdeveloped.

Out of those vast arrays of rural land, spotted with neglected towns, this work zooms in on the Russian controlled zone, named at different times Congress Poland, the Kingdom of Poland and Vistula Country.¹⁹ It was the part most crucial for the subsequent emergence of the Polish nation state, not only because of its geographical centrality and prominent role in the Polish imagination. It had the highest ratio of industrialization and urbanization, which made it more developed than the Prussian part or Galicia (on the northern fringes of Austria-Hungary).²⁰ Even with the highest pace of growth, however, it did not happen in a day.

The formation of capitalism proceeded in a fairly specific way, divergent from that which occurred in regions where it had been built over centuries. It was a fragmentary, state-licensed capitalism, in the first phase implemented very quickly from top to bottom by the Polish autonomous government. The intensity of social change was greater than in the countries where these processes were more extended in time. In Russian Poland, the change was not evolutionary but revolutionary. Capitalism developed not in existing cities but instead fostered the growth of new urban centers amidst old rural realities. A primary accumulation of capital, proletarianization, and a rise of contract labor combined with the rapid development of cities and an internal migration from rural areas (rather than an impoverishment of craftsmen and townsmen as often occurred in Western Europe).²¹ The government took an active part in these processes, slowly loosening the remnants of a secondary

H648/dr-kacper-poblocki.html.

¹⁹ At that time Poland was in a constitutional personal union with the Russian Empire, created in 1815 by the Congress of Vienna. The Tsars soon reduced Polish autonomy, and Russia eventually *de facto* annexed the country.

²⁰ See Maria Nietyksza, *Rozwój miast i aglomeracji miejsko-przemysłowych w Królestwie Polskim, 1865-1914*, Polska XIX i XX Wieku (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1986). At the beginning, however, the only industrial areas in the new country's frontiers were Staropolski Okręg Przemysłowy (Old Polish Industrial Region) and Częstochowa; the rest of the Congress Poland was rural. On early pre-partition attempts to industrialize the country see Nina Assorodobraj-Kula, *Początki klasy robotniczej. Problem rak roboczych w przemyśle polskim epoki Stanisławowskiej* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1966).

²¹ Robert Kołodziejczyk, "Pochodzenie i źródła rekrutacji klasy robotniczej," in *Polska klasa robotnicza. Zarys dziejów*, vol. 1, part 1 (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1974); Witold Kula and Janina Leskiewiczowa, *Przemiany społeczne w Królestwie Polskim: 1815-1864* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1979); Anna Żarnowska, *Klasa robotnicza Królestwa Polskiego, 1870-1914* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1974). For a comparative frame in England, France and Germany, respectively, see for instance Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*; Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France*; Kocka, *Arbeitsverhältnisse und Arbeiterexistenzen: Grundlagen der Klassenbildung im 19. Jahrhundert*. For an instructive comparative overview see Katznelson and Zolberg, *Working-Class Formation*.

“feudal” regime; for instance, by means such as the decree of December 1807, which facilitated the expropriation of peasants from the land.²² The pivotal event was the January uprising of 1863. As a result, the Polish autonomous government lost the last significant prerogatives, and state-induced early capitalism gave way to a particular form of tsarist, autocratic *laissez-faire* capitalism.²³ The 1864 agrarian reforms finally ended the long epoch of secondary serfdom in Poland. The abolition of serfdom merged with political repressions against landowners, and secured peasant support for the Russian rule. It also triggered the economic collapse of the Kingdom's manorial agriculture, not necessarily boosting the peasant economy. These measures stimulated migration to cities and facilitated the recruitment of workers and reduction of labor costs. Subsequently, thousands of unemployed peasants, as well as bankrupted nobles, were forced to migrate to cities. The urban areas entered the path of rapid industrialization.

Not surprisingly, this period of impressive industrialization dramatically remodeled the existing social structure in the cities. Between 1850 and 1900, a few industrial urban centers flourished, supported by Russian trade protectionism and the booming economy of the empire stimulated by foreign investment.²⁴ Some of these cities had become huge isles of capitalistic modernity, surrounded by rural Polish landscapes. Industrial hubs of Russian Poland were among huge industrial centers which mushroomed in the 19th century across the globe, being positioned in the growingly porous borderland between the Russian world-empire and European networks of knowledge and

²² See Wstęp, in Gąsiorowska-Grabowska and Kalabiński, *Źródła do dziejów klasy robotniczej na ziemiach polskich*. Paragraphs above were for the first time presented in Wiktor Marzec and Agata Zysiak, “Days of Labour: Topographies of Power in Modern Peripheral Capitalism. The Case of The Industrial City of Łódź,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 29, no. 2 (2016): 129–59, doi:10.1111/johs.12080.

²³ Some remarks on the tsarist system and synthesis of autocracy with deficient governance functions see Peter Waldron, *Governing Tsarist Russia*, European History in Perspective (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). Political freedoms and actual cooperation between state administration and social institutions were much more meager in Russian Poland than in mainland Russia. After the January uprising of 1863, the autonomy of the region was practically abolished and meek attempts to liberalize the tsarist state (as rural and urban self-governance, loosening of press censorship) did not affect the region later. See Leszek Jaśkiewicz, *Carat i sprawy polskie na przełomie XIX i XX wieku* (Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna w Pułtusk, 2001); Theodore R. Weeks, “Nationality and Municipality: Reforming City Government in the Kingdom of Poland,” *Russian History* 21, no. 1 (1994): 23–47; Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia*; Malte Rolf, *Imperiale Herrschaft im Weichselland: das Königreich Polen im russischen Imperium (1864-1915)* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015).

²⁴ Peter Gatrell, *The Tsarist Economy 1850-1917* (London: Batsford, 1986).

technology transfer. Thus, it used to have much more in common with its industrial counterparts farther away than with places directly neighboring it. This does not mean, however, that they were disconnected from their hinterland. In the 1870s and 1880s, the Kingdom of Poland experienced a huge wave of proletarianization and internal migration of peasants or agricultural laborers from rural areas to the emerging industrial centers.²⁵ However, the technical composition of the working class, a hotbed for further political trajectories, differed significantly in the three major industrial hubs which are at the center of my focus.

Making the proletarians

Out of the three largest industrial centers of Russian Poland, Warsaw, was long-viewed as the capital, even if after cutting Polish autonomy short it was more and more an informal capital only. It grew significantly, reaching a half-million inhabitants in 1900 and becoming a vivid Polish-Jewish urban center.²⁶ It was there, where artisanal production and petty industry supplying the meager demand for industrial goods stagnated. The development of industry was gradual and its results more equally spread and diversified – the mills were of different size, there were hardly any large factories and the profile of industry was highly diversified, delivering multiple industrial goods. The social composition of workers was equally diverse. In Warsaw, former craftsmen were proletarianized, pauperized noble offspring arrived there to look for opportunities (and often failed) and, last but not least, peasants from the region flocked to the city.²⁷ Thus, there were artisan networks there and some elements of early working class culture.

Dąbrowa Basin, a mining region on the South-Western fringe of Russian Poland, also developed

²⁵ The notion of proletarianization and its assumed indeterminate outcomes in respect to class-based culture and working class politics is indebted to the perspective presented in Katznelson and Zolberg, *Working-Class Formation*. An earlier and equally useful model was proposed in Jürgen Kocka, *Lohnarbeit und Klassenbildung: Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland 1800 - 1875* (Berlin: Dietz, 1983).

²⁶ On Warsaw development and ethnic cauldron see more in Corrsin, *Warsaw before the First World War*.

²⁷ Żarnowska, *Robotnicy Warszawy na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*. On outcomes of this social composition for revolutionary protest see Halina Kiepuska, *Warszawa w rewolucji 1905-1907* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1974).

relatively gradually, but that was due to other sources of population growth. There had been germs of mining industry there already, before the industrial growth loomed large. The coal outputs were sent all over the country, and the railway connection with Warsaw from 1848 integrated local mines and foundries with the broader economic circulation. Here, most of the new laborers arrived from the surrounding villages. There was also some population exchange with the already booming mining industry of the German Upper Silesia, which stimulated a diffusion of technology, miner's culture and political repertoires.²⁸ Dąbrowa Basin grew “organically” from the rural areas around, drawing from them its labor force, but creating an external, invasive body.

In Łódź, soon the biggest concentration of industrial working class, the origin of labor force was similar. In this case, however, industrialization was much more rampant, soon resulting in the creation of large, vertically integrated textile conglomerates hiring several thousand people each.²⁹ Before this, Łódź was a rural backwater town, consisting of only 190 inhabitants and 44 houses in the late 18th century.³⁰ Everything was to change in just a few decades, after the Polish government implemented a special program to stimulate industrial development. It offered a variety of privileges for future investors as well as facilities designed to encourage settlement and investment in selected areas of the Kingdom (automatic acquisition of citizenship, free access to building materials, and tax credits).³¹ The program proved to be effective enough to stimulate successive waves of immigration – in Łódź, just nine years after its implementation, the population increased from 799 to 4343 people (from 1821 to 1830). Further increases in population followed very rapidly; the scale was unique in Europe, comparable only with fast-growing, relatively young American cities. From 1850 to 1900 the

²⁸ Jan Walczak, ed., *Dzieje robotnicze Śląska i Zagłębia Dąbrowskiego* (Katowice: Śląski Instytut Nauk, 1986). See also Adam Kałuża, *Przeciw carowi! Rok 1905 w Zagłębiu Dąbrowskim* (Sosnowiec: Muzeum w Sosnowcu, 2005).

²⁹ By the end of the century up to 1/3 of the workers were employed in factories hiring more than 1000 people. Zbigniew Pustoła, “Dynamika liczebności proletariatu przemysłowego,” in *Polska klasa robotnicza. Zarys dziejów*, vol. 1, part 2 (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1978).

³⁰ Ryszard Rosin and Mieczysław Bandurka, *Łódź 1423 - 1823 - 1973: zarys dziejów i wybór dokumentów* (Łódź: WKiSUM, 1974), 18.

³¹ Wiesław Puś and Stefan Pytlas, *Dzieje Łódzkich Zakładów Przemysłu Bawełnianego im. Obrońców Pokoju “Uniontex” (d. Zjednoczonych Zakładów K. Scheiblera i L. Grohmana) w latach 1827-1977* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1979), 11.

Łódź population increased by an astonishing 2006%, while London “only” increased by 192%, and Manchester, the industrial heart of England, a benchmark for rapid industrial growth, by 557%.³² In just a few decades, this place was transformed from a non-descript village into a city with 400,000 inhabitants by 1900.

The nature of transformation was also marked by the fact that the city was not a developed urban area where the structure of employment and property merely changed – rather, it was the creation of a new city built from scratch. The result was the emergence of an unusual industrial city, with its structure totally subordinated to the requirements of production and the market. The single-track growth led to high levels of specialization, and, from the 1860s onwards, more than half of the inhabitants were textile workers.³³ From the 1870s onwards, there were not enough people around and an inflow of rural populations intensified. Thus, most of the workers were born in villages, mainly in landless families; the peasant population became the main reservoir for recruiting an urban labor force substituting for proletarianized craftsmen.³⁴ Up to 2/3 of the population were first generation migrants, and 1/5 of all workers were single or separated from their families left in the rural areas.³⁵ This created a situation where the cost of biological reproduction was often externalized to the rural areas securing the basic subsistence of workers. Moreover, the specificity of the textile industry and the need for a disciplined labor force facilitated the feminization of labor, reaching a much higher proportion than in other industrial centers.³⁶ Conflicts resulting from class structure were intensified by ethnic and cultural boundaries. For example, a Polish worker had to face the oppression of a Jewish factory owner or a German foreman, supported by a tsarist regime equally foreign to him. However,

³²Calculations in Eugenia Podgórska, *Szkolnictwo elementarne w Łodzi w latach 1808-1914*, Prace Wydziału II Nauk Historycznych i Społecznych (Łódź: Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1966), 58. Further information on the urban growth in Jan Fijałek et al., eds., *Łódź: dzieje miasta do 1918 r.* (Warszawa: PWN, 1988). In English see Julian Janczak, “The National Structure of the Population in Łódź in the Years 1820-1938,” *Polin*, no. 6 (1991): 20–26.

³³ Gryzelda Missalowa, “Kształtowanie się klasy robotniczej przemysłu włókienniczego Łodzi w latach 1815-1870,” in *Włókniarze łódzcy: monografia*, ed. Józef Spychalski and Edward Rosset (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1966), 23–24.

³⁴ Żarnowska, *Klasa robotnicza Królestwa Polskiego, 1870-1914*, 132–36.

³⁵ Anna Żarnowska, “Rodowód i ruchliwość społeczna,” in *Polska klasa robotnicza. Zarys dziejów*, Stanisław Kalabiński, vol. I, part 2 (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1978).

³⁶In bigger textile mills female workers could be a majority, see Puś and Pytlaś, *Dzieje Łódzkich Zakładów Przemysłu Bawełnianego im. Obrońców Pokoju “Uniontex” (d. Zjednoczonych Zakładów K. Scheiblera i L. Grohmana) w latach 1827-1977*, 124.

another time he collaborated with a Jewish or German proletarian against exploitation by his countrymen. The proportion of Polish post-peasant populations grew, outnumbering Jewish and German inhabitants, who nevertheless remained a significant part of the city dwellers.³⁷ The social structure was characterized by a small presence of intelligentsia and strong, almost binary class polarization.³⁸ In sum, the city was characterized by a particular social mixture of rapidly proletarianized, multi-ethnic, feminized working class with few organic leaders or established class-based cultural milieus.

In these circumstances, the influx of migrants to the swelling urban centers did not trigger a larger drive towards cultural invigoration or political involvement.³⁹ The rhythm of industrial work was only incidentally punctuated by social protests. In 1861, Łódź witnessed a Luddite-style riot of impoverished weavers who attacked one of the first mechanized mills and attempted to destroy the steam engine.⁴⁰ In 1883 in Żyrardów, a strike of female textile workers indignant with the sexual misconduct of foremen and denigrating piece wages erupted. It was, however, only in 1892 when the first large wave of strikes and street fights happened in Łódź. A spontaneous strike after a May Day and parallel anti-Jewish pogrom in the neighboring shanty-town, Bałuty, were the first events which triggered a broader debate. While emerging socialist circles, for the first time, saw the potential for mass action, the bourgeoisie and intelligentsia were frightened by the growing problem of an almost destitute industrial working class. It was also the first time when the tsarist administration felt obliged to react in a way other than short-term street policing, and some concessions for the aspiring Polish-

³⁷ By the turn of the century the proportion of Poles (according to language classification) reached 46%, while Germans made up to 21% and Jewish population 29%, see Janczak, "The National Structure of the Population in Łódź in the Years 1820-1938," 25. On local bourgeoisie and factory owners see Stefan Pytlas, "The National Composition of Łódź Industrialists before 1914," *Polin*, no. 6 (1991): 37-56; Stefan Pytlas, *Łódzka burżuazja przemysłowa w latach 1864-1914* (Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1994).

³⁸ While older scholarship stresses the complete lack of educated groups, this conviction was recently revised, see Marzena Iwańska, "Garść refleksji i postulatów badawczych w związku ze stanem badań nad inteligencją łódzką w dobie zaborów," *Rocznik Łódzki* LIII (2006): 89-113.

³⁹ Żarnowska, *Klasa robotnicza Królestwa Polskiego, 1870-1914*, 102-57; Żarnowska, "Rewolucja 1905-1907 a aktywizacja polityczna klasy robotniczej Królestwa Polskiego."

⁴⁰ Jarosław Kita, Natalia Królikowska, and Cezary Pawlak, *Bunt, masa, maszyna: protesty łódzkich tkaczy w kwietniu 1861 roku* (Łódź: Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 2011).

speaking skilled workers were made.⁴¹ In 1892 there were still no stock repertoires of contention, and workers, when gathered, spontaneously attempted to elect their own king.⁴² This situation was about to change, however. Initially as a weak undercurrent, later as a massive movement, the educational situation also began to evolve.

Not surprisingly, the conditions for educational pursuits were not easy. The school system was extremely limited due to the general educational policies of the tsarist empire, made additionally worse by the repressive measures taken against Russian Poland. Only a few children of working class background were able to attend school at all, barely being able to read and write afterward.⁴³ Up to the age of twelve, children rarely worked for wages. Thus, it was sometimes possible to send the offspring to the “official” school. It was, however, usually limited to three years and highly ineffective concerning the didactic process. Combined classes, where already trained children were used to teach the younger fellow-pupils instead of proceeding further with their own educational path, did not help the educational goals, but it was some form of school nonetheless.⁴⁴ It was, moreover, a widely proliferated conviction among “the adults” that some schooling would not harm. Alternatively, at least some families were able and willing to send a child (more rarely the subsequent ones) to an unofficial private teacher, some student or pauperized intelligentsia members for “private lessons”, usually with a couple of other children in a conspiratorially rented room.⁴⁵ These pockets of

⁴¹ On the swelling “national question” and tsarist responses see Laura Crago, “The ‘Polishness’ of Production: Factory Politics and the Reinvention of Working-Class National and Political Identities in Russian Poland’s Textile Industry, 1880-1910,” *Slavic Review* 59, no. 1 (2000): 16–41; Yedida S. Kanfer, “Łódź: Industry, Religion, and Nationalism in Russian Poland, 1880-1914” (Yale University, 2011).

⁴² On the repertoires of contention see Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834*. About somehow mysterious proceedings of this short-lived political constituency see Adam Próchnik, *Bunt łódzki w roku 1892. Studium historyczne* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1950); Paweł Samuś, ed., “*Bunt łódzki*” 1892 roku: (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1993).

⁴³ More information on the level of education among workers, see Anna Żarnowska, “Zasieg oświaty elementarnej wśród klasy robotniczej królestwa polskiego w drugiej poł XIX wieku,” *Z pola walki*, no. 2–3 (1973): 61–77.

⁴⁴ There were deliberate attempts to limit access of the working-class children to any form of schooling apart from these three-year municipal schools. The Russian superintendent in charge of education, Alexander Apukthin, issued a secret directive to the school directors to prevent them from accepting working class children to gymnasium. Later, special schools for this group were created in urbanized areas. On general education see Podgórska, *Szkolnictwo elementarne w Łodzi w latach 1808-1914*; Leonard. Szymański, *Zarys polityki caratu wobec szkolnictwa ogólnokształcącego w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1815-1915* (Wrocław: AWF, 1983).

⁴⁵ On various forms of informal and usually illegal, private education see Żarnowska, “Zasieg oświaty elementarnej wśród klasy robotniczej królestwa polskiego w drugiej poł XIX wieku”; Żarnowska, *Robotnicy Warszawy na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*; Adam Światło, *Oświata a polski ruch robotniczy 1876-1939* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1981).

educational chances often ended abruptly, which only triggered a further will to learn among some of the more intellectually vigorous working class children and adolescents.

Similarly, the possibilities for professional mobility for Polish workers were extremely limited. Even in large industrial hubs there were only rare positions in vocational training available.⁴⁶ In cities like Łódź, the founding of more modern professional schools with larger teaching capacities was a major theme in local reformatory discourses expressed in the press and by more outspoken public opinion.⁴⁷ The situation was not much better in industrial plants where high-ranking staff were often “imported” along with technology from abroad or recruited from the generally more affluent and better educated German population (esp. in Łódź and Dąbrowa Basin). In this context, it is no wonder that any form of party-orchestrated education or alternative forms of mastery and upward mobility within the party structure were attractive for people striving for more fulfilling lives.

Politics and education in the circle

More ambitious young workers were eager to participate in alternative forms of education. Those youngsters who were lucky enough met some educational circles. Such circles, focused on reading, training or transferring general knowledge, were a local mutation of the “Sunday school” movement and a relatively broad phenomenon at the turn of the century.⁴⁸ Concurrently, informal educational practices took hold in Russian Poland. Here, however, they were not only informal but actually illegal, since any educational activity required endorsement of the appropriate tsarist office, and any gatherings of this kind might be subjected to punitive measures. This repression notwithstanding, new forms of underground education emerged and libraries and reading rooms

⁴⁶ On the vocational training see Józef Miąso, *Szkolnictwo zawodowe w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1815-1915* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1966).

⁴⁷ On a local debate about the catastrophic lack of professional schools see Śmiechowski, *Łódzka wizja postępu*.

⁴⁸ On synthetic presentation of the generic features of the informal and continual working class education see Richard Johnson, “Really Useful Knowledge: Radical Education and Working Class Culture,” in *Working-Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory*, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies Classic Texts (Routledge, 2006); See also Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, 2nd ed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

supplemented discussion and educational circles.⁴⁹ In many cases, it was only there that the workers learned to read, as one of the intelligentsia voluntary teachers remarked:

The boys often could not read, and while being there for the first time I pointed out the need to learn, they were excited. I read to them a brochure with scientific content, and with happiness I registered that almost every one of them receives every sentence with burning eyes. In a very short time I noticed that everybody could already read to some extent. I had results and I was very happy that the circle was growing.⁵⁰

This was a typical communicative situation in which transfer of knowledge and stimulation through reading were initiated by the intelligentsia. Here, one may guess that, in addition, most probably “the boys” were doing their best to keep up with the expectations of the young lady from the intelligentsia – an important external authority – and upper class female – assessing their pursuits. Initially, almost all of the circles were organized by radical intelligentsia of different ideological shades but common commitment to educate “Polish people”. It was the milieu of post-positivist intelligentsia putting into practice the idea of working with “the people” and “for the people” which was the main driving force behind those activities. Thus, the practice of lecture and discussion circles was part and parcel of particular intelligentsia ethos of social service and enlightening mission “among the people”, which put into practice ideas of “organic work”.⁵¹ As a result, it was often tainted with paternalism and prescribed vision of future popular classes' identities and politics.

This paternalism notwithstanding, circles for workers were organized differently in respect to

⁴⁹ Miąso, *Uniwersytet dla Wszystkich; Światło, Oświata a polski ruch robotniczy 1876-1939*.

⁵⁰ Maria Szukiewicz, *Fragmenty mojej pracy partyjnej*, “Kronika ruchu rewolucyjnego w Polsce. Organ Stowarzyszenia Więźniów Politycznych” 1939, red. L. Krzesławski, A. Próchnik, Tom 5, nr 1(17), 36.

⁵¹ On intelligentsia ethos and mission see Walicki, *Polish Conceptions of the Intelligentsia and Its Calling*; Denis Sdvizkov, *Das Zeitalter der Intelligenz: Zur vergleichenden Geschichte der Gebildeten in Europa bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006). “Organic work” was one of the core ideas developed by Polish positivism. Positivism as an intellectual movement in the Polish context used to have particular features. Although referring to the Comtean positive philosophy, it was more of a socio-cultural program following the suppression of the 1863 January Uprising. Instead of inducing insurrectionist tendencies positivists called for “organic work”, bringing mundane civilizational progress through progressive and liberal measures in culture and economy, as means of contesting partitions and lack of nation state, see Positivism, in: Czesław Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Stanislaus A Blejwas, *Realism in Polish Politics: Warsaw Positivism and National Survival in Nineteenth Century Poland* (New Haven: Yale Concilium on International and Area Studies, 1984); Maciej Janowski, *Polish Liberal Thought before 1918* (Budapest ; New York: Central European University Press, 2004).

the structure of hierarchy than intelligentsia ones. Even if the transfer of knowledge was more vertical, with an intelligentsia speaker and working class listeners, they were actually less hierarchical. There were no permanent charismatic leaders as in intelligentsia-only circles.⁵² In the circles for workers, speakers changed according to the topic and rarely was there a deeper spiritual or intellectual agenda. Unlike circles dedicated for gymnasium youth, which concentrated more on debating “illegal” topics, ideas or books, the circles for workers were occupied more with general knowledge. Initially it was the basics of science, preliminary topics in history or geography, or propaedeutic of social science which was much more attractive for the workers.⁵³ Circles for workers were rather alternative “universities” with lectures, classes and discussions within which more “advanced” workers often had their say. Thus, the agency within the circle might be distributed irrespectively of the more one-dimensional transfer of the ready-made knowledge. Later, the intellectual communication was also more equal, as ranks of intellectually sound and experienced workers grew steadily.

These workers, after having developed their interests in general educational content, later willingly accepted the parties' ideological offer. The class on social science, if led by party members and committed socialists, could be used for agitation purposes as well.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, political agitation had to be tightly interwoven with the educational content. Conversely, general social knowledge was built on a backbone of militant concepts and popularized theories of the forefathers of socialism. Gradually, however, this political message came to the fore. Along with the development of political parties and growing ideological polarization of the intelligentsia, such educational activities were penetrated by an explicitly political agenda, be it for the class liberation of socialism

⁵² This particular form, allegedly strengthening some authoritarian disposition of Eastern European intelligentsia is analyzed in Helenena Nicolaysen, “Looking Backward: A Prosopography of the Russian Social Democratic Elite, 1883-1917” (Stanford University, 1991), 41–120; Liliana Riga, “Identity and Empire: The Making of the Bolshevik Elite, 1880-1917” (McGill University, 2000), 136–49.

⁵³ The Polish circles were organized similarly to the Russian ones, thus the literature on the latter can be of some relevance also here, see Pearl, *Creating a Culture of Revolution*, chap. 1; See also Wildman, *The Making of a Workers' Revolution: Russian Social Democracy, 1891-1903*, chap. 4. On Russian Poland see Miąso, *Uniwersytet dla Wszystkich*. On the Polish alternative education seen through the lens of the history of the intelligentsia, see Mencwel, *Etos lewicy*.

⁵⁴ Often the main aim of this general education was supplementing the very scarce body of skillful agitators, and for such work general knowledge was also useful. Such a situation is described for instance in: Franciszek Sternet, *Strajk styczniowo-lutowy r. 1905 na kolejach nadwislanskich*, “Niepodległość” 1935, Vol. XI, 241.

or rebirth of the nation of modern Polish nationalism.⁵⁵ The politicization of educational content progressed parallelly in socialist circles with more and more general educational activities organized by the parties' members or sympathizers, and within nationalist milieus, with the growing reach of the Society for National Education (Towarzystwo Oświaty Narodowej – TON). Subsequently, more party politics came in and limits separating general lectures from party meetings tended to be blurred. The circles began to be an explicitly politicized activity. Therefore, a short overview of party politics is presented here.

The political scene was highly fractured, and the level of antagonism between the parties was growing. One party, Social Democracy in the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy – hereafter SDKPiL), had founded its program, strategy, and agitation on class as the basic frame of reference and affiliation, and on labor unity as the main identity, overcoming or even annulling the national one.⁵⁶ It was a common struggle alongside the Russian proletariat for class goals and internationalist socialism, sublating the nation state based on exploitation, which was to be an efficient and appealing strategy. The seed for the party was initially a splinter group, opposed since 1893 to the “nationalist” tainting of the Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna – PPS). This second group indeed tried to combine class struggle with claims for national independence, and treated a sovereign Polish state as reconcilable with socialism. The labor struggle was in this perspective a means of regaining independence, and independence a way toward socialism. Particular writers differed, however, in respect to proportions of the two.⁵⁷ Such an inherent tension was a reason for the forthcoming split in 1906, which had its main cause in the

⁵⁵ After the demise of positivism as a master framework of patriotic activity for the younger generation of intelligentsia now more prone to active radical politics, the generation of anti-system radicals emerged, subsequently splitting into socialist left and populist and national democratic right, see Cywiński, *Rodowody niepokornych*; Mencwel, *Etos lewicy*; Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*.

⁵⁶ Robert Blobaum, Feliks Dzierżyński and the SDKPiL: A Study of the Origins of Polish Communism (Boulder : New York: East European Monographs ; Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1984); Paweł Samuś, *Dzieje SDKPiL w Łodzi 1893-1918*, Łódź (Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1984); Bronisław Radlak, *Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy w latach 1893-1904* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1979).

⁵⁷ Snyder, *Nationalism, Marxism, and Modern Central Europe*.

divergence of class and national claims in the party's political agenda.⁵⁸ More to the right, the circles connected with the “National Democracy” party and later their labor branch, the National Workers Union (Narodowy Związek Robotniczy – NZR, created in June 1905), took the nation as the basic form of affiliation. In the given circumstances, they abandoned any insurrectionary hopes and concentrated on the struggle for political and cultural autonomy and the right to use Polish in different spheres of life. The superiority of the national unity meant the abandonment of economic claims or class demands which could have acted against “Polish” industry. That equaled subordination to factory owners or landlords.⁵⁹ Despite this differentiation, all these milieus built corollary associations and stimulated workers' intellectual activities.

Those party-sponsored activities were composed of several concentric “spheres” of involvement. The politically active working class was not homogenous, and the level of involvement was very diversified. There were groups of sympathizers and regular participants of various lecture and discussion circles. Even if tighter groups of regular participants were not exceptionally large before revolutionary upheaval, they were quite influential as leaders of the workers' public opinion. The broader circle, dubbed by one of the PPS agitators as “the readers” (*czytacy*),⁶⁰ were permanent receivers of party publications and distributed brochures and books. However, those leaflets which had the biggest print-runs reached beyond any party structure. This created a particular form of

⁵⁸ Żarnowska, *Geneza rozłamu w Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej, 1904-1906*. On differences in theoretical sensitivity see Jadwiga Possart, *Struktury myślenia teoretycznego a kontrowersje ideologiczne: polemiki w publicystyce PPS w okresie rozłamu 1906-1908* (Książka i Wiedza, 1963). There is no major work on PPS in English. On negotiating the Jewish question see Zimmerman, *Poles, Jews, and the Politics of Nationality the Bund and the Polish Socialist Party in Late Tsarist Russia, 1892-1914*. The liberation struggle under the national banner as redeemable to socialism, and indeed more sensitive for intersection of identities and demands is presented in Eric Blanc, “National Liberation and Bolshevism Reexamined: A View from the Borderlands,” *John Riddell Marxist Essays and Commentary*, May 20, 2014, <http://johnriddell.wordpress.com/2014/05/20/national-liberation-and-bolshevism-reexamined-a-view-from-the-borderlands/>; Eric Blanc, “Anti-Imperial Marxism Borderland Socialists and the Evolution of Bolshevism on National Liberation,” *International Socialist Review*, no. 100 (2016).

⁵⁹ Crago, “The ‘Polishness’ of Production: Factory Politics and the Reinvention of Working-Class National and Political Identities in Russian Poland’s Textile Industry, 1880-1910”; Monasterska, *Narodowy Związek Robotniczy, 1905-1920*; Alvin Marcus Fountain, *Roman Dmowski, Party, Tactics, Ideology, 1895-1907* (Boulder; New York: East European Monographs; distributed by Columbia University Press, 1980); Grzegorz Krzywiec, *Chauvinism, Polish Style: The Case of Roman Dmowski (Beginnings: 1886-1905)*, Polish Studies--Transdisciplinary Perspectives (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition, 2016).

⁶⁰ Józef Dąbrowski, *Czerwona Warszawa przed ćwierć wiekiem: moje wspomnienia* (Poznań: Karol Rzepecki, 1925), 111–12.

structured readership (far more limited before the revolution than during it), composed of interested workers, and also those who first approached the leaflets by accident. Even if they were not supporters of any particular party, or were adherents of a different ideology, they nevertheless participated in a shared community of language and to some extent also a certain emotional community. They were as readers confronted with new languages describing the world, different than their everyday or professional vocabulary (I explore the leaflets and their language in detail in Chapter 3). The leaflets were often the only texts the workers actually read, but they were later vividly commented upon, debated and re-read aloud. In this way, party propaganda also stimulated general readership. The leaflets thus had a broad impact on readers.

It was not easy, however, to increase the number of receivers. In the reality of the tsarist state, executing additional repressive means in the rebellious multinational borderlands, such forms of political propaganda soon approached structural limitations. Further massive political education and political participation of workers was hardly possible in conditions of illegality and police repression.⁶¹ Forms of nascent civil society could emerge in tsarist Russia before 1905, as recent revisionist scholarship on Russian autocracy demonstrated. It was, however, in major cities of Russia proper and only among highly-ranked elites where those margins could be created.⁶² It required a revolution to change these conditions.

The situation indeed changed along with the revolutionary upheaval of 1905. Certain forms of action started to be legal or at least tacitly accepted due to a moderate liberalization of the tsarist regime. This included labor unions, more open debate on social issues in the press, and mushrooming associations to name only a few. The upsurge of political militancy paved the way for the vivid protest

⁶¹ Żarnowska, “Rewolucja 1905-1907 a aktywizacja polityczna klasy robotniczej Królestwa Polskiego”; Żarnowska, “Klasa robotnicza Królestwa Polskiego w rewolucji 1905-1907.”

⁶² Joseph Bradley, *State and Civil Society in Russia: The Role of Nongovernmental Associations* (National Council for Soviet and East European Research, 1997); Bradley, “Subjects into Citizens: Societies, Civil Society, and Autocracy in Tsarist Russia”; Joseph Bradley, *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia: Science, Patriotism, and Civil Society* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2009); Bauerkämper, *Die Praxis der Zivilgesellschaft: Akteure, Handeln und Strukturen im internationalen Vergleich*; Thomas Earl Porter, “The Emergence of Civil Society in Late Imperial Russia. The Impact of the Russo-Japanese and First World Wars on Russia,” *War and Society*, no. 23 (2005): 41–60.

culture. The secret educational circles or agitation meetings had prepared the participants to act more publicly once circumstances made it possible. Along with the revolutionary mobilization those workers trained in, reasoning and speaking were often important pillars of more open agitation and political claims made public. At the same time, large new groups joined the political cauldron of the revolution and public participation became an unprecedented mass experience.

Approaching the revolution

The revolutionary upsurge from January 1905 surprised almost everybody, from the tsarist administration to the leadership of the socialist parties to the rank and file party circles and, last but not least, to hitherto rarely politically-active workers. The first regular confrontation between socialist militants (mostly from PPS who organized the raid) and tsarist police took place in autumn 1904 (demonstration on Grzybowski square in Warsaw).⁶³ The atmosphere was tense because of the ongoing Russian-Japanese war and related drafts, strongly opposed by the Polish population. Thus, even before the direct outbursts of rioting and massive strikes, a certain feeling of anxiety is remembered, a mixture of longing, revived expectations, curiosity and awe.

In the year 1904 and to 1905 there was something out of joint, there was something strange in the air, because in houses of the working people, and on the fields and everywhere, one could meet people intrigued heavily by something. As a young boy I used to look on people playing cards, which was fashionable in those days, I was looking when the elder were playing. And now something changed, more of them gathered playing, but the play did not go on. One disputed on something and we, the youngsters, were often sent away so as not to listen. One could hear “socialism” often and I was excited. My mother told me often about socialists, who they were, that they wanted people to be equal, in order to remove exploitation. Father told me to be quiet.⁶⁴

⁶³ This surprise notwithstanding, some signs of tension were already visible before. Robert Blobaum is somehow right while arguing that in the Polish Kingdom the relevant timing should incorporate the start up of 1904 events predating 1905 clashes, already synchronous with the general upheaval in Russia. See Blobaum, *Rewolucja*. Also, scholars of the Russian Revolution pointed at earlier tensions, effectively broadening the time scope of the revolution to the 1904-1907, see Ascher, “Interpreting 1905.”

⁶⁴ Edward Skórkiewicz, *Pamiętnik rewolucji 1905 roku w Zagłębiu Dąbrowskim*, APL, Komitet Łódzki PZPR, folder 11718, p. 4.

Indeed, after years the socialist underground education had done its job. Yet socialist milieus remained underground and the narrow cadre organizations were hardly capable of stirring massive unrest out of hand. Nevertheless, there already must have been well-spread awareness of the sheer existence of some mysterious groups openly opposing the tsarist power apparatus and questioning existing factory relationships. There was also a slow growth of a general claim to a recognition of personal dignity in purely human terms, registrable in the petitions received by various tsarist and factory administrations.⁶⁵ It was perhaps a poignant feeling for workers hardly participating in open political or contentious activity before. Something was in the air.

It exploded in January 1905. A spark initiating mass resistance was lit by the events of the so-called “Bloody Sunday” in St. Petersburg. That event was the catalyst for the general strike of January 1905 when virtually the entire city of Łódź came to a stop, and waves of protest swept against disoriented policemen in Warsaw and other cities. Paroxysms of rioting hit with huge force, composed of a class strike, a national awakening, an economic opposition to growing deprivation, and a general refusal to endure the harsh regime, all at once. It was, perhaps above all, an ultimate demand for recognition of the basic human dignity of the worker, as well as for the right to give voice to his or her own situation. The very issue of who was a political subject was a basic stake of politics *tout court*. The main significance of the strike was precisely the claim for legitimacy of the proletariat. After the first general strike of January 1905 the Warsaw general-governor admitted that initially “workers, having ceased to work, did not raise any claims”.⁶⁶ It was a *par excellence* political event, not immediately carrying particular demands.

This *political* dimension of strike was successful. Pages of various memoirs of the intelligentsia writers or party activists are filled with descriptions of calm and dignified behavior of workers who

⁶⁵ Abundant documentation of the pre-revolutionary language of claims may be found in petitions and protest letters issued to factory owners or different agencies of the tsarist administration. See petitions in Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 1*; Gąsiorowska-Grabowska and Kalabiński, *Źródła do dziejów klasy robotniczej na ziemiach polskich*. More petitions may be found in tsarist files, see for instance APL KGP 546, 547.

⁶⁶ Kalabiński and Tych, *Czwarte powstanie czy pierwsza rewolucja. Lata 1905-1907 na ziemiach polskich*, 116.

were appropriating the streets for marches seemingly without any strict purpose. They encouraged other workers to join and firmly insisted on café publicity to cease exquisite consumption “while workers are striking”.⁶⁷ The fact that without workers working the entire city ceased to function had a profound effect on everybody around. It very directly reshuffled social imaginary, bringing forth a group which had not occupied a prominent place before. Stanisław Brzozowski, a Polish philosopher then sympathetic to the socialist cause, was thrilled by events in the “city of blood and toil” (Łódź). He reoriented his entire philosophical project so as to recognize the most paramount significance of work in the world.⁶⁸ In one of his essays he expressed bluntly: “Besides the proletariat the present crisis did not reveal any other life form capable of development and purposeful action”.⁶⁹ Not so different tones were also sounded among the bourgeois public, which still believed in a more general cause of liberalization of the tsarist regime. For instance, one of the textile moguls of Łódź claimed in an interview that even “some factory owners revealed revolutionary mood, which in 1905 encompassed also the bourgeois” because they “they thought that they support a liberation movement, bringing attractive future for all”.⁷⁰ In a word, the workers gained an unprecedented political legitimacy.

Such a bid for pure political legitimacy did not correspond to any prior expectations. The size and “spontaneity” of the first strikes surprised and astonished all political factions. One of the local SDKPiL activists wrote in his memoirs:

⁶⁷ [Leon Wasilewski], *Strejk polityczny w Król. Polskiem*, Nakładem Administracji „Przedświtu” i „Naprzodu”, Kraków 1905, s. 22–23, see also Stanisław Pestkowski, *Wspomnienia rewolucjonisty* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1961), 32.

⁶⁸ Stanisław Brzozowski, *Kultura i życie: zagadnienia sztuki i twórczości w walce o światopogląd* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1973). Generally on Brzozowski see Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of “Western Marxism”*; Marzec, “Reading Polish Peripheral Marxism Politically.”

⁶⁹ Stanisław Brzozowski, *Literatura polska wobec rewolucji*, in Stanisław Brzozowski, *Współczesna powieść i krytyka literacka* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971), 224.

⁷⁰ *Wywiad u M. Poznańskiego*, “Rozwój” 1907, No 6. One of the members of liberal intelligentsia remembered: “So far [early 1905] everybody supported strikes. In the moment of outburst they were even supported by factory owners against whom they were nominally directed”, in: Aleksander Mogilnicki, *Wspomnienia: spisane w Łodzi w latach 1949-1955* (Warszawa: Barbara Izdebska, 2008), 95. The Warsaw-based association of engineers also expressed their admiration to the calm and dignity of the striking workers, see *Krwawe dni w Warszawie*, Warszawa 1905, 2. Many relations from the first days use the description of a strike as a feast [święto].

To what degree did our party in Łódź direct this strike? Very little. [...] The strike commenced without any proclamations [...], was spontaneous, and organizations were completely surprised by this enormous revolutionary blow.⁷¹

This situation changed when a complex interaction began between party agitators and workers. Initially, parties were not controlling strike mobilization whatsoever. The initial general strike, being a work stoppage and seizure of urban space, gave birth to different activities and strike-based repertoires of contention. Well-organized party structures capable of agitation and communication between factories, branches and cities emerged only later.⁷² The scattered groups of workers parading the cities and calling other crews to join ceased to be a typical sight in the striking days. Strikes were more synchronized with activities of the party structures able to coordinate expressions of dissatisfaction in different factories. This does not mean, however, that they were able to control them entirely or launch them at will. The parties, nevertheless, set the tone for striking activity. They pushed certain topics or inspired forms of expression for the felt grievances.

As a result, the form and content of striking activity bifurcated. Waves of single-factory strikes followed, aiming to fight for better wages, shorter working hours and better work conditions. At the same time, more all-encompassing strikes were organized under slogans less connected with the workplace. Workers were striking to address such issues as general proletarian cause (1 of May), solidarity with Russian workers (strikes supporting the Moscow uprising in December 1905), or dissatisfaction with the reforms of the tsarist autocracy (strikes against the Duma projects and election).⁷³ Social and political demands perpetuated different forms of protest.

⁷¹ Pestkowski, *Wspomnienia rewolucjonisty*, 32–33.

⁷² Party literature tried hard to build this general solidarity between factories, branches and regions. Almost every socialist journal directed toward working class readers contained a special section on “current news from factories and workshops”, which was the most popular part among readers. Editorial commentary on this issue in SDKPiL's journal see “Czerwony Sztandar” 1905, No 23, January, footnote on p. 9.

⁷³ For an overview see Anna Żarnowska, “Próba analizy ruchu strajkowego w Królestwie Polskim w dobie rewolucji 1905-1907,” *Przegląd Historyczny* 56, no. 3 (1956): 432–55. On dynamics in Łódź see Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*, 39–41. In Warsaw the rhythm of strikes was slightly different, with more involvement of non-working class participants, see Kiepuska, *Warszawa w rewolucji 1905-1907*, 79–97. On Dąbrowa basin the best description may be found in Kałuża, *Przeciw carowi! Rok 1905 w Zagłębiu Dąbrowskim*.

However, one cannot artificially separate the economic and political dimensions of the strike movement. While the first general strike was not a specifically economic one, soon claims for better working conditions arose and the actual situation in the factories in respect to wages and working hours improved.⁷⁴ The tsarist administration hoped that addressing economic grievances would calm down the general upheaval; thus, it put pressure on factory moguls to compromise as a part of emergency policing. Local economic strikes mushroomed after this initial success. This led to important gains which created the conditions for further action. Only with additional resources (e.g. time, moderate increase of income) was it possible to develop political and cultural activities. Even seemingly trivial shop floor negotiations, when successful, boosted worker self-assertion and capabilities for further action.

Nevertheless, the specialization of strikes bore witness to at least two important processes. Workers began to consciously strive for social and economic gains, cooperating closely between factories and departments within a single factory. For instance, when only one department crucial for the production process ceased to operate, the practical bargaining power was exactly the same as if the entire factory would have come to a stop. Other workers, however, were not deprived of their wage. At the same time, large, general political protests signified the rise of a broader feeling of solidarity or a certain form of imagined class community, populated by all the workers of the industry branch, the country, or even the entire Russian Empire.⁷⁵ This dimension was especially tangible in the general strikes encompassing all of Russian Poland (January 1905 and October-November 1905), or those only slightly smaller (May 1905, January 1906, May 1906), and the solidarity strikes with Russian workers (January 1905, December 1905).⁷⁶ The strikers must have felt at least some

⁷⁴ For detailed information on concessions and improvement of the living conditions after the first strikes Kalabiński and Tych, *Czwarte powstanie czy pierwsza rewolucja. Lata 1905-1907 na ziemiach polskich*, 626–628; Kamil Piskala, “1905 - rok z dziejów polskiego Manchesteru,” in *Rewolucja 1905. Przewodnik* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo “Krytyki Politycznej,” 2013), 221–22.

⁷⁵ Even if Anderson coined the term as referring to the perceived bond of national community, here it is rather class which became such a virtual yet no less effective frame of reference. See Benedict R. O’G Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed (London ; New York: Verso, 2006).

⁷⁶ Detailed analysis of strike waves with participant number estimations, data on strike days and change across time are presented for Łódź in Kazimierz Badziak and Paweł Samuś, *Strajki robotników łódzkich w 1905 roku* (Łódź:

connection with their distant comrades. Not only did the sense of contemporaneity of different events and struggles emerge but also an “imagined community” binding different workers not known in person. Strikes were also establishing a broader repertoire of contention characterized by “cosmopolitanism, autonomy and modularity”,⁷⁷ typical of modern protest forms. Their intended goals reached beyond the immediate here and now. Those were coordinated attempts aiming at a future, general political transformation, requiring systematic, step-by step, efforts.⁷⁸ Mobilization for such strikes, with abstract aims deferred in time, also testifies for a growing ability to comprehend the individual situation or problems within one factory in a broader perspective of a general political and economic situation, and corresponding will to protest for a general change.

However, this does not indicate that strikes were merely orchestrated from above by the party structures. Often, party functionaries just tried to resonate with the emotions of the street and factory and therefore called for strikes at the right moment, detecting the already heated atmosphere among the workers. Party committees were also able to win economic strikes even if it had not been party agitators who had called for them.⁷⁹ This contributed enormously to their prestige and subsequent influence as political entities capable of organizing “the masses”. Subsequently, as party structures developed into mass organizations with effective printing industries and distribution, they were often capable of calling a strike for political or even tactical reasons, and conversely, to cool down the revolutionary moods in moments considered inappropriate.⁸⁰ However, that was not always the case, and dynamics of mass protests sometimes had greater influence. Moreover, socialist parties were not

Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1985). On Warsaw see *Ruch strajkowy robotników przemysłowych Warszawy i guberni warszawskiej w okresie najwyższego jego natężenia*, cz. 1 i 2, in Stanisław Kalabiński, ed., *Polska klasa robotnicza: studia historyczne*, Polska klasa robotnicza: studia historyczne, t. 5 (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1973).

⁷⁷ Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834*, 347–349.

⁷⁸ A transformation masterfully described, concerning other factories on the industrial fringes of Imperial Russia, in Reginald E Zelnik, *Law and Disorder on the Narova River the Kreenholm Strike of 1872* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

⁷⁹ Władysław L. Karwacki, “Walka o wprowadzenie tzw. „konstytucjonalizmu fabrycznego” w latach rewolucji 1905-1907 w Łodzi,” *Rocznik Łódzki*, no. 15 (18) (1971); Karwacki, *Związki zawodowe i stowarzyszenia pracodawców w Łodzi (do roku 1914)*, 45; Pestkowski, *Wspomnienia rewolucjonisty*, 35. Analysis of party documents in this respect: see Strobel, *Die Partei Rosa Luxemburgs, Lenin und die SPD: der polnische*, 227–31.

⁸⁰ Some remarks on the dynamic relationship between parties and mass movement see Kaczyńska, “Partie polityczne a masowy ruch robotniczy”; Żarnowska, “Rewolucja 1905-1907 a aktywizacja polityczna klasy robotniczej Królestwa Polskiego”; Żarnowska, “Spojrzenie na rewolucję 1905 r. w polskiej historiografii - garść refleksji.”

always able to cooperate, so strike dynamics became an important factor in the inter-party struggle. Thus, calling for and against a strike might have been a trial for a given party's organizational capacity and fidelity of its adherents. In case of success, such a strike became a powerful weapon against opponents. Needless to say, such conduct very effectively prevented the creation of a common socialist or workers cause, muddying the waters, inducing conflict, sewing ambiguity and undermining the still precarious authority of the parties among the working class. Nevertheless, any successful strike was a transformative experience for its participants.

The strike itself was often combined with a very direct struggle for recognition of the dignity of the workers and renegotiation of factory relationships. Not only did the strikers openly put on trial the exhaustive power of the owner to dictate all the conditions, but they also explicitly questioned practices of hierarchical communication. Thus, the violence of a foreman and their power to arbitrarily punish workers was one of the main bones of contention. Foremen who were exceptionally tyrannical were simply thrown out of the factories. This practice was also combined with a kind of retributive humiliation. According to reports, they were carried away on wheelbarrows and dumped in some place which usually was not too clean.⁸¹ In labor-management negotiations it was often easier to agree on financial conditions than on personal issues. Workers often resisted most stubbornly against bringing the hated foreman back to the factory, fearing that any promise of improved behavior would not help for long.

In sum, strikes were an important form of public activity in the factory and on the streets. They included forms of direct communication (as within the strike and factory committees), negotiating political opinions and strategies, public performance (displaying banners, or announcements) and

⁸¹ Narrators telling about such events, either as their experience or as a general practice those days, see *Relacja Feliksa Zimnocha*, AAN, Zbiór relacji dotyczących ruchu robotniczego, R-141, p. 2; Władysław Nowicki ("Książę"), *Wspomnienia z 1905-1906 roku*, in Feliks Tych, ed., *Archiwum ruchu robotniczego*, Archiwum ruchu robotniczego, t. 3 (Książka i Wiedza, 1976), 95.; Edward Skórkiewicz, *Pamiętnik rewolucji 1905 roku w Zagłębiu Dąbrowskim*, APŁ KŁ PZPR, t. 11718, p. 9; Henryk Bitner, *Rok 1905 w Łodzi*, "Z pola walki" 1931, No. 11-22. On factory conflicts and complicated negotiations see Karwacki, "Walka o wprowadzenie tzw. „konstytucjonalizmu fabrycznego” w latach rewolucji 1905-1907 w Łodzi”; Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*; Richard D. Lewis, "Labor-Management Conflict in Russian Poland: The Lodz Lockout of 1906-1907," *East European Quarterly* VII, no. 4 (1974): 413-34.

complex forms of public sphere such as speeches or debates. These were the crucial dimensions of a new mode of working class public presence, which is examined in the following section.

Being in public

The urban public sphere of the pre-revolutionary Polish Kingdom did not leave much space for working class presence. Intense military policing of the autocratic state limited, if not prevented, any political expression concerning class-relationships and the “national question”. Party activity of any kind was illegal and diligently policed with multiple measures directed against various rebellious subjects, from “owners” of socialist leaflets to national press editors. Workers were populating the streets while rushing to work and going back home, but they were hardly considered as legitimate users of the urban space.⁸² Factory relationships were highly hierarchical and possibilities for negotiation scarce. Reasoning was not tolerated. “The entrepreneur considered himself a chosen one, for whom the subordinates were obliged to look with reverence and obligation”, reported one of the Warsaw left-liberal titles soon after the shock of the revolution.⁸³ All means were used to keep workers in their place. Concurrently, workers themselves were burdened with harsh living conditions, subdued within the tsarist-capitalist configuration of power, and still too disorganized to launch an alternative public sphere grounded in workers’ values, habits and life contexts. The problems were also not openly debated by external observers. Undoubtedly, harsh preventive censorship severely limited any debate on social, let alone political issues.⁸⁴ “This situation has completely changed”, the author of the aforementioned article resolutely announced, in no other moment than the most turbulent

⁸² Kamil Śmiechowski, Marta Sikorska-Kowalska, and Kenshi Fukumoto, *Robotnicy Łodzi drugiej połowy XIX wieku. Nowe perspektywy badawcze* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2016).

⁸³ *Echa bezrobocia*, “Kurier Codzienny”, 7 VI 1905, No. 56, 2, quoted in Kiepuska, *Warszawa w rewolucji 1905-1907*, 96.

⁸⁴ On tsarist censorship in general, see Charles A. Ruud, *Fighting Words: Imperial Censorship and the Russian Press, 1804 - 1906* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009). On the situation in the Kingdom of Poland, see Bartłomiej Szyndler, *Dzieje cenzury w Polsce do 1918 roku* (Kraków: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1993). The local censor’s offices were very sensitive for political and social issues, see Kamil Śmiechowski, “Strategie władz carskich wobec łódzkiej prasy codziennej do 1914 roku,” *Klio. Czasopismo Poświęcone Dziejom Polski i Powszechnym* 28, no. 1 (June 6, 2014): 63–83, doi:10.12775/KLIO.2014.004.

month of strikes and street fights in the middle of 1905.⁸⁵ Workers after the initial outburst of resistance started to organize themselves and be organized by emissaries of political parties.

Soon after the strikes broke out, the workers began to form “strike committees”, which were gradually transformed into semi-legal and more structured factory committees. This was an important means to negotiate with the management, and constituted first bodies of collective bargaining in a time when labor unions were still entirely illegal. Moreover, it was also an essential platform of the emerging political will of the workers. It was within this framework where factory crews were for the first time able to elect their representatives and simultaneously were forced to negotiate among themselves different interests, opinions and strategies.⁸⁶ Similarly, strike activity was not limited to simply bringing work to a stop. The rallies, marches and mass meetings accompanying strikes were a manifestation of the workers' presence in the public sphere and important forms of public participation. In times of revolutionary upheaval, mass-meetings (“*masówki*”) were organized almost everywhere, and streets turned into displays of political ideals and collective emotions. One of the militants recalled:

For the very first time, lawful posters appeared. They announced rallies organized by socialist parties. Two weeks of civic freedoms given by the tsarist suffocated by the revolution were greatly utilized by socialist parties. (...). In theater halls (...) in factory halls, (...) and many others rallies were held with many thousands of participants. There were also discussion rallies on which programs of the PPS and the SDKPiL were thoroughly discussed.⁸⁷

These rallies contributed significantly to the politicization of participants and funneled their enthusiasm into the mass entry of political parties. Another author of a memoir remembered that “just

⁸⁵ *Echa bezrobocia*, “Kurier Codzienny”, 7 VI 1905, No. 56, 2, quoted in Kiepuska, *Warszawa w rewolucji 1905-1907*, 96.

⁸⁶ Pestkowski, *Wspomnienia rewolucjonisty*, 35; Karwacki, *Związki zawodowe i stowarzyszenia pracodawców w Łodzi (do roku 1914)*, 45–47; Błobaum, *Rewolucja*, 99.

⁸⁷ Henryk Bitner, *Rok 1905 w Łodzi*, “Z pola walki” 1931, No. 11-12, quoted in Feliks Bąbol, *Łódzkie barykady: wspomnienia uczestników rewolucji 1905 - 7 roku* (Łódź: Komitet PZPR i Woj. Rady Związków Zawodowych, 1955), 387.

from the first freedom days in 1905 I joined the PPS, I participated in almost all demonstrations and rallies and I distributed party literature”.⁸⁸ Politics loomed large and the streets, regardless of the police and military repression, became vivid spaces bustling with speeches, polemics, and visual expressions of political commitment. On the days of mass strikes, workers left factories and, often wearing elegant Sunday attire, marched from one factory to another proudly displaying their socialist insignia in public.⁸⁹ The practical aim was to encourage other possible participants to join the strike. However, the implicit rationale of acquiring political visibility and staging their ideological commitments was probably even more important. Such expressionist manifestations reconstructed the public domain on yet another level.

These actions questioned class-based partition of bodies and practices in public. Manifestations and rallies, especially at the beginning of the revolution, did have an inclusive character, encompassing a vast palette of social milieus. Therefore, they directly fostered encounters and collisions of bodies in the urban public space. They were acts of staging of a trans-class body politic on the streets. Thus, revolution simultaneously intensified the urban predicament – in Judit Bodnar’s wording, “the tension between the physical proximity and moral remoteness of city dwellers” – and temporarily overcame it.⁹⁰ After the announcement of the October Manifesto, when the Tsar, under the pressure of strikes and riots, admitted to the people basic political freedoms, euphoric moods proliferated. In Łódź, Warsaw, and other cities of the Polish Kingdom, crowds flocked to main streets and squares in order to manifest their enthusiasm and put into practice the declared freedoms.⁹¹ Moreover, numerous political gatherings took place in private flats and people met and debated in various auditoriums. Speakers and listeners included not only local intelligentsia and bourgeoisie but also workers.⁹² The materiality and class composition of public participation changed, workers

⁸⁸ Stefan Sobotka, *Wspomnienia Żyrardowiaka*, “Niepodległość” 1934, Vol. IX, p. 377.

⁸⁹ On public street performances see Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*.

⁹⁰ Judit Bodnar, “Reclaiming Public Space,” *Urban Studies* 52, no. 12 (2015): 2091, doi:10.1177/0042098015583626.

⁹¹ Samuś, *Wasza kartka wyborcza jest silniejsza niż karabin, niż armata...*, 210–13.

⁹² On attempts to call various political gatherings as reflected in tsarist reports, see Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 2*, 488–89. It is often hard to assess to what extent the speakers were workers or, rather, representatives of the workers issue. However, workers speaking, for good and for worse, definitely made

speaking publicly and being listened to was not a common practice for either of the involved.

It is probably hard to report on the atmosphere of those days in scholarship. Instead of this, let me extensively quote a contemporary writer, Józef Dąbrowski [aka Grabiec], former member of PPS, here writing as a secretary of the Warsaw newspaper “Kurier Codzienny” (loosely associated with the PPS). Regardless of, or perhaps because of, its stylistic abundance, it gets much closer to the atmosphere characteristic of those days. It contains a particular mixture of high expectation and excitement already tainted by ambiguity. It also bears witness to the high level of pluralization and almost uncontrolled multiplication of political identities. Certainly not least, it demonstrates the intermingling of various, hitherto separated class milieus.

Demonstrations on the streets.... Police and patrols powerless ... [...] on the corner of Sienna and Marszałkowska a march comes, pupils (*sztuba*), workers, girls... I recognize the banners of the “Proletariats” [PPS Proletariat was a small faction of the socialist movement somehow between “main” PPS and SDKPiL]. There is a handful of them, they sing squeakily, “To the barricades!” [*Na barykady!*, one of the more popular socialist songs] [...] The police and an army squad approaches. Apparently against the proletarians. “To hell with them!” They passed... I go further. Suddenly I hear shouts behind me – Are they already fighting, aren't they? I turn around instinctively and I am dumbfounded... the “Proletariats” roar “Long live”, “Hurrah” and carry the policemen in the air. By the banner nailed to a wooden pole like a church pennon, on the shoulders of “the people” a fat constable is sending kisses with his hand, like [Helena] Bogorska [famous singer and actress]; the workers greet the soldiers... The devil takes me... The pavement splits [...].⁹³

The memoir continues so as to present the ecstatic experience of the forthcoming days already tainted with ambiguity regarding the rivaling political forces and “the masses” acting:

Dusk. Warsaw looks unprecedentedly exceptional... Streets are full [of people], there is no sign of the police. Crowds dressed elegantly, illumination, dominated by red lampons. Hum. From every side “the Red” [The Red Banner – *Czerwony Sztandar* – one of the revolutionary songs]. We are constantly passing the workers' marches [...] We

their way into the memories of proletarian autobiographers and excited or frightened intelligentsia alike. Thus, all the parties felt the difference in partitions of political visibility.

⁹³Józef Grabiec [Dąbrowski], *Pierwszy tydzień listopadowy Warszawy przed dwudziestu laty. Notatki*, “Świat” 1925, No. 47, 6, quoted in Samuś, *Wasza kartka wyborcza jest silniejsza niż karabin, niż armata...*, 213–14.

approached a great scene... the march comes, red banners, red lampoons, they sing “the Red”. It seems like it's a revolution... Suddenly around the corner a dozen of hussars arrive... Obviously, according to the habit “powstancy kochajoncy ubirajut, kak zajoncy” [in Polonized, phonetic Russian, roughly: the lovely insurgents flee like hares – WM]. Some more nervous revolutionaries escape in panic, and they bump into us. We call for order – by mercilessly hitting them with our walking sticks in their heads, ordering them to stand still and come back. Finally the attempt is successful. The march splits [so as to let the hussars go]. The hussars are riding through... Near the red banner – they salute. This was not like that ever before! The crowd becomes enthusiastic. On the Marszałkowska street about 8 o'clock – I hear for the first time “Poland Is Not Yet Lost” [*“Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła!”*, incipit of a patriotic song about fighting for national independence, the future anthem of the Polish republic]. Dozen of adolescents, holding their hands walk in the middle [of the street]. Apparently, the “Kilińszczycy” [the members of the association named after Jan Kiliński, a popular patriotic hero of the artisan background active in Kościuszko uprising of 1794] attempt to organize a march. [...] On the Nowy Świat street I see the march composed of craftsmen and women. The power of tertiaries [*tercjarki*, female members of the religious association], various hens. A lot of serious foremen. Over the crowd there is a giant white banner waving. And a song is heard: “Who entrusts himself to his Lord's safekeeping” [*“Kto się w opiece”* - a religious hymn]. The Christian democracy was able to organize a march on the spot. There are about two thousands of them. [...] A moment breeds people, or at least street speakers. Today it seems that the same happened with people as with the apostles on the Pentecost. An epidemic oratory is ruling the day. On every corner there are speakers – they are giving orations – either from a window, or from the lamppost or standing on a chair carried out from the guardian [’s room], or they are carried on shoulders of their neighbors. They rant and rave on the tsarat, the bourgeois, the bondage... the orations are heard in Polish, Russian, Jewish [Yiddish].⁹⁴

This vivid political culture entered into a certain lacuna left by older communal networks often torn apart along with migration to cities and new forms of industrial labor. New practices mediated experiences of urban life and allowed for the articulation of grievances that were looming large.⁹⁵ On the other hand many earlier cultural forms of rural origin were maintained by fresh urban dwellers. Socialists utilized many elements of religious imagery and rhetoric, without any direct connection with the allegedly “religious” or “eschatological” qualities of their ideology.⁹⁶ It was grounded in

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ This is the main framing Scott Ury proposes to understand massive political participation of the Jews of Warsaw around 1905, see Ury, *Barricades and Banners*. For a poignant description of transition from peasant child into conscious urban worker and immersion in the new world of a big city and modern factory, see Lucjan Rudnicki, *Stare i nowe* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1979).

⁹⁶ As it is claimed by some researchers of Marxism, as practiced among the people. For the best presentation of this line of argumentation, see Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000). My polemic with this position is presented in Wiktor Marzec, “Vernacular Marxism. Proletarian Readings in Russian Poland around the 1905 Revolution,” *Historical Materialism*,

certain intransigence of cultural forms and repertoires.⁹⁷ Thus a politicized open air festivity (“majówka”) resembled in many respects a village party with food, singing and dancing. One of the participants remembered that:

When spring came, lecture circles usually moved with their activities (...). There were presentations, declamations going on (...). After lectures, a meal and last but not least dances, already in the evening a “march” was organized (...). One hanged a red lining or a handkerchief on a walking stick, it was carried on the front and imitated a banner, further in the “march” went the participants of the meeting (majówkowicze) and sang (...) of course singing unbearably out of tune and tailoring the melody to their own musical tastes and abilities.⁹⁸

The nationalists, in turn, were doing different things than conspicuous dancing or unruly singing. They cultivated the national body under more explicit hierarchy and discipline:

Excursions enjoyed great popularity, [they] were organized during the summer month in the Wawer woods, where in the fresh air lectures were listened to, political discussions were performed and gymnastics was done, under the leadership of Stefan Dziewulski.⁹⁹

Regardless of these differences, in both contexts political and intellectual activities played an important role during such evenings. As one proletarian agitator remembers, “during those gatherings there used to be one or two hundred people or more. There was always music, and one danced and played. But the most paramount element were the agitation speeches”.¹⁰⁰ In this way, political message was transferred through cultural practice. Simultaneously, the cultural practice performed in public redrew limits of the political.

Just as past cultural forms helped to carry political agitation, they also shaped new repertoires

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⁹⁷ More about this complex relationship in historical detail, see Chwalba, *Sacrum i rewolucja*.

⁹⁸ Dąbrowski, *Czerwona Warszawa przed ćwierć wiekiem: moje wspomnienia*, 113.

⁹⁹ Ludwik Dziąg, *Ze wspomnień kilińczyka*, “Kiliński” 1936 No. 3, 123.

¹⁰⁰ Marian Płochocki, *Wspomnienia działacza SDKPIL* (Iskry, 1956), 130.

of contention. Political demonstration with singing and banners bears much resemblance to a Corpus Christi procession or other church rituals. Even the melodic structure of songs popular among militant workers is relatively similar to the church anthems with their contemplative pompousness and repetitiveness.¹⁰¹ Doubtlessly, the tradition of public funeral attended by crowds of political allies of the dead was important because it was one of the few relatively legitimate forms of public gatherings under tsarism. However, it was also because it was just the most established form of expressing emotions in public and joining with others of similar sentiment. It was important to build forms of public participation familiar for the participants and not create unnecessary exclusion.

In order to secure its broad impact, the new public domain of workers had to be inclusive. Thus, it was also important to create a familiar atmosphere. Here workers did not feel inadequate as would be the case in many transplanted forms of bourgeois public sphere, which maintained gentle mechanisms of exclusion, be it in regard to the manner of speaking or a required dress code. For instance, it was not recommended to wear exquisite clothes to workers' gatherings; neat and modest working attire was encouraged instead. It was intended not only to spare money for strike funds, but also so as not to induce the implicit rivalry in elegance, which would repel some more modest or poor comrades.¹⁰² While performing in public in front of the external gaze, workers often wore Sunday clothes and elegant hats. By this performance they assumed the mantle of citizenship in new circumstances. In their own company, however, they often tried to keep the neat but low-profile elegance in order to let their dignity flourish as workers among others.

In sum, all those forms of presence on the streets and squares ushered people into the public realm. It made them visible among themselves and for others. The workers noticed how numerous they are, and so did the urban elites. During the rallies and meetings, bodies of different classes and habits could rub shoulders. People might accustom themselves with one another, learn and talk, but

¹⁰¹ An outlook of singing culture and lyrics may be found in Eugeniusz Ajnenkiel, *Czerwona lutnia: Pieśni robotnicze* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1964).

¹⁰² Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*, 317–37. Alcohol and tobacco were banned to prevent demoralization and gather money for the strike fund as well. A report of the tsarist police on this see Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim*, tom 1, cz. 2, 9.

also openly quarrel. Political speeches of different breeds mushroomed, exposing listeners to new, contentious and conflicted political ideas. Such plurality also concerned languages, cultures and ethnicities, where “orations Polish, Russian, Jewish” were heard. This did not pass without notice, and many were frightened by new contenders undermining the social order. Also, the presence of many languages approached resistance. Suddenly, those hitherto held illegitimate, or just foreign, also demanded the right to conspicuous presence in the streets, so far empty because of repression but considered Polish by the decent citizens of the nation (I will get back to this reaction later). Those groups greeted, with some relief, intensified tsarist policing aimed yet again to push the unwanted elements out of sight.

Publicization of the space of production

As the tsarist repressive measures increased, workers were not always able to demonstrate in the streets. Being deprived of the right of civil presence simultaneously in a political and spatial dimension, they politicized the spaces of production. Being reduced to the sphere of production and not being able to be properly visible beyond it, they creatively modified the space they were assigned to. They re-appropriated many seemingly “anti-public” spaces of production and thus reclaimed them for public purposes, so that they could become places of open discussion and contact with political ideas. Factories became public spheres. While still embedded in the context of production, they nevertheless began to be commonly perceived as spaces of political expression as well.¹⁰³ One of the creators of those politicized spaces recalled:

The [political] work became massive. Still illegal, it became somehow semi-public. In factories mass meetings were held with the party emissaries, discussions were organized. Hundreds of people participated in these gatherings. Factory organization were growing fast and massively.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*, 113–18.

¹⁰⁴ Waław Konderski, *Wspomnienia działacza związków zawodowych SDKPiL*, “Z pola walki” 1961, nr 1, 74.

There, workers gained autonomy. They built a space governed by their own rules, (usually) free of police supervision but also free of the internalized gaze of the other social classes, which might have disciplined public practices, as forcefully compliant to the tacit laws of the bourgeois public sphere. Those spaces of political activity were eagerly protected against the inroads of any foreign elements in order to maintain those precious pockets of freedom which were so hard to get.¹⁰⁵ The awareness of this tension appeared in biographical testimonies of participants involved:

The repressions were present above all on the streets, leaving factories and mines alone, and it was there, where almost the entire organizational life moved. There meetings and discussion rallies were organized, in factories often training of defense squads took place and weapons were kept. It was a form of exterritoriality, as even if many of those factories were under special supervision of the police or army squads, even if police and soldiers were constantly in guardrooms and toilets, they rarely entered departments and workshops, because they felt foreign and unsafe there, and traitors were still rare.¹⁰⁶

As a result, factory spaces were turned into relatively independent proletarian public spheres. There, the issues concerning workers' lives were hotly debated in public. Mass political meetings mushroomed with mobile agitators proselytizing ideas close to their hearts, party representatives performing political orations, and last but not least workers debating among themselves, making sense of this vivid inflow of political content. Announced political programs were used as means to explain the world around them and relate the everyday experiences to broader social processes, which is explored further in Chapter 3. Those debates supplemented work activity or just replaced the everyday toil, as they typically happened during strikes. These mass gatherings and discussions created new

¹⁰⁵ These were the spaces typical for big factories hiring mostly Christian workers. They were big enough to enable the existence of these private-public spaces in the cracks of process of production, and out of the sight of factory owners or military staff. In the case of smaller workshops with Jewish crews this function might have been played by "the market" (*birzha*), where Jewish employees of smaller workshops met to exchange political ideas. It was also possible to do it on the street because of a strong asset they had – impenetrable language, which secured them against policemen and spies. It was equally eagerly protected if any of them entered, see Shtakser, *The Making of Jewish Revolutionaries in the Pale of Settlement*.

¹⁰⁶ Stanisław Nowosiński (Zawierucha), *Z czasów rewolucji 1905 roku i późniejszych walk o niepodległość Polski*, "Niepodległość" 1932, Vol. V, 385.

communicative circuits and public contexts not previously known to the workers who were mobilized politically for the first time in such large numbers. In those spaces they were acquiring political knowledge and certain public ethos of participation.

Similarly, private rituals, present from time to time in factory spaces, now gained particularly political significance. Even personal holidays were saturated with political content, leading to tight interweaving of private and public domains, as of one worker recalled:

[W]hen I entered the guardroom I was surrounded [by people], lifted up on hands and carried to the other room on the second floor, while at the time “the Red” was sung [“The Red Banner” - one of the most popular socialist songs those days]. After I had been carried into the room, like an idol, I saw an exceptional decoration made of plants and flowers, and my weaving workshop was especially distinguished, it was flooded with greens and flowers, and on the top of the machine [there were] three shuttles and the factory banner with the inscription “Long live the SDKPiL” and “Down with the tsarat”. I was so perplexed that I several times tried to move the workshop in order to start it, not realizing that the regulator is tied with a string, which meant [that I had to] ransom myself.¹⁰⁷

In such situations workers were able to assume this kind of self definition which normally they were refused in the workplace. They were no longer subsumed under hierarchical forms of communication, if not direct bondage. Instead they could be socialized into the world of equals debating with each other.¹⁰⁸ This realm was regulated by certain tacit rules and explicit regulations, which secured the right to equal expression, promoted self-control and somehow funneled the untamed energies of wannabe speakers. Not always were they effective, and growing political antagonization again allowed aggression if not violence to sneak into the proletarian public sphere. In general, however, moderate factory constitutionalism, epitomized in autonomous decisions about the organization of debate, strike policies, disciplining petty thieves and the like was a significant

¹⁰⁷ Władysław Nowicki (“Książę”), *Wspomnienia z 1905-1906 roku*, in: Tych, *Archiwum ruchu robotniczego*, 91. This was a name day, politicized especially in respect to political militants as this narrator just got out of political imprisonment.

¹⁰⁸ On this dimension in other factory contexts in the region, see Shtakser, *The Making of Jewish Revolutionaries in the Pale of Settlement*; Welskopp, *Das Banner der Brüderlichkeit: die deutsche Sozialdemokratie vom Vormärz bis zum Sozialistengesetz*.

means to decide about the collective and learn to act in public.¹⁰⁹ In those rapidly proliferating spaces, workers found episodic experience of public sociality, which would be so important later on when creating more long-lived workers' associations in other contexts.

Moreover, staging the proletarian political meeting in a way which stimulated debate gave the participants a share in political community. An identity could be reconstructed anew, for instance, as a respectful speaker capable of convincing others of his arguments. In factory meetings, articulation of a political utterance also demanded an ability to convince others of a particular argumentation. Talented speakers sprung up, being able to build a special form of authority out of their political zeal and argumentative wit. One of the autobiographers remembered his brother who became an emerging oration-star.

[He] used to often speak on mass-meetings and workers gatherings. He was outstandingly smart. His logics and arguments made him a bogymen for the PPS people [the brother was SDKPiL member]. As they had spotted him on the assemblies organized by the PPS they were frightened by his speeches. In discussion he backed them into a corner, so they often attempted to throw him away by force, and if they were not able to do so, they interrupted assemblies.¹¹⁰

This fragment demonstrates that rank and file workers also participated in the speaking culture and were encouraged to learn how to speak and argue effectively.¹¹¹ Being a successful speaker must have been an important component of the brother's identity, as he was remembered precisely in this respect. This was a viable alternative way of building personal dignity posited against the workplace. Moreover, it was also a modern experience of fracturing the self and introducing alternative domains

¹⁰⁹ For regimes of speech and communication important for creating workers institutions and "alternative cultures" in German contexts, see Vernon L. Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture: Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Welskopp, *Das Banner der Brüderlichkeit: die deutsche Sozialdemokratie vom Vormärz bis zum Sozialistengesetz*.

¹¹⁰ Stanisław Perkowski, *Życiorys*, AAN, ZAODRR, 4545, p. 12.

¹¹¹ Also, minutes from the party gatherings confirm that training working-class speakers was a serious issue and a deliberately pursued strategy. For instance, the leaders of the PPS before the revolution were already complaining about "lies" used by the SDKPiL agitators but also admitted that their own speakers were just badly prepared to resist those "empty phrases" adequately, and win the bids. See *Sprawozdanie z zebrania kierownictwa PPS w 1903 roku*, AAN, Mf 1256/10.

of meaning or social roles and respective identities which by itself offered new spaces of freedom.¹¹² After all, a political debate was an exciting experience not known before, not to mention an attractive alternative to the everyday factory or workshop work. The context of political debate was highly pluralized which stimulated the development of polemical abilities and rendered effective speakers even more desirable. Thus, the plurality of roles within the proletarian life context was supplemented by the plurality of political positions.

Plural commitments and democratic surplus

After the initial agitation of novices, when political identities might be forged from scratch, it soon appeared that there were more challengers to win the support of individual workers. This change resulted in the development of highly polemical and reflexive mobilization strategies taking into consideration the existence of opponents. This evolution had its correlation in forms of public sphere and respective experiences of its participants. Changes in practices of agitation, public performance and oral culture followed. The waters got muddied as the political competition between parties intensified. With new possibilities for agitation and the massive inflow of members, parties started to openly compete for more adherents. Limited competition and polemics were already common before the revolutionary upsurge. Only after, however, did socialist milieus turn from cadre, conspiratorial organizations into massive political parties, and nationalists began to agitate urban workers much more intensively than before. Then the entire mode of communication changed – instead of merely informing about predicaments of capitalism under tsarism and explaining the world with a particular ideological vocabulary, the parties openly questioned their rivals in self-reflexive polemics. This paved the way for more advanced political rhetoric and complex argumentative structures using various forms of inter-discourse.

¹¹² In this respect the change in the working class social world epitomized the modern experience as analyzed by classical sociology, see Georg Simmel, *Conflict / The Web Of Group Affiliations*, trans. Kurt Wolf, First Free Press paperback edition (New York: The Free Press, 1964).

As a result, agitation texts in the political press considered the proposed ideological presentation as one of the few possible. Thus, they very often used quotation, indirect reference, irony or sarcasm to gain distance from competitive presentations or just mock them. For instance, when issued from minority position, nationalist texts were designed to gradually undermine the dominating position, as a frontal attack might discourage convinced readers. Later, as the balance of power changed, they started to be more explicit in directly insulting their opponents. Socialist texts, in turn, moved from the mode of “enlightening presentation”, just explaining the world, to more argumentative, point-to-point polemics between socialist parties, and ironic strategies against the inroads of nationalist propaganda.¹¹³ Not always did these strategies render the choices easier; it was no longer enough to embrace socialism as such. One of the agitated workers recalled the puzzle in the following words:

And then a fresh surprise approached me, [the agitator] started to explain to me the difference between PPS and SD [SDKPiL], from which [explanation] I did not understand anything. So I tell him that I do not want to have anything to do with those who expel the Russians [“moskali”, a derogatory term used deliberately by the narrator to mimic and mock the language of the PPS hostile to Russians in general – WM] (...). So I ask him: but “Sprawa robotnicza” [the SDKPiL journal], what is this? A! This is SD. So and I will be in SD!¹¹⁴

Apparently, the readers of proclamations or people listening to political orations were confronted with a complex, polemical discursive setting which forced them to face the plural political field. Because of the competition between parties, entangled political processes and launching of new institutions, workers entered pluralist and proto-democratic contexts. To put it another way, everybody had to confront the possibility of adhering to other political positions or narratives. This was far from an obvious experience for the political debutants desperately trying to make sense of the situation:

¹¹³ I presented broader analysis of these strategies in Marzec, *Rebelia i reakcja. Rewolucja 1905 roku i plebejskie doświadczenie polityczne*.

¹¹⁴ Dobrowolski – kowal, *Kartka do historii SDKPiL*, “Z pola walki” 1974, no 4, 194.

After every speech, workers argued for a long time, which sometimes resulted in a fight. Then I was astonished why one group quarreled with another, and why speakers threw each other out of the soap box [that served as an improvised rostrum]. But the revolution has done its job and I began to understand what's going on. Soon I noticed that in our factory there are three party organizations: Social-democracy of the Polish Kingdom and Lithuania, Polish Socialist Party, National Democracy.¹¹⁵

Workers had to re-conceptualize their own commitments, turning them from a simple “awakening” – from passivity into a conscious choice. This choice needed to be grounded and justified, not only in front of others but above all the tribunal of their own selves, now among the politically differentiated peers demanding more conscious commitment. This might created a tough emotional puzzle:

Not a single night was for me sleepless because of two feelings fighting in my heart and not leaving me calm. After a three-month-long struggle between nationalism and internationality I was convinced that in socialist movement there is no place for separate nationalist parties.¹¹⁶

In some cases, the ultimate choice was later narrativized as a formalized story of ideological maturation. It occurred, for instance, in standardized depictions of Bolshevik ideological peregrinations documented in many Soviet files. It is of course hard to assess to what extent it was a practice already forged in prior communication and thus being a genuine form of expressing the committed political self.¹¹⁷ On of the SDKPiL militants, writing in Moscow in the 1930s, recollected:

This year [1905] was a path-breaking one for me. My concepts were entirely crystallized.

¹¹⁵ Piotr Szefer, *Ze wspomnień łódzkiego robotnika*, “Z pola walki” 1927, No. 3, 141.

¹¹⁶ It is worth adding that this is a memory of a Jewish militant affiliating himself with Polish culture. This testimony, as far as the next quoted one, also demonstrate how open various identities still might have been in those days. Oddly enough, the decision the narrator had to face was between (nationalist) Bund and international solidarity (this time between Poles and Jews) postulated by PPS, see Mojżesz Kaufman (Mojsze Mezryczner), *Przyczynki do historii żydowskiej organizacji PPS*, “Niepodległość” 1935, Vol. XII, 30.

¹¹⁷ Igal Halfin, *Red Autobiographies: Initiating the Bolshevik Self* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011). The conundrum of biographical testimony of the political self and various layers within it are examined in Chapter 2.

Being on the services of this and that and yet another party I had an opportunity to get familiar with their programs. On the beginning I did not care that much about the programmatic differences, what was important for me was just the fact of the direct participation in the revolutionary movement. I was, however, dissatisfied with the nationalistic taint in PPS and Bund; on the contrary the slogan of international struggle of the proletariat was close to me. I understood that my only place is in the SDKPiL.¹¹⁸

Once convinced, the workers needed to be capable of defending their commitments publicly. In order to do this, their political intellect had to be freed from the direction of the intelligentsia or the party control. They had to forge an independent political self, defensible in confrontation. Agitation and educational strategies changed accordingly. It was not enough to offer a simple way to comprehend the world; it had to be compared, criticized and exposed to potential counterarguments. A consciously “proletarianized” SDKPiL agitator, Stanisław Pestkowski, who approached the proletarian milieu as his own new class of choice, recollected the new communicative circuit on the agitation circle he had led:

Facing so strong activists I organized an agitators' school. We used to gather on Sundays in the quantity of about thirty people. The classes lasted 3-4 hours. I used to give a topic a week in advance, dissecting it into separate theses. The classes were conducted according to the discussion method, I spoke only on the very end. This school enjoyed great popularity.¹¹⁹

The situation was further complicated by the diverging and evolving strategies of the main parties in respect to the most hotly debated topics. For instance, in the first months after the Tsar announced the subsequent projects of the Duma and elections were organized, socialist parties unanimously boycotted it as politically bogus. Thus, a lot of ink was spilled to convince workers that they would not gain anything from this staged liberalization. At the same time, however, a lot was

¹¹⁸ Radomski, *Wspomnienia technika partyjnego 1905-1907 rok*, “Z pola walki” 1931, No. 11-12, quoted in Aleksander Kozłowski, *Z rewolucyjnych dni: (Wspomnienia z lat 1904-1907)* (Warszawa: Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1963), 234.

¹¹⁹ Pestkowski, *Wspomnienia rewolucjonisty*, 83.

done to actually explain how democratic institutions work in order to provide evidence that this Duma could not be considered as one of them. Later, the strategy changed and one by one socialist parties realized what gains the nationalists enjoyed, capitalizing on the possibility to agitate around the ballot. National Democracy was able to offer a tangible feeling of agency to the working class voters. They were for the first time given a chance to express their preferences, even if they had little impact on the actual electoral outcome. All this produced massive informative campaigns clarifying the strategies of parties or explaining the logics of political institutions. While not all the receivers were able to make much sense of it, there were some, however, who left the political battlefield rhetorically and politically educated.¹²⁰ The lack of democracy contributed to the rise of knowledge about it, as the ideal of democracy was used as a point of reference to debunk tsarist electoral policies. A similar conundrum concerned the emerging labor unions with some parties having decided to tacitly influence legal, non-partisan unions and others launching illegal, more independent from police supervision, party-controlled organizations.¹²¹ Although all these controversies stimulated the growth of political knowledge, they also induced conflict.

While one may observe the gathering of storm clouds for the “long” months of 1905, only after the nationalists entered the bid did the hurricane burst forth. The heated atmosphere induced political emotion which needed to be tamed. Even before the intra-class political conflict escalated, PPS responded to the rising tension during factory mass-meetings. The party propaganda attempted to proselytize moderation and the culture of debate.¹²² While the temperature of debates between

¹²⁰ There is no space here to explore this issue further. For a brief outline of the Duma elections and party strategies refer to Blobaum, *Rewolucja*. Evolving strategies and Duma elections are also extensively examined in Samuś, *Wasza kartka wyborcza jest silniejsza niż karabin, niż armata...* Leaflets, polemical strategies and political expertise surplus are examined in Marzec, *Rebelia i reakcja. Rewolucja 1905 roku i plebejskie doświadczenie polityczne*.

¹²¹ On multiple labor unions, see Karwacki, *Związki zawodowe i stowarzyszenia pracodawców w Łodzi (do roku 1914)*. It seems that in this polemical culture the narcissism of small differences between parties and their supporters had much more importance than some researchers suggested in respect to working class militancy in tsarist Russia. It is argued (for instance in Pearl, *Creating a Culture of Revolution*) that all the parties used the same literature and agitation techniques and that on the shopfloor of late 19th-century Russian factories, most of the radical workers cooperated and considered themselves rather radical workers as such than adherents of a particular program. In the context researched here, however, some of the few significant pieces of direct evidence of the working class discourse suggest the opposite. For instance a much telling “kite” from the tsarist prison is a well-elaborated exchange of arguments on the national question, the main bone of contention between socialist parties. See AAN APPS 305/II/60.

¹²² The PPS leaflet explaining the rules of the game and calling for cultured discussion may be found in Korzec, *Źródła*

socialist parties grew, the polemics remained harsh but *verbal*. The conflict with the nationalists, however, resulted in regular (and lethal) street battles. Fierce fights, increasing waves of aggression, and mutual revenge occurred equally on both sides of the conflict, often out of the control of the parties' headquarters from mid-1906. Only after several attempts to calm it down on a party level did a bottom-up initiative of the shop floor militants lead the sides to the negotiation table in April 1907.¹²³ This ended the atrocities, leaving a highly conflicted political landscape behind. Apparently, while democracy and pluralism may have brought many blessings, they also came with a brutal conflict between the conflicting parties.

Making claims for citizenship

All those acts and practices constituted transgressions of limits of the legitimate. They broadened the realm of what among workers was considered “practicable” as forms of public and political participation. Those who had been feared before, now had to at least recognize the significant power of workers as a threat to be dealt with. Those who had not taken workers into consideration as claimants and essentially equal people, now began to recognize in them a real, active factor, if not an interlocutor to engage in political communication. The change was enthusiastically documented (and to some extent proclaimed in performative register) by its ardent supporters such as labor union organizer Bernard Szapiro quoted in the opening paragraph of this chapter. For the workers, the world around was reconfigured, and police, burghers and the bourgeoisie looked at them differently.

Sometimes, such an altered gaze was actually forced upon tsarist functionaries, when workers temporarily took the upper hand in the streets. During processions with banners, policemen or factory administrators who were passing by were often forced to praise the socialist insignia (for example by

do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 2, 661. Significantly, it poses clear limits to the “freedom of speech”. Those calling for anti-Jewish violence should be treated as a provocateur that is shot dead on the spot.

¹²³ Broader on “fratricidal” struggles see Kalabiński and Tych, *Czwarte powstanie czy pierwsza rewolucja. Lata 1905-1907 na ziemiach polskich*, 279–81; Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*, 156–60.

taking off a hat), or even to walk ahead of the procession, personally holding the banner.¹²⁴ Tsarist gendarmes were pushed aside to the pavement; they had to make way for groups of workers, whereas policemen were simply insulted and driven away.¹²⁵ The revolution also concerned the changing relationship between bodies, as was demonstrated above in a different context. However crude such forms of reclaimed citizenship may seem, they nevertheless testify that workers began to be aware of their new visibility if not overall position or place in society.¹²⁶ It might be reflected like this:

I was wondering, how it works – a handful of people are gathered and mister commissar, the lord of life and death of those people, entered the room white as a sheet, throwing a wobbly, and said: “excuse me, I came only on official business”. What a power, this is the value of the associated man. For the first time I was struck by this fact.¹²⁷

The tsarist administration apparatus, probably the furthestmost from stimulating change by its announcement, also registered the changes. Some of the fearful reports of its officials are just catalogs of attempts to question the borders of political visibility and the delimited realm of action. One of the outraged tsarist officials described the events in Sosnowiec in these words:

[T]he newcomers declared that now there is a freedom of the press and that they can print whatever they like; they simultaneously shouted “Long live Social democracy!”. After having printed the proclamation the crowd went away. That day, from the early morning boys and adults walked around the city and without any restraint they gave away various proclamations, also to the military officers. (...) [I]n the building of the Winter Theater, when the audience had gathered for the performance, a young worker entered in the scene and having read the tsarist manifesto, he thrown it on the ground, began to trample it and said that it was not a constitution but a cheat, after that he started to explain to the audience the nature of the constitution from the social-democratic party's point of view.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim*, tom 1, cz. 2, 121; See also Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*, 112.

¹²⁵ Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim*, tom 1, cz. 2, 123.

¹²⁶ This dimension as the most profound change brought about by the 1905 is examined for Russian workers and, more in emotional detail, Jewish poor, in, respectively: Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion*; Shtakser, *The Making of Jewish Revolutionaries in the Pale of Settlement*.

¹²⁷ Antoni Kotyl, *O działalności w SDKPiL, KPP oraz pracy w Polsce Ludowej*, AAN, AODRR 3028, p. 5.

¹²⁸ Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim*, tom 1, cz. 2, 568–69.

What was possible to be said and done did change. It affected not only, and not above all, the relationship between the tsarist administration and populations under its jurisdiction.¹²⁹ Above all the relationships between classes and milieus enclosed in single communicative spaces, as national areas or sub-states on the fringes of the Russian Empire, changed. To put it another way, the revolution considered even more “Polish society” (obviously not necessarily consisting of ethnic “Poles”, which was still a dubious category those days) than the confrontation between the “Poles” and external imperial power. This collision of classes, and the possibility of a productive political encounter in a single space as for instance at a political rally in a theater, was also recognized by the bourgeois press. While the more conservative journalists would eventually come to condescend or fear the workers' presence, in the beginning these encounters were greeted enthusiastically. A journalist's account from the rally organized by the Warsaw association of technicians left little doubt about it:

This is the rally of the Polish thought. On the scene a committee of the association of technicians – on the chairs and in the lodges – all of the states! In the first rows, the heroes of the new era: the workers! Hail to them, priority for them!¹³⁰

This mode of political participation was not known before to those marching or debating. It must have deeply reorganized the notion of whom they were in relation to other social groupings.¹³¹ It was a form of political subjectification, simultaneously creating new forms of self and recognized places of political utterance, from where the workers took part in the rising public spheres *as* workers. For instance, they were recognized as essentially equal by intelligentsia members of the socialist party structures, as was memorialized in some memoirs.¹³² This as such was implicit evidence of

¹²⁹ The staging of tsarist power, loss of its appeal and legitimacy and attempts to restore its public appearance are examined in Baberowski, *Imperiale Herrschaft in Der Provinz: Repräsentationen Politischer Macht Im Späten Zarenreich*; Malte Rolf, “A Continuum of Crisis? The Kingdom of Poland in the Shadow of the Revolution (1905-1915),” in *The Russian Revolution of 1905 in Transcultural Perspective: Identities, Peripheries, and the Flow of Ideas*, ed. Felicitas Fischer von Weikersthal (Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica Publishers, 2013).

¹³⁰ *Wiece*, “Kurier Warszawski”, 3 XI 1905, No. 486, 1, quoted in Kiepuska, *Warszawa w rewolucji 1905-1907*, 204.

¹³¹ Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*, 120.

¹³² Franciszek Łęczycki, *Mojej ankiety personalnej punkt 35* (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1969), 61.

recognition for their importance and dignity.

Moreover, workers could participate in regular elections, or at least they could consciously decide not to do so. While the initial project of the Duma did not allow workers to vote and excluded national minorities (thus Poles and Jews of Russian Poland), under the pressure of the street, the October Manifesto issued by Nicholas II in 1905 promised more generous suffrage.¹³³ Along with this tactical liberalization confirmed by a Duma decree on 24th of December 1905, some institutions known from parliamentary systems were introduced, even if in a form often resembling their own caricature.¹³⁴ The voting statute largely disadvantaged lower classes, allowing only workers from big factories (in the factory curia) or official tenants (in the urban curia) to vote. Moreover, it assigned to these votes only very mediated and limited, if not almost nonexistent, voting power. It nevertheless was a significant act of empowerment for many people who had never before been able to participate in electoral politics of any kind. Thus, the very fact of being able to vote and witnessing an entire electoral campaign procedure with meetings, speeches and also a huge dose of just explaining what it is all about, provided an unexpected new recognition for workers as political subjects.¹³⁵ State Duma appeared more like mere fiction than any legislative power, and even in its meek form was

¹³³ Leszek Jaśkiewicz, *Absolutyzm rosyjski w dobie rewolucji 1905-1907: reformy ustrojowe* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1982), 80–145.

¹³⁴ Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1995).

¹³⁵ For some reason, however, it is not a topic extensively present in the memoirs. In the case of socialist militants, it is coherent with a rather marginal role of elections in socialist politics, always claiming that they had been just a cheat (even the open bidding for votes was explicitly framed as just using the possibility to gain adherents and not seats in the Duma). In the case of nationalist workers, it is more mysterious, though. Perhaps the official trajectory of the NZR from which the vast majority of narratives came, caused the narrators to diminish their involvement with National Democracy, as their association split with national democrats in 1908 and later built rather separate memory culture. It is a widely held, and not untrue, conviction, that the main reason was a growing pro-Russian and re-conciliatory position of National Democracy in subsequent Dumas (Monasterska, *Narodowy Związek Robotniczy, 1905-1920*, 67–80.) If so, this would confirm the ultimate success of nationalist mobilization among workers, which proved to be stronger than convictions of the (elite) national democrats themselves. Although they initially stimulated it, they later engaged in political maneuvers unacceptable for their ardent supporters among workers. However, there is also another explanation: workers unwilling to accept growing social conservatism and elitist hegemony. Indeed, factory nationalism was not an artificial project made up from scratch by National Democracy, and the intellectual milieu of the NZR workers and their aspirations were resistant to full submission to the national democratic leadership demanding trans-class loyalty against class-based interests. Their imagined future nation, state and professional life were still class-based, and their claims strictly referred to class context of production (Crago, “The ‘Polishness’ of Production: Factory Politics and the Reinvention of Working-Class National and Political Identities in Russian Poland’s Textile Industry, 1880-1910,” 36–41.)

soon dissolved. This triggered bitter polemics but allowed less and less for belief in any real political leverage of the ballot. Nevertheless, subsequent elections provided a genuine inclusion for workers, offering them a certain form of participation and citizenship in the national body politic, now turned into an electoral agent.

It was the National Democracy, which used this opportunity to boost its support in a most effective way. The party from the onset opted for taking part in the election, and soon launched a powerful agitation machine. This was to a significant extent a source of the national democratic success and subsequent rise to the status of a most significant political player.¹³⁶ The ongoing agitation was largely based on dubious political practices, such as kindling antisemitism and the propelling of harsh antagonism between (now stressed more than before) ethnicities and supporters of different political agendas.¹³⁷ This dimension, however, was also an important pillar in successful national democratic mobilization.

All in all, even if by any standards Russian Poland underwent a transition to democracy, the elements of proto-democratic public culture emerged.¹³⁸ People attempted to craft anew their own attitudes to themselves and others. They began to claim a certain form of citizenship. This new citizenship also, in many aspects, encompassed female workers, even if this dimension did not leave a tangible signature in the sources.

Feminine participation

Although the sociality of the labor union, the solidarity of the shop floor, and the heroism of

¹³⁶ See Grzegorz Krzywiec, “Z taką rewolucją musimy walczyć na noże: rewolucja 1905 roku z perspektywy polskiej prawicy,” in *Rewolucja 1905. Przewodnik* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2013); Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*.

¹³⁷ The dark side of National Democratic politics is analyzed in Ury, *Barricades and Banners*, chap. 6.

¹³⁸ Analysis of Polish politics in respect to transformation of “political culture” see Samuś, *Wasza kartka wyborcza jest silniejsza niż karabin, niż armata...* An interesting approach to implicit political change on cultural and imaginary level of citizenship in the early days of Weimar democracy, similar to the transformation scrutinized here, see Kathleen Canning, “Introduction,” in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

the street-fight enshrined “male” militancy, the movement was not entirely exclusive in respect to gender. The history of Russian populist radicalism aptly demonstrates the early inroads of female militants into the radical milieu.¹³⁹ In Russian Poland as well it was mostly women from the intelligentsia who got involved in politics. Some of them made spectacular political careers and a significant number of women played leading roles in the socialist movement.¹⁴⁰ Only later did female comrades from the working class become part and parcel of the revolutionary effort.¹⁴¹ At the turn of the 20th century in Russian Poland, the share of female workers was already significant.¹⁴² As female workers were willingly employed in bigger mills, they were also mobilized during the revolution despite the initial reluctance and barriers imposed by the traditional female roles. As a result, at the apex of the revolutionary surge, women made up to 1/6, and in some districts up to 2/5 of the socialist parties' members in Łódź, where the labor force was the most feminized.¹⁴³ Those women were active participants of conspiracy activities, organized the distribution of party publications and took part in demonstrations and street fights. This last activity made a sad imprint on the registers of people killed during the revolt. For instance, 1/5 of people officially listed dead after the June uprising of 1905 in Łódź were women, which testifies to their active involvement.¹⁴⁴ While the nationalists saw women as guardians of nationhood at home, socialism was not a male-only issue anymore.¹⁴⁵ Against the

¹³⁹ Anna Hillyar and Jane McDermid, *Revolutionary Women in Russia, 1870-1917: A Study in Collective Biography* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2000).

¹⁴⁰ Rosa Luxemburg (SDKPiL), Cezaryna Wojnarowska (SDKPiL), Estera Golde-Stóżecka (PPS-Left), Maria Paszkowska (PPS), to name only a few.

¹⁴¹ Recent historical studies attempted to fill in this significant lacuna in the knowledge about the period but, admittedly, did not bring spectacular outcomes because of the lack of relevant sources. Many of the arguments presented there are rather inferences from indirect clues, see Sikorska-Kowalska, “Polskie ‘Marianny’. Udział kobiet w rewolucji 1905-1907 roku w świetle wydarzeń w Łodzi.”

¹⁴² Statistical data on Łódź are especially revealing, see Julian Janczak, *Ludność Łodzi przemysłowej 1820-1914*, vol. 11, *Acta Universitatis Lodzensis. Folia Historica* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1982), 96–99. A case study concerning the largest factory of the city confirms the high percentage of female workers, see Puś and Pytka, *Dzieje Łódzkich Zakładów Przemysłu Bawełnianego im. Obrońców Pokoju “Uniontex” (d. Zjednoczonych Zakładów K. Scheiblera i L. Grohmana) w latach 1827-1977*.

¹⁴³ Samuś, “Kobiety w ruchu socjalistycznym Królestwa Polskiego w latach rewolucji 1905-1907,” 94.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁴⁵ On the image and alleged role of women in different political milieus, trajectories of the women's movement and the changing role of female members of the nation see Blobaum, “The ‘Woman Question’ in Russian Poland, 1900-1914.” On the particular, gendered image of women among the nationalists, see Meghann Pytka, “Policing the Binary—Patrolling the Nation: Race and Gender in Polish Integral Nationalism, from Partitions to Parliament (1883 – 1926)” (doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University, 2013).

backdrop of traditional post-peasant culture, male heroism, and practical exclusion of women from the public sphere, any female activity was a significant step forward.

Women made this step and entered the proletarian public sphere, but this did not happen without friction. The place of women changed through practice during the revolution, for women themselves and their male counterparts alike. The redefinition might have paradoxically started from the hierarchical gender relationship. For instance, a factory foreman, not always the sworn enemies, might ask a young female worker to distribute some leaflets, which may later lead to more serious involvement in socialism.¹⁴⁶ The content of the distributed leaflets also encouraged women to join the movement. Many proclamations started with an apostrophe to comrades but also in female form, comradess. PPS even issued a special journal for female workers, “Robotnica” (“workeress”, female worker), unfortunately published only once. This very fact of official and dignified address doubtlessly made a huge impression if this dimension was also broadly memorized by male workers, proud of being somehow recognized as equal partners of conversation or exchange. Apparently, even for women of intelligentsia background the recognition as equals was a serious issue. One of the young adepts of socialism admitted: “[some important party member] addressed me as «comradess». It impressed me a lot, I was only seventeen then”.¹⁴⁷ All in all, the self-assertion signaled above was even more powerful for women comrades, as it changed not only their class position but also the gendered dimension of it.

As a result, the inter-gender relationships between socialist militants and their wives were also an explicitly problematized issue; apparently they tended to be tense enough to trigger official statements of socialist journals. The local correspondence circulating between PPS militants gives insight into the practical obstacles of the distribution of the party journal that were caused by family life. Not surprisingly, it was not safe to read “Robotnik”; after being caught with a copy, a severe police persecution was guaranteed. Nevertheless:

¹⁴⁶Władysława Michałowska, *Wspomnienia robotnicy*, “Niepodległość” 1937, Vol. XVI, 380-381.

¹⁴⁷ Maria Budkiewicz, AAN, ZAODRR, folder 12896, p.1-2.

In Pabianice [small town near Łódź] they get from us 40-60 copies, and they are read, according to local estimations, by 400-500 people (sic!). We were told in secret that if anybody burns the issue after having read it, “there are people there, who will punish him”, thus the respect for our papers is enormous; funny scenes accompany this: some worker brought a copy of “Robotnik” home from the factory, his wife understood what it was, so she abruptly attacked him so as to take the paper and burn it. The worker was not eager to give it back, testifying that he values his life. As she insisted, he took it out and wandered around as long as he found somebody else who took the baton.¹⁴⁸

Those days the wife was expected to take care of the home. Thus, avoiding the risk of arrest, unemployment, and often irreversible poverty was a perfectly rational survival strategy. The resulting resistance of female family members against the male political involvement was a serious issue.¹⁴⁹ “Family issues” were not limited to female opposition against politics. Concurrently, young female workers involved in socialism approached resistance of their fathers and brothers. Male family members tried to prevent women from political and public involvement, and sometimes in addition used to have different political commitments.¹⁵⁰ However, the common political involvement of fathers and brothers was an impulse to bring political conversation into the working class chamber. The intensity of social contacts also increased, sweeping women out from the home's limited life context.¹⁵¹ The same fathers and brothers might support new politicized interests of women, but equally well, even if they themselves were involved, they might deliberately limit women's access to “male-only” issues. The key to successful political mobilization laid in the hearth, and, conversely, politics severely reconstructed family relationships.

A seemingly grassroots campaign was launched to address this hotly disputed topic in “Robotnik”. It explicitly questioned the rigidity of public-private division, diagnosing the related obstacles for socialist politics. Husbands were used to treating socialism as a male-only issue and

¹⁴⁸ Aleksander Malinowski, ed., *Materiały do historii PPS i ruchu rewolucyjnego w zaborze rosyjskim 1893-1904, tom I, 1893- 1897* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Życie, 1907), 158.

¹⁴⁹ Those reasons might be different. One of the wives preferring dance to socialism see Michał Ostrowski, *Wspomnienia*, AAN, ZAODRR, folder 4386, t.1, k.2/2.

¹⁵⁰ Zob. np. Elżbieta Żebrowska, *Wspomnienia*, APL, KW PZPR, 1605, 107.

¹⁵¹ Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*, 123.

often excluded women from their political business, simultaneously preventing them from participation. Not surprisingly, this not only limited female participation, but also backfired as those were the wives who resisted against husbands' long-term involvement. Thus, the paper criticized the exclusion of women from the public sphere by ordering them to take care of "the pots and children but not mess with the male business". In response, one of the supposed female readers postulated in the letter published in the paper that wives should be better informed and admitted into political activities of their husbands, that papers and proclamations should be read aloud and commented at home (an important issue as women were much more often illiterate), and that the party should be more involved in organizing female political life by preparing dedicated gatherings and lectures that were more women-friendly and focused on their issues.¹⁵² Such a letter was also an important gesture in publicizing female voice – after all it was published in a paper held in high esteem among comrades.

This course of action was convergent with the party line openly declaring that their program is directed "to all the oppressed and exploited, regardless of the differences of religion, language or sex".¹⁵³ The same article called for the full inclusion of women into public domain and argued that they could develop intellectually and politically just as men if only circumstances were favorable. It is no coincidence that it was PPS, which most vividly addressed the women question within socialism. This party responded most comprehensively to the complex social composition of the Polish Kingdom, and the mixture of national and class demands.¹⁵⁴ PPS was sensitive to the multiple regimes of oppression and its members built a nascent theory of intersectionality, supporting its actual socialist universalism. This sensitivity contributed to the recognition of the place of women in the socialist movement. Not everybody, however, was happy with the changes and inclusion of workers, women or Jews into the public domain.

¹⁵² "Robotnik" 1904, No 54, 4.

¹⁵³ "Robotnik" 1904, No. 57, 4.

¹⁵⁴ Snyder, *Nationalism, Marxism, and Modern Central Europe*; Zimmerman, *Poles, Jews, and the Politics of Nationality the Bund and the Polish Socialist Party in Late Tsarist Russia, 1892-1914*; Blanc, "National Liberation and Bolshevism Reexamined: A View from the Borderlands."

Enemies of democratization

The mass movement looming large was greeted with ambivalence. Workers' protests destabilized the existing social order. The feeling that "something is out of joint" also affected groups other than workers. As argued above, the scale of the movement and its rebellious dynamics were a surprise for socialist parties. The national democrats, in turn, complained that they were unprepared for activities in the urban environment on this scale, even if they had developed a functional network of institutions before.¹⁵⁵ No wonder the revolution was a shock for the positivist intelligentsia and the liberals, who were having a hard time accommodating to the new mode of politics (see Chapter 4). Commercial elites as well were not too enthusiastic, for obvious reasons.¹⁵⁶ Some of these groups were eager to criticize the revolution and condemn its disruptive potentials. Apart from the general opposition, however, also on a micro-level an explicit and unmediated presence of workers within the political sphere spurred on resistance. This resistance also appeared among people and milieus generally supportive toward popular politics, if not involved in fanning the flames of the social turmoil. I have examined above the ways in which workers redrew the contours of the political by forcefully moving the limits of what could be said and done, at where and by whom. New people appearing in spaces where they were not welcome before triggered outrage among those who felt that they were the legitimate occupiers of those spaces. The ultimate evidence of the operation of power is resistance, as the influential Foucauldian dictum says.¹⁵⁷ Paraphrasing it, logically: a testimony to the breach of political limits is the resistance of their guardians.

The wardens of order were frightened with its disruption, even if before they were staunch opponents of the tsarist state. While initially it was contingency and openness itself which made them

¹⁵⁵ Roman Dmowski, *Narodowcy i ugodowcy w czasie rewolucyjnym*, w: Roman Dmowski, *Pisma. Dziesięć lat walki*, vol. 3 (Częstochowa, 1938), 91. On nationalist institutions among workers see Crago, "The 'Polishness' of Production: Factory Politics and the Reinvention of Working-Class National and Political Identities in Russian Poland's Textile Industry, 1880-1910"; see also Kanfer, "Łódź: Industry, Religion, and Nationalism in Russian Poland, 1880-1914."

¹⁵⁶ An interesting study of the revolution perceived by the industrial bourgeoisie is Andreas R. Hofmann, "The Biedermanns in the 1905 Revolution: A Case Study in Entrepreneurs' Responses to Social Turmoil in Łódź," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 82, no. 1 (2004): 27-49.

¹⁵⁷ Michel Foucault, *Body/Power*, in: Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).

unsure, it had still left hopes for favorable developments in the future intact. Commentators from the intelligentsia often spoke of chaos posing danger but also creating possibilities. “Warsaw looks like in «the first day of genesis». Chaos everywhere and in everything is total. On almost every street there are already speeches, party banners and songs”,¹⁵⁸ noted Władysław Reymont, an honored Polish writer, a distanced observer rather than a partisan of any particular cause. More conservative commentators did not maintain this finesse of analysis and soon began to condemn “anarchy” out of hand.¹⁵⁹ In the case of conservatives, it was simply a feeling of undermined hierarchy which perpetuated this condemnation.¹⁶⁰ The national democrats were also worried but more by inroads of political ideals than nationalism. Nevertheless, fighting revolutionary “anarchy”, they successfully managed fears of destabilized society and profited heavily from general weariness with the revolutionary unrest (I return to this issue in Chapter 3).¹⁶¹ Within the liberal milieu, in turn, the fear of the new regime of the public sphere assumed the form of policing the unwanted elements. Although the liberals supported the revolution in the beginning, later they lost faith in possibilities of liberalization of the state order. Thus, they ceased to accept new forms of politics not always fully aligned with their own ideals. (I cover this problem in Chapter 4).¹⁶² This evolution can be traced in self-reflexive comments of the main figure of Polish liberalism, Aleksander Świętochowski. On the eve of the new year of 1906, he felt obliged to sum up the ups and downs of his political agenda in

¹⁵⁸ Władysław Reymont, *Z konstytucyjnych dni. Notatki*, Wednesday, 1st of Nov., in: Stefan Klonowski, ed., *1905 w literaturze polskiej* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1955), 283. See also Cezary Zalewski, “Świat wyszedł z zawiadów. Przemoc i jej reprezentacje w Dzieciach Bolesława Prusa,” *Roczniki Humanistyczne* LIX (2011): 77–88.

¹⁵⁹ Wiktor Marzec, “Beyond Group Antagonism in Asymmetrical Counter-Concepts. Conceptual Pair Order and Chaos and Ideological Struggles in Late 19th – Early 20th Century Poland,” in “*Hellenes*” and “*Barbarians*”: *Asymmetrical Concepts in European Discourse*, ed. Kirill Postoutenko (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016).

¹⁶⁰ Examples could be found in pamphlets such as Eustachy Ostoja, *Wobec zbrodni* (Kraków: Nakładem autora, Skład główny księgarń Goebethnera i sp., 1906); Kazimierz Niedzielski, *Z burzliwych dni 1904-1905* (Warszawa: Księgarnia Ignacego Rzepeckiego, 1917).

¹⁶¹ The leader of National Democracy, Roman Dmowski, also expressed an ambivalent attitude to the initial revolutionary moment, opening new chances but also posing a danger for his political ideals, see *List Romana Dmowskiego do Zygmunta Miłkowskiego*, Kraków 31.03.1905, in: Mariusz Kułakowski, *Roman Dmowski w świetle listów i wspomnień* (Gryf Publications, 1968), 312. On fighting anarchy see Leaflet of the Central Committee of the National Ligue, 1st of August, 1905, APŁ PGZZ 12/1905/II, p. 918-919, see also the leaflet of Łódź Department of the NZR, 27th of December, 1905, APŁ KGP 1553, p. 6; National-Democratic Craftsmen and Workers Youth APŁ PGZZ 12/1905/I, p. 119.

¹⁶² Janowski, *Polish Liberal Thought before 1918*.

the turbulent period of 1905. Among other tribulations, he recalled one of the political rallies he participated in:

We enter to the philharmonic hall packed with people, with hearths full of joy and merry hope, (...) but we did not managed to open our mouths yet, when we were greeted with some hellish fanfare – wild howl, screams, maledictions (...) Finally we were allowed to speak. Despite the fact that none of us uttered any bad words, which would not be a praise for freedom and warm-hearted greeting for the people, after every speech screams and maledictions burst out again. Eventually we had been deprived of voice completely and people started to burst onto the lectern, they cursed everybody and everything apart from themselves: (...) the government, bureaucracy, tyrants, bourgeoisie, liberals, patriots, democrats of all sorts, and above all the progressive ones, who were the hosts of this gathering [Progressive Democracy was a name of the liberal party – WM].¹⁶³

This depiction could be read almost as a synecdoche of the entire liberal confrontation with the popular emotion. It grasps the clash between expectations and reality, salon politics and a mass rally. The means which mediates between them and helps Świętochowski to make sense of the clash is contempt towards the rabble, who were not grateful for everything the progressives had done for them. The problem with the revolutionary rabble was not, however, limited to its class composition.

Also, the ethnic composition of the people acting in public was unacceptable for some commentators. It is clearly visible, for instance, in the passage opening the introduction to this study. It demonstrates how various measures could be used to delegitimize the presence of Jews in the very same liberal political rally from November 1905, which is described by Świętochowski above. At the same time, the language used there undermines the credentials of the working class speakers, who were allegedly no more than liaisons for some Jewish interests. When workers entered the public sphere, they were sometimes depicted in a way similar to the quoted fragment: “ushered on the podium by a young Jew”. The stories about “the Jew flouncing on the podium in convulsions of wild

¹⁶³Aleksander Świętochowski, *Po roku*, “Prawda” 1906, No. 45, quoted in: Tadeusz Stegner, *Rewolucja w opinii środowisk liberalnych*, in: Przeniosło and Wiech, *Rewolucja 1905-1907 w Królestwie Polskim i w Rosji*, 33. More on Świętochowski's changing position see Barbara Petrozolin-Skowrońska, “‘Liberum veto’ A. Świętochowskiego wobec rewolucji 1905-1907: część I,” *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego* 9, no. 2 (1970): 183–96; Barbara Petrozolin-Skowrońska, “‘Liberum veto’ A. Świętochowskiego wobec rewolucji 1905-1907: część II,” *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego* 9, no. 3 (1970): 339–60.

fury or happiness” and just a while later “lunging on the banner with the white eagle” and “throwing it on the ground” in the figural expression of anti-national feelings, are almost a part of the genre.¹⁶⁴ The mobilized clichés are cultural tokens expressing much more than a simple description of a political rally. They might be applied in various circumstances to rallies or political speeches with a multi-ethnic working class public. The situation where “the orations were heard in Polish, Russian, Jewish” (as in the “decade of freedom” recalled above) or Polish and Jewish workers protested together carrying socialist banners in different languages as during funerals and manifestations in Łódź in May and June 1905, were not rare. Tsarist officials noted this fact with some astonishment.¹⁶⁵ Many political activists were, however, uneasy about it, even if not endorsing antisemitism out of hand. Michał Sokolnicki, one of the intelligentsia and a leader of the right wing faction of the PPS, must have strolled Warsaw in October 1905 in a similar manner as Józef Dąbrowski quoted above. Even if he was associated nominally with the same party, his writing on the decade of freedom in Warsaw reveals much more ambiguity and suspicion toward the protesters:

I realized that the actual people have not much in common with this imagined, which was given to us by old insurrectionary, emigrational and democratic ideology, and which was inherited by the Marxist worldview imported to us from Germany. In the people there were indeed elements of work, heroism and sacrifice, but under the surface, capable of solidarity and sacrifice, there was only dark ignorance; poverty acted from within without restraint and this huge mass was lacking any idea, just because nobody had introduced it there before.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Quotes are from the memoir of Anna Skarbek Sokołowska, *Wspomnienia 1882-1914*, Ossolineum, rkps 14137II, k. 160-161, quoted in: Stegner, “Rewolucja w opinii środowisk liberalnych Królestwa Polskiego 1905-1907,” 33-34.

¹⁶⁵ A collection of tsarist administrative reports giving a detailed overview of the contentious worker's politics without antisemitic additions, and even confirming existing solidarity of workers with different ethnic and religious backgrounds, could be found in: Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 1*; Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 2*; Stanisław Kalabiński, ed., *Carat i klasy posiadające w walce z rewolucją 1905-1907 w Królestwie Polskim: materiały archiwalne* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1956). There is no reason to suspect the tsarist administration of hiding antisemitic undertones, as it was rather interested in inducing ethnic and religious antagonisms. The fact that they quite explicitly deny this, claiming openly that Jewish and Polish workers participated solidarily in manifestations, backs up the statement. It is also worth mentioning that a direct impulse for the June uprising in Łódź in 1905 was a massacre of a peaceful demonstration of workers. This gathering was organized because of the gossip about two killed Jewish workers buried secretly in order to avoid the public (and possibly contentious) funeral (Kalabiński and Tych, *Czwarte powstanie czy pierwsza rewolucja. Lata 1905-1907 na ziemiach polskich*.. Apparently, rumors about the Jews could also play a role different than the one we are used to in the research on pogroms in the region.

¹⁶⁶ Michał Sokolnicki, *Czternaście lat* (Warszawa: Inst. Badania Najnowszej Historji Polski, 1936); quoted in Michał Śliwa, “Rewolucja - przeszłość i kontynuacje,” in *Z perspektywy osiemdziesięciu lat: materiały z sesji naukowej w*

Sokolnicki did not consider the political agenda of the protesters as an idea of sorts, and stopped a step before suggesting outright that the real problem was their ethnic composition. His grave political enemy, Stanisław Kozicki, the “official” chronicler of National Democracy, while writing about the very same events, was much more outspoken in his revulsion against the multi-ethnic crowd. In his writing, the delegitimization of the working class presence through ethnic hatred reached its zenith. In the official history of the National Democracy he described popular participation using “chthonic” expressions referring to the uncontrollable and inhuman forces crawling out of the depths.

Then everything, which was hidden in the underground, bubbled up. Above all the true face of the socialist movement was revealed. The streets of Warsaw were full of crowds, which had not a Polish character. Who has seen this conquest of the Warsaw street by foreign elements, will never ever forget the feeling of awe, which must have taken him.¹⁶⁷

Additional meanings of these insinuations may be revealed by comparison with the parallel fragment in Kozicki's unpublished memoirs. In this more private document, Kozicki added more figural expressions and contexts helping to understand deeper reasons for his fears. In the memoirs, the source of shock is clearly the political presence of people who are not entitled to it. The “decade of freedom” was such a traumatic experience which redirected the intellectual trajectories of the National Democracy, because these unwanted groups (non-nationalist workers, Jews) assumed active political subjectivity as soon as channels of political expression were unblocked.¹⁶⁸ They were not only fruits of “epidemic oratory”, or as Kozicki himself wrote, “random speakers”, but above all politicized, working-class Jews.¹⁶⁹ Had they remained passive “Jews in gabardines”, they would have

Wyższej Szkole Pedagogicznej w Krakowie w dniu 21 XI 1985 r., poświęconej rewolucji 1905 - 1907 r. (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP, 1988), 38–39.

¹⁶⁷ Stanisław Kozicki, *Historia Ligi Narodowej: (Okres 1887-1907)* (Londyn: Myśl Polska, 1964), 287.

¹⁶⁸ I developed this argumentation in Wiktor Marzec, “Modernizacja mas. Moment polityczny i dyskurs endecji w okresie rewolucji 1905-1907,” *Praktyka Teoretyczna*, no. 3 (2014); See also Krzywiec, “Z taką rewolucją musimy walczyć na noże: rewolucja 1905 roku z perspektywy polskiej prawicy.”

¹⁶⁹ Broader on those Jews and Warsaw Jewish revolutionary street, see Ury, *Barricades and Banners*.

been acceptable. As soon as the “foreign crowds” claimed a right to political expression, however, it provoked a reaction of the “national Warsaw”:

Then the crowds flocked onto the streets, but they were crowds composed of people *not visible in the downtown* every day [...], the *Jewish crowd* appeared, they were not, however, Jews in gabardines, known to Warsaw and not hated. There were members of the socialist Bund and other Jewish associations, Jews who came in most of the cases from Russia, with Russian customs, willingly speaking Russian, referring with the *highest aversion to the Poles*. It was revealed in speeches, often given in Russian by *random speakers*, in shouts, in a hostile attitude to the Polish population, which initially being intimidated left streets free for these foreign crowds [...]. We were all just overwhelmed by how the streets of *our city* looked like, we realized for ourselves that our position as the Polish population is seriously endangered. Marches with red banners and revolutionary songs (...) appeared. *The national Warsaw was not visible* at all. [*italics mine* – WM].¹⁷⁰

This quote is a masterpiece of something one can call a “racialization” of political difference. It contains a myriad of discursive strategies directed to secure the stable position of national democrats as embodying the national interest. There is a metonymic sliding between the national and the nationalist, and between the nation and the National Democracy. The same applies to the enemies; the working class protest and above all the socialists are unanimously associated with the Jews. What triggered anger of the nationalist chronicler was the fact that the public space was occupied by those who were not entitled to be there (i.e. the Jews) or those who could enter the public domain only when guided by proper leaders, who would “introduce there [proper] ideas” (i.e. the workers).¹⁷¹ Thus, those unwelcome groups shocked the national elites with their very presence, and, adding insult to injury, they made political claims (“shouts”). According to this way of reasoning, every political force opposing the “national Warsaw”, itself clearly represented only by the national democrats, was

¹⁷⁰ Stanisław Kozicki, *Pamiętnik*, t. 1 k. 212-214, Biblioteka PAN w Krakowie, syg. 7849, quoted in: Waldemar Plennikowski, *Stanisław Kozicki: w kręgu propagandy idei i polityki Narodowej Demokracji* (Toruń: Grado, 2008).

¹⁷¹ The battle for “national” Warsaw, fought on the street and around a ballot box during the Duma elections, and the raging antisemitism accompanying it was examined in Corrsin, *Warsaw before the First World War*; Theodore R. Weeks, “Fanning the Flames: Jews in the Warsaw Press, 1905–1912,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 28, no. 2 (December 1998): 63–81; Robert Blobaum, “The Politics of Antisemitism in Fin-de-Siècle Warsaw,” *The Journal of Modern History* 73, no. 2 (2001): 275–306; Ury, *Barricades and Banners*.

immediately not only a political opponent of the nationalist party but a grave danger to the Polish nation and its ethnic purity.¹⁷² Whenever this force was composed of people not entitled to political presence also because of other reasons, then it was described almost as an inhuman, chthonic, quasi-natural force which had to be resisted by any possible means.

It is important to note in this context, how the nexus of ethnicity and class was mobilized to delegitimize political opponents. Rising political antisemitism is not at the center of my focus, and it is widely documented in existing scholarship.¹⁷³ However, it helps to explain an intersectional position of revolutionary contenders such as Jewish workers, workers allegedly led by the Jews, or socialists considered to be serving Jewish interests.¹⁷⁴ In the discourses mobilized against popular participation during and after the revolution, this nexus was very important, as it helped to effectively rule out rival political ideas. The fact that popular contention or redistribution were delegitimized as un-Polish and foreign not only secured the triumphs of the political right; it also relocated political conflict onto terrain much more destructive to democracy, since political practice was grounded in assumptions about shared civic community.

Furthermore, the reconstruction of the political faced resistance also regarding other dimensions of new claimants' identities. As I mentioned above, the revolution ushered women into the public sphere. Not surprisingly, this presence attracted attention of less-progressive forces. The condemnation of new participants had, therefore, a fully intersectional character. Misogyny went hand in hand with vitriolic antisemitism in service of the opponents of the revolutionary democratization.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² This form of usurpatory nationalism reached its fullest form in the interwar period, see Paul Brykczynski, *Primed for Violence: Murder, Antisemitism, and Democratic Politics in Interwar Poland* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2016).

¹⁷³ Apart from works on Warsaw quoted above, see as well Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*; Robert Blobaum, ed., *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism*; Grzegorz Krzywiec, "Eliminationist Anti-Semitism at Home and Abroad: Polish Nationalism, the Jewish Question, and Eastern European Right-Wing Mass Politics," in *The New Nationalism and the First World War*, ed. Lawrence Rosenthal and Vesna Rodic (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Marzec, "What Bears Witness of the Failed Revolution? The Rise of Political Antisemitism during the 1905–1907 Revolution in the Kingdom of Poland."

¹⁷⁴ The notion of intersectionality stems from feminist studies on multiple regimes of oppression, usually on black, working-class females, see above all Kimberlé Crenshaw, *On Intersectionality The Seminal Essays*. (New Press, 2012).

¹⁷⁵ On the nationalist vision of gender and policing the gendered boundary within the movement see Pytko, "Policing the Binary—Patrolling the Nation: Race and Gender in Polish Integral Nationalism, from Partitions to Parliament (1883

The chief anti-Semite, Jan Jeleński, was for a long time a marginal figure not taken too seriously by nearly any of the political formations.¹⁷⁶ During and after the revolution, however, his enunciations gained more publicity, and the language he used entered into mainstream debates.¹⁷⁷ It was no longer a scandal to claim that:

In a society with little political consciousness, perhaps as any other one, suddenly a great number of politicians appears – politicians of various estates, various sex and... age! Whoever is alive and can utter sounds of speech, is politicking, and on famous rallies persons foreign to us and degenerated hold sway – such as Estera Golde [female physician and activist of the PPS—Left of Jewish origin], frighteningly shallow, mindless and short sighted.¹⁷⁸

While publications of Jeleński and his followers assumed the most extreme form (i.e. exorcising the “masons, Jews and socialists, the perfectly matched trio aiming at the destruction of Christian societies”¹⁷⁹), similar undertones ceased to be a rarity. For instance, they appeared in many variants – condemning biologically degenerated workers, Jewish enemies of Polishness, or foreign socialists – and they appeared in the writings of prominent literary figures and those previously known to hold a progressive worldview (see also Chapter 4).¹⁸⁰ The merger of class hatred and antisemitism became

– 1926).”

¹⁷⁶ Andrzej Jaszczuk, *Spór pozytywistów z konserwatystami o przyszłość Polski 1870-1903* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1986).

¹⁷⁷ Małgorzata Domagalska, *Zatrute ziarno: proza antysemicka na łamach “Roli” (1883-1912)* (Warszawa: Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne; Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2015).

¹⁷⁸ Jan Jeleński, *Wrogiem własnej ojczyzny (jeszcze słów parę ku opamiętaniu)* (Warszawa: Księgarnia “Roli,” 1906), 8. Other examples of antisemitic vitriol mixed with virulent anti-socialism, a prototype of the trope of Judeo-Commune still perpetuating Polish antisemitism today, may be found in Jan Jeleński, *Bezrobocie rozumu* (Warszawa: Księgarnia “Roli,” 1905); Jan Jeleński, *Siła przed prawem albo jak kto woli: wolność socjalistyczna* (Warszawa: Księgarnia “Roli,” 1906); Jan Jeleński, *Robotniku polski! Ratuj siebie przed zgubą a kraj swój przed ruiną! (głos swojego do swoich)* (Warszawa: Księgarnia “Roli,” 1907).

¹⁷⁹ Zbigniew Kościeszka [Antoni Skrzynecki], *Wrogowie wiary i ojczyzny. Kilka spostrzeżeń na czasie* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Kroniki Rodzinnej, 1905), 10.

¹⁸⁰ Agnieszka Friedrich, “Polish Literature’s Portrayal of Jewish Involvement in 1905,” in *The Revolution of 1905 and Russia’s Jews*, ed. Stefani Hoffman and Ezra Mendelsohn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 143–51; Christoph Garstka, “The Revolution of 1905 in Polish Literature: Henryk Sienkiewicz’s Wiry (Whirls) and Andrzej Strug’s Dzieje Jednego Pocisku (The Story of One Bomb),” in *The Russian Revolution of 1905 in Transcultural Perspective: Identities, Peripheries, and the Flow of Ideas*, ed. Felicitas Fischer von Weikersthal (Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica Publishers, 2013), 245–55. See also Bohdan Urbankowski, *Rok 1905 przed sądem najwyższych autorytetów literackich*, in Irena Maciejewska, *Rewolucja i niepodległość: z dziejów literatury polskiej lat 1905-1920* (Kielce: Wydawnictwo Szumacher, 1991). Magdalena Rumińska, „Wiekiusta maskarada” przed 1905 rokiem i krwawy karnawał po 1905 roku. Wybrane Kroniki i Dzieci Bolesława Prusa, in: Stepnik and Gabrys, *Rewolucja lat 1905-1907*. Adam Tyszką, *Pożytywiści wobec rewolucji 1905–1907. Szkic z dziejów świadomości polskiej*, in: Stefan Klonowski,

a long-lasting amalgam among the Polish public.

In sum, the revolution changed the political not only in respect to the presence of popular contention in the public sphere but also in the spurring on of vicious forms of resistance against it. Thus, modern political languages maturing in the revolutionary public sphere were not only accommodating democratization but also harboring antisemitism. While it might be used to immediately paralyze working class protest in the multi-ethnic industrial hubs,¹⁸¹ above all it was helpful in delegitimizing workers among the higher echelons of the Polish public. As Scott Ury comments, “[w]hile democracy may have brought many blessings, it also came with at least one curse that would scar Polish society for generations: political antisemitism.”¹⁸² It did not happen, however, chiefly because of the already anti-Semitic masses entering the scene as Ury tends to suggest, resonating the liberal-conservative argument about masses causing degeneration of politics. The reason was the broad anti-Semitic panic of the elites fearing the masses.

New sociality – conclusion

In conditions of the relatively rapid proletarianization, it was political activity which was often the first entry to the world of letters and public participation. Various studies on labor movements and proletarian mobilization, regardless of whether they concern strikes, cultural activity or class consciousness point out the role of existing proletarian, usually post-artisanal culture and established social ties in facilitating the emergence of resistance and public democratic claims.¹⁸³ In Russian

Pod czapkę frygijską (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1975).

¹⁸¹ As it happened further east, when pogroms loomed large, see Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms*; Weinberg, *The Revolution of 1905 in Odessa*.

¹⁸² Ury, *Barricades and Banners*, 216.

¹⁸³ It was widely documented by labor historians how important for early labor protest and sprouting socialism the artisanal cultures had been. They provided the networks of communication and solidarity, delivered educated members to the movement and fueled the militant zeal with longing for a better future, modeled along the imagined, long-gone past. In various ways and regarding different contexts, such argumentation is presented in Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*; Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, *Strikes in France, 1830-1968* (London, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974); Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France*; Sewell, “Artisans, Factory Workers, and the Formation of the French Working Class, 1789-1849”; Craig J. Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle: Social Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion*; Welskopp, *Das Banner der Brüderlichkeit: die deutsche Sozialdemokratie vom Vormärz bis*

Poland, however, with the single exception of Warsaw, there was neither urban based networks of the popular classes nor well established artisanal cultures constituting a hotbed for contentious politics of various kinds.

In Russian Poland it was the other way around – the emergent political mobilization and the intensive work of political parties stimulated intellectual activities and emergence of the proletarian public. Emerging forms of proletarian public sphere during the revolution were the important backdrop, against which the transformation of the political occurred. The confrontation with this complex political setting was an important school of politics for participating workers. It was also a form of general education, allowing those people to develop broader interests, an active attitude to the world around, and exchange information about the social reality they were part of. The change in the intellectual pursuits of workers was profound enough to be noticed not only by the internal committees of the parties but also put under public scrutiny in official announcements such as political leaflets. For instance, PPS-Left delivered quite unambiguous information to their readers.

Past tiny gatherings, hidden circles or lectures are redundant today – on the one hand because one can make everything publicly in relevant existing organizations thanks to the revolution, on the other hand the mass dimension of the movement does not allow as yet to dedicate all our efforts for shaping and bringing up individuals. Previously it was the party which assumed the role of the teacher – nurturer. Nowadays maybe even she [the party] should be satisfied with awakening and maintaining the strives to education and culture among the masses, show them the way and means to satisfy those needs either in existing educational institutions, saturated with the democratic spirit, progress and love for free, independent knowledge, or in the self-education institutions created by the workers themselves.¹⁸⁴

The picture of this transformation emerging from my research does not indicate the will of the parties to resign from the circle-style work in favor of the stricter control of the mass worker. Parties were still interested in bringing up independent agitators capable of autodidacticism and not limited

zum Sozialistengesetz; Zygmunt Bauman, *Memories of Class: The Pre-History and after-Life of Class* (London: Routledge, 2009).

¹⁸⁴ Ruch robotniczy u nas przeżywa chwile przełomowe, Leflet of the PPS-Lewica, 18 grudnia 1907, BN DŻS.

the will to resonate and acquire general knowledge. The need for effective political action put such a pressure even earlier on the Russian Social Democracy, leading to the birth of the Leninist centralized party doctrine.¹⁸⁵ In the sources I investigated, both documentation of the socialist parties and militants' memories registered possibilities for new modes of action, but not so much a drive to control the intellectual pursuits of the members.

The will to control the intellectual life of the masses was, however, revealed among the intelligentsia milieus dedicated to maintaining social calm. Many of them were not ready to accept forms of political participation which were not complicit with their expectations. In order to describe and manage the situation, they used various rhetorical strategies condemning workers, especially those supporting other political ideas. The intelligentsia, however, also clearly noticed the change of the political practice (see also Chapter 4). The same applies to educational associations already then controlled by the National Democracy, a political force explicitly hostile to the revolutionary upsurge. The report of the Polish School Motherland (Polska Macieź Szkolna, national-democratic educational organization created on the basis of TON) admitted that "the readership among the people grew unprecedentedly in recent years because the interest in political events".¹⁸⁶ While acknowledging the change, the political right also undertook active measures to retract the popular participation.

This resistance notwithstanding, revolutionary public spheres created multiple opportunities for reasoning and speaking freely across boundaries between those who were supposed to speak and those who were supposed to listen. It was also a step out of the previous hierarchical knowledge transmission of the educational circle stimulated by the intelligentsia speakers. Despite initially being top-down, alternative education managed to trigger the will for public adventures of new-born men of letters. They transmitted information further to other receivers, while short-circuiting the hierarchical order of knowledge. Those political-educational milieus were places where all the

¹⁸⁵ Wildman, *The Making of a Workers' Revolution: Russian Social Democracy, 1891-1903*, chap. 8; Schwarz, *The Russian Revolution of 1905*. On the tensions in the practice of Polish parties, above all the nationalists, see Porter, "Democracy and Discipline in Late Nineteenth Century Poland."

¹⁸⁶ Quoted in: Jadwiga Krajewska, *Czytelnictwo wśród robotników w Królestwie Polskim, 1870-1914* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1979), 91.

political publications were digested. Reading material was vividly discussed and transformed among receivers, autonomously and often against the “official” authorial intention of the enlightened writers. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the forms of public before examining political discourse of leaflets and brochures in detail (which I do in Chapter 3).

Experiences in reading were supplemented by the experience of the street. Public performance and assuming a visible place in the urban public sphere empowered people in contact with the tsarist police and the higher echelons of society. When pushed out off the streets, public participation proliferated within factories; the spaces of production turned into hubs of agitation and debate. In all those places a proto-democratic culture emerged with workers negotiating their action in emerging factory constituencies and debating, if not fighting, with political opponents among their fellow workers. As in every of these practices the workers crossed the boundaries imposed by social order, hierarchical relationships and their own limits, they together composed the emergent proletarian public sphere of the revolutionary politics. Their own experience and memory of this process may also be revealed in biographical testimonies. Those inscriptions of the political in transformation are examined in the next chapter.



Figure 3. Cover of the anniversary issue of the “Kiliński” journal, publishing nationalist workers’ memoirs. University Library in Łódź

CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHY AND POLITICS – THE BIRTH OF THE MILITANT SELF

*This year [1905] was a ground-breaking one for me. My concepts were entirely crystallized.*¹

Biography and its politicization

The 1905 Revolution was often considered by workers as the most important event in their lives. In autobiographies of politicized workers, as this quoted above, it is the 1905 Revolution which is the singular event structuring the memory. In the presented life-stories, biography as life (for the writers) and biography as narration (for us) meet politics. Political activity is an important vehicle of biographical transformation and the main means of storytelling regarding the remembered life. However, the revolution did not come out of the blue even if virtually all participants and observers were astonished, if not shocked, by its appearance. Neither did it imprint on a blank canvas of the working-class self. The event intervened in processually developing biographies by either being the ultimate mobilization already dreamed about by political militants or by ushering novices into the realm of mass politics. In both cases it was an event reconfiguring the selves, as reconstructed later in biographical memory. Just as biographical memory is always entangled in more or less institutionalized collective remembering, the actual effect of the revolution in real time cannot be neatly dissected from this memory.² Nevertheless, its overarching presence in the biographical

¹ Radomski: *wspomnienia technika partyjnego 1905-1907 rok*, “Z pola walki” 1931, No. 11-12, quoted in Kozłowski, *Z rewolucyjnych dni: (Wspomnienia z lat 1904-1907)*, 234.

² The literature on biography, memory, life story and narrative is obviously so vast that it cannot be presented here in detail. My approach is mostly inspired by the studies of biography in respect to political involvement. A heterogeneous catalog of works important here, without those presented in more detail below, is as follows: Kaja Kaźmierska, *Biography and Memory: The Generational Experience of the Shoah Survivors*, Jews of Poland (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2012); George Steinmetz, “Reflections on the Role of Social Narratives in Working-Class Formation: Narrative Theory in the Social Sciences,” *Social Science History* 16 (1992): 489–516; Martyn Lyons, ed., *Ordinary Writings, Personal Narratives: Writing Practices in 19th and Early 20th-Century Europe* (Bern ; New York: P. Lang,

reconstruction testifies to its significance, however entangled the involved social mediation and memory culture might have been.

The aim of this chapter is to examine this memory and the role of the revolution in the reconstruction of the working-class self in respect to the political. The revolutionary culture of militant workers and its memorization has been abundantly investigated in regard to Russia and the respective Soviet canonization. In this body of scholarship, it is usually unidirectional, semi-orchestrated Bolshevik history, memory and self which are put under scrutiny.³ The Polish context, however, offers a much more pluralized setting with characteristics better gauged to investigate working class presence in public as a generic phenomenon. The social and political upheaval in Russian Poland was much more worker-centered than elsewhere in the Russian Empire, and happened in the relatively independent microcosm of pluralized political communication.⁴ The political militants were not necessarily socialists, and sometimes just the opposite. Thus, research tradition notwithstanding, I investigate all the narratives – socialist, patriotic socialist and nationalist alike – on the same abstract level. On this generic plane, not only the socialist promise of emancipation, but also nationalist unity often brought pivotal changes of the selves, assertions, and feelings of the militants.

In order to achieve such a general overview, I have included in the research corpus over a hundred testimonies left by members of the NZR, SDKPiL and both factions of PPS (see methodological appendix). To complicate the picture further, they were produced and gathered under

2007); Molly Andrews, *Shaping History: Narratives of Political Change* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Luisa Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class* (Cambridge; New York : Paris: Cambridge University Press; Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1987); Francesca Polletta, *It Was like a Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Ditmar Brock, *Alltägliche Arbeiterexistenz: soziologische Rekonstruktionen des Zusammenhangs von Lohnarbeit und Biographie* (Frankfurt/Main [u.a.]: Campus-Verl., 1982); Otfried Scholz, *Arbeiter selbstbild Und Arbeiterfremdbild Zur Zeit Der Industriellen Revolution: Ein Beitrag Zur Sozialgeschichte Des Arbeiters in Der Deutschen Erzähl- Und Memoirenliteratur Um Die Mitte Des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Colloquium-Verl., 1980).

³ On the culture of revolution, see Kolonitskii and Figes, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917*. On orchestrating biographical memory and its role in “initiating the Bolshevik self” see Halfin, *Red Autobiographies*. The manufacturing of memory of the 1917 Revolution through its retelling is analyzed in Frederick C. Corney, *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

⁴ Blobaum, *Rewolucja*, Introduction.

very different political circumstances and regimes of speech. Not only had workers been mobilized in multiple, and conflicting, ways but also most of the forged identities had their afterlives in parallel memory cultures. They, in turn, were punctuated by important shifts in the general political landscape: going away from tsarism; the Polish interwar state under different political jurisdictions; the socialist state after 1945; not to mention two world wars. This multiplicity of entanglements supports a more complex analysis of the biographical encounters with politics. They were experienced, memorized and reintegrated in the meaningful construction of the selves of political militants of different kinds and denominations, and only as such are graspable in scholarship today.

In these circumstances, I see the discourse of the political self presented in autobiographies as a product of the layering of time. It is produced at the intersection of the synchronous embedding in the context of particular utterance and the diachronic development of a political self.⁵ All that defines the political self of the writing subject is a historical lamination created in the process they describe. Thus, facts, experiences and contexts as presented in the biography are also elements of the self responsible for producing this biography in real time. And the other way around, what the actually-manufactured biography is, what it presents as its axial events, may help us to infer something about the process of subject formation diachronically occurring in history. Regardless of past events, it is the memory of them, with all the orchestrated collective elements and conventionalized strategies of emplotment, which gives the actual self its place and sense. After all, “all autobiographical memory is true. It is up to the interpreter to discover in which sense, where, for which purpose”,⁶ as one of the scholars of the topic remarks. I aim to uncover these layers of time in order to reveal the sediment of

⁵ This strategy is inspired by the approach to the history of concepts by the late Reinhart Koselleck with its focus on the layered sediments of historical meaning within a single concept, also being a part of the present, synchronous semantic field. On the debate of layers of time in single concepts, see Reinhart Koselleck, “Begriffsgeschichte and Social History,” in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Helge Jordheim, “Does Conceptual History Really Need a Theory of Historical Times?,” *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 6, no. 2 (2011): 21–41; Helge Jordheim, “Against Periodization: Koselleck’s Theory of Multiple Temporalities,” *History and Theory*, no. 51 (2012): 151–71; Niklas Olsen, *History in the Plural: An Introduction to the Work of Reinhart Koselleck* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012).

⁶ Luisa Passerini, “Women’s Personal Narratives: Myths, Experiences, and Emotions,” in *Interpreting Women’s Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives*, ed. Personal Narratives Group (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 197.

political experience.

This experience was also an inscription of the changing political. In accordance with the task of the entire study, which is exploration of the elusive transformation of the political, a historically evolving communicative sphere where subjects and objects of common life are debated and claims for participation are made, this chapter examines the biographical dimension of this change. An important dimension of the particular site- and time-specific regime of public visibility and communal presence is biography and life course, seen simultaneously as an objective trajectory of an individual life (of lesser interest here) and as subjective expectations, perceived chances and wills – in a word, a form of a self-applied “place” within society.⁷ Encounters with the political registered in writing are the best possible barometer of change regarding the actual working class subjects’ presence in this domain.

It remains so even if only a few workers decided, for various reasons, to write. Even though some form of political participation was a widespread phenomenon in the heated days of the revolutionary upheaval,⁸ autobiographical writing remained a minority practice. Thus, what can be inferred from the analysis of the memoirs does not directly concern the entire working class population, and not even those who embraced some form of political action. Below, I investigate the written testimonies of often-exceptional individuals, many times displaying a particular sensitivity to their surroundings, thus engaging in a form of ethnosociology/vernacular analysis of themselves and the social world around them.⁹ I imbed myself in those orders of knowledge to get closer to the biographical process of changing the self through politics and performing the political through individual lives.

Correspondingly, my analysis proceeds in a synthetic, thematic mode, by investigating

⁷ This is a question similar to that asked to his narrators by Joyce, *Democratic Subjects*.

⁸ If not universal, than very common, for data on party membership, consult Blobaum, *Rewolucja*; Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*.

⁹ Such focus on the *in situ* knowledge is of course indebted to social phenomenology, and the concept of ethno-knowledge loosely refers to ethnomethodology, see Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1984).

important, axial events and stages recurrent in militant biographies. Together with conventional ways of emplotment, these events make a genre out of the revolutionary biography. Writing about axial events, I refer to their pivotal quality, and due to emplotment I understand, after Hayden White, the integration of facts as components of specific kinds of plot structures.¹⁰ The biographies are structured according to the time sequence where individual biographical time converges with the political time of the revolution. In order to understand the impact of the latter on the former, a broader picture, tracing the militant biography in the earlier stages, is indispensable. Thus, I am not strictly following paths and narrative structures of particular militants, but trying to extract the typical stages of life, work and political activity, as presented by the writers. However, I creatively use particular narratives as vehicles for the exposition of the important themes. Whereas this strategy is intended to bring in some exemplary ethnographic detail beyond the dry motley sets of quotations, the themes are analyzed and the general presentation is informed by the investigation of the entire corpus of over a hundred biographies.

The chosen protagonists with names and stories do not represent any ideal types of proletarian biography strictly speaking; however, they may be seen as individuals embodying typological representativeness. Therefore, these are prismatic biographies offering insights into a broader microcosm of meaning and dense structural constraints of the politicized lives. Their specificity often sticks out of the official memory culture within which they were created, which allows us to lurk behind the highly-conventionalized ways of writing. The way they are emplotted in a (usually) coherent story may as well reflect the actual pathways of political militancy, performed, after all,

¹⁰ Definitions of sorts are due here. Writing about axial events, I mean their general pivotal quality but also I refer loosely to the notion of axial period as introduced by Karl Jaspers and developed by Smuel Eisenstadt. While it was applied to the development of civilizations and their intellectual soundness, it referred to a “kind of critical, reflective questioning of the actual and a new vision of what lies beyond.” And this is precisely the dimension brought about by axial events in biographies investigated here. See Antony Black, “The ‘Axial Period’: What Was It and What Does It Signify?”, *The Review of Politics* 70, no. 01 (December 2008), doi:10.1017/S0034670508000168. Axial events are reconstructed in biographical storytelling as pivotal for the biography. The notion of emplotment signifies the analytical sensitivity drawn from literary studies as applied to historical storytelling. Thus, emplotment is “simply the encodation of the facts contained in the chronicle as components of specific kinds of plot structures”. Here, the same applies to biographies, also a form of storytelling. See Hayden White, “The Historical Text As Literary Artifact,” in *The History and Narrative Reader*, ed. Geoffrey Roberts (London ; New York: Routledge, 2001), 223.

along the lines of the expectations which were shared within a given social milieu.¹¹ However, I investigate steps of political involvement and stages important for the accomplished, narrating self.¹² Militant narratives as manufactured statements present the politically saturated life course as a main factor changing the relationship of the self and the political.¹³ They are capstones finishing and retroactively interpreting the story, and thus ultimately confirming the significance of past events at the time of writing. This tautological status renders autobiographical writing a fruitful point of departure to investigate the political transformation.

Sense of misery and rising self-assertion

The political transformation embodied in biography was embedded in the sense of self and an idea of the world which for some reason was considered unsatisfying. Władysław Kossek was the son of a skilled worker. However, at the age of twelve, he lost his father, who died of a “typical workers' disease, tuberculosis”.¹⁴ Władysław had to first drop a modest unauthorized education in order to help his semi-invalid father in the factory and later take over the household after his death. Such a path represents a common arrangement: unavoidable and hardly reversible poverty resulting from the death of a male bread-winner. The story of a short respite of youth, with limited possibilities of self development, abruptly ended by a sudden death or deterioration of health conditions is a repetitive pattern in working class biography in the pre-welfare period in Europe; in Russian Poland

¹¹ However, I do not offer a prosopography of proletarian militants. Sequencing the data in this way in order to answer different research questions may bring insights about political involvement structuring biography, so a reversed picture of the dynamics is investigated here. For such attempts regarding Russian revolutionaries, for instance female militants, Bolshevik elites, and Jewish revolutionaries, see, respectively: Hillyar and McDermid, *Revolutionary Women in Russia, 1870-1917*; Riga, “Identity and Empire: The Making of the Bolshevik Elite, 1880-1917”; Nicolaysen, “Looking Backward: A Prosopography of the Russian Social Democratic Elite, 1883-1917”; Robert J. Brym, *Jewish Intelligentsia and Russian Marxism: A Sociological Study of Intellectual Radicalism and Ideological Divergence* (London ; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1978).

¹² For the sake of clarity, I sometimes resigned from reported speech. However, it does not mean any switch in epistemology – what is said here always concerns the past reality narrated by writers and not the biographical process in real time. Occasional background information on the working class living conditions and the like are supplemented by references to secondary sources.

¹³ A single case-based analysis in respect to the self and the social is presented by Joyce, *Democratic Subjects*.

¹⁴ Władysław Kossek, *Kartki z życiorysu proletariusza*, in: Zdzisław Spieralski (ed.), *Wspomnienia weteranów rewolucji 1905 i 1917 roku*. (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1967), 15.

this was prolonged for several decades.¹⁵ In this uneasy situation, young Władysław, already on the verge of being destitute, was wondering about his fate. The harsh circumstances became the matter of conscious critical reflection and they were memorized as justifying action. So as to stress the sense of misery, living conditions were compared with those of other people in a multi-ethnic and highly differentiated (in terms of class and status) urban environment. Indeed, various class milieus were often confronted face to face because of the relative proximity of factories, workers' districts or tenements, and entrepreneur's villas and palaces (esp. in Łódź and Dąbrowa basin).¹⁶

I was wondering if all people live and work in the same way. Why – I was thinking – when I am coming back from the church [thus on Sunday, a festive day when traditionally a more exquisite meal was eaten – WM] and I would like to eat anything better I cannot afford it. (...) Why are the rich people everywhere liked, enshrined and do not have to work as hard as me and my mother? Why do even the priests in the church like them more than us?¹⁷

These doubts were not yet a sufficient reason to rethink his own position, and an external political intervention was needed. Kossek admitted in the same paragraph that in his “own opinion in those days the most righteous was the Father God, giving the health and power in work, and after him was the factory owner, Buhle, who after father's death had taken my mother to work and allowed us to exist”.¹⁸ Apparently, there was still a lot of political work to be done to forge militant workers out of passive laborers who took capitalist moral economy for granted and rendered the owners as merciful for “giving work”.

Such an agitation often spurred on existential grievances. Even if cataloging misfortunes was a cold-blooded reconstruction of facticity rather than a prolonged mourning, it nevertheless was set

¹⁵ David Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge, and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography* (London ; New York: Methuen, 1982); Mary Jo Maynes, *Taking the Hard Road: Life Course in French and German Workers' Autobiographies in the Era of Industrialization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

¹⁶ Nietyksza, *Rozwój miast i aglomeracji miejsko-przemysłowych w Królestwie Polskim, 1865-1914*.

¹⁷ Władysław Kossek, *Kartki z życiorysu proletariusza*, in: Spieralski (ed.), *Wspomnienia weteranów rewolucji 1905 i 1917 roku.*, 17–18.

¹⁸ Ibid., 17.

within the emotional background of familial tragedy. A child not being able to survive because of sanitary deficiencies or sheer hunger was a mundane experience. However, the entire fate weaved out of such sad events was an unbearable burden, which cannot be in any way removed: “The life of our family was very harsh, thirteen times a child was born and eight times a funeral was organized. For most workers when one misfortune was gone, another one approached”.¹⁹ Against such a backdrop Kossek reconstructs his political affiliation. It was his brother who gave meaning to these perceived sufferings and offered a way out of a seemingly hopeless situation.

[My] brother Julian (...) used to say: “Nobody is going to help us, workers. We have to fight for better living conditions on our own”. Soon Julian started to broaden my consciousness and encouraged me to work for the party. He was bringing proclamations home and once he said that he had been a member of Polish Socialist Party for a long time and his pseudonym was Kostek. Since then I was an adult man; I have seen life differently and I have been ardently observing all that was happening around me.²⁰

This was a political revelation resonating well with previous experience. Once the mystery was revealed, it was an important threshold in the process of formation of the revolutionary self, or just a “mature” consciousness, comprehended by writers as essentially coherent with the future state of mind in the moment of producing biographical narration. It was the shortest path leading to political involvement. Kossek entered PPS as one of many workers, mobilized in the first days of the revolutionary upheaval, finally making use of their long-maturing commitments. It was also a fundamental element of the rising self-assertion, presented as an important dimension of biographical trajectory. It was further confirmed by the tangible experience of a possible change. This moment reappearing in memory may be expressed as a short “syllogism” combining the success of strikes with further political mobilization in favor of the socialists.²¹ It was aptly expressed by Kossek: after

¹⁹ Władysław Kossek, *Kartki z życiorysu proletariusza*, in *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁰ Władysław Kossek, *Kartki z życiorysu proletariusza*, in *Ibid.*, 18.

²¹ As the NZR in most of the cases opposed strike activity, this section is dedicated to the socialists only. Nationalist memoirs are mostly silent on that matter.

a strike won, “[t]he factory was on the move again. It was a great victory of the socialists. Everybody knew that we owed it to the socialists. Long live the socialists!”²² Such a conclusion was well-received in the context in which the memoir was written.

Kossek's autobiographical statement is part and parcel of the orchestrated commemorative effort of the Polish socialist state. This important sub-corpus consists of: larger book-size autobiographies (sometimes utilizing earlier manuscripts); testimonies given on various occasions such as anniversaries, open competitions or radio calls to gather such memories; extensive, open-ended questionnaires collected by historians orbiting around the ruling party; and, last but not least, “resumes” written to prove entitlement for benefits as veterans of the proletarian movement. Without a doubt, the larger framing is not incidental; his testimony is included in a collected volume gathering the writings of the Polish veterans of 1905 and 1917. They are deliberately lumped together in order to stress the continuity of the “revolutionary struggle” between events in “Poland” (1905) and those happening elsewhere, which were later perceived as indifferent if not hostile (1917 – largely dismissed because of the later Polish-Soviet war of 1919-1921). On the micro level, however, there were hardly any interventions; the standard story of a militant socialist worker, conventionalized as it was already before, was usually enough to fulfill the official requirements.

The sense of misery and deprivation was not incongruous with the ideological requirements but also not particularly encouraged. However, biographical testimonies may tend to project the subsequently acquired awareness of the context or patterns of interpretation into the past. It is argued, for instance, that even the feeling of basic deprivation and defining the self as entangled and victimized by industrial production was acquired relatively late. Stimulated by the upper-strata discourses on the social question, it appeared only after the nearly universal spread of post-enlightenment aspirations to welfare and well-being.²³ It seems, however, that this frame was already

²² Władysław Kossek, *Kartki z życiorysu proletariusza*, in: Spierański (ed.), *Wspomnienia weteranów rewolucji 1905 i 1917 roku.*, 25.

²³ Ditmar Brock, *Der schwierige Weg in die Moderne: Umwälzungen in der Lebensführung der deutschen Arbeiter zwischen 1850 und 1980* (Frankfurt am Main u.a.: Campus-Verlag, 1991).

present in the real-time experience of the workers before 1905. The diagnosis of pure living conditions as a background for political activity appears in testimonies stemming from all the political denominations analyzed here. It is also confirmed by the moral economy of early petitions sent by workers to factory owners or tsarist administration. If before 1905 they did not display any critique of the existing order, they nevertheless used poverty and unbearable conditions as a main justification of submitted claims.²⁴ In later recollections it was also generalized into a more all-encompassing compassion and solidarity with others in similar situations.

I was suffering hunger and humiliation for a few coins as a sweeper in mister Geyer's weavery. I felt with the sensitive heart of a child that along with me all the workers of this enormous factory were suffering – equally my peers and the adults, who previously had seemed to me always satisfied and self-assured. I have pitied most of these exhausted women and elders, from whom Geyer's factory had taken away their entire lives, not giving them anything instead.²⁵

In this vein, the prerevolutionary situation was widely reconstructed as a time of passivity and obedience. Narrators use advanced introspection to understand their own initial position. They also stylize it as raw material for political mobilization, later pointing at the particular political framework which allowed them to “wake up”. Alternatively, they reconstruct the political framework as resonating with their primordial sentiments or inborn dignity.²⁶ While a sense of misery as a background of militancy is a wide-spread motive in European labor biography, in the Polish conjuncture the striving for national recognition was as important as the economic deprivation and

²⁴ Abundant documentation of the pre-revolutionary language of claims may be found in petitions and protest letters issued to factory owners or different agencies of the tsarist administration. See petitions in Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 1*; Gąsiorowska-Grabowska and Kalabiński, *Źródła do dziejów klasy robotniczej na ziemiach polskich*. More petitions may be found in tsarist files, see for instance APŁ KGP 546, 547.

²⁵ Stanisław Michalski, *Na obu brzegach Atlantyku*, in Spieralski (ed.), *Wspomnienia weteranów rewolucji 1905 i 1917 roku.*, 113. See also Władysław Kossek, *Kartki z życiorysu proletariusza*, in Ibid., 12.

²⁶ Thus, constructing a vernacular frame analysis of a kind. On academic concept of frame alignment, see Robert Benford and David Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 611–39.

the rejection of inequality. These motives are present in narratives from all over the political spectrum, regardless of any obvious political incentives to hone the story of the self along one of those lines. For instance, one of the Sosnowiec workers, working under a German foreman's supervision, described the germinating pride and rejection of docility against his still-passive (or, maybe, hiding-resentment-better-than-the-narrator) colleagues:

Some of my cooperators ignored it, not paying any attention to it. I do not know if they were convinced that it had to be like this, that we were outlawed people, or their thought was so dumb, so lazy, that they did not understand the disrespect against us as Poles. I also do not know why, I, when hearing a similar word [some offensive nickname derogatory against the Poles – WM] directed to me or to some of my cooperators, felt that somebody was beating me with a stick, that somebody was kicking me with his legs, that somebody treated me like dirt till I could not stand it anymore, and I felt some unbearable, undefined pain, and it seemed to me that somebody was tearing out my heart and tearing out my guts, and I felt pain which one can not describe with a human language.²⁷

Such feelings are often a context explaining the political alignment after the first contact with some nationalist association or a socialist party circle. Later they triggered retributive acts of assuming dignity during the revolutionary days, when long-maturing grievances and hidden fantasies of revenge might be re-enacted for real. But, the growing subjective dissatisfaction with the world around and one's own place in it was above all presented as a background for attempts to change the situation. The stories, however, do not unfold straightforwardly. As a kind of *Bildungsromane*, they draw the narrator as a figure overcoming various threats and obstacles. The political involvement, or even initial interest, had to first go through layers of distrust, internalized feelings of hierarchy, and sheer fear of persecution. How it happened that narrators got involved in spite of those threats is a subject of scrutiny in the following sections.

²⁷ F. (full name unknown) Bereza, *Wspomnienia z dni rewolucyjnych czyli przebieg rewolucji z roku 1904 i dalej*, AAN, Instytut Badania najnowszej historii Polski, Wspomnienia nadesłane do redakcji pisma Niepodległość 1930-1937, sygn. 357/4, folder 3, p. 34.

The hard road of autodidacticism

It is probably difficult to overestimate the difficulties which an illiterate worker had to cope with before he or she got involved politically. Working class militancy in 1905 should be taken as far from obvious; in the case of more experienced activists, it required a long autodidactic career beforehand. A peasant's son and future professional writer, Lucjan Rudnicki, while pasturing geese, stole remnants of illustrated newspapers from a pile of burning papers and furniture. They were treated in this way after being removed from the parish house after the local priest died of cholera. He was later severely beaten by his father, who found out what happened and confiscated this precious booty already hidden by the boy somewhere in the barn. The punishment was executed, however, not because the papers were “stolen” from the (dead) priest's property, let alone because the boy exposed himself and his family to the risk of cholera infection. The problem was that he had not taken care of the geese properly.²⁸ The hierarchy in a peasant household was rigid and did not leave much space for education. “Taking the hard road” was the fate of everybody wanting to reach beyond.

For Rudnicki, it was an initially forced migration to the large industrial hub which appeared to be the path of escape from the “benign state of natural, almost primitive culture”.²⁹ In this new environment he was soon ready to take on new intellectual activities. Following the standard path of autodidactic readers, from popular pulp novels he jumped to the Polish classics. He used to vehemently read “after coming back from the factory and satisfying hunger, from 8 to 11 PM with the whole family by the kitchen lamp”. Later the fate of the characters was ardently discussed, till “repetitive calls of the aunt to go to bed gradually calmed down the literary disputes”.³⁰ Further studies indispensable for the self-inflicted professional and intellectual mobility demanded exceptional effort, a painful self-perfection, and the overcoming of subsequent borders of language and cultural exclusion. Rudnicki felt “uneducated in the simplest knowledge, knowledge of the

²⁸ Rudnicki, *Stare i nowe*, 21–22.

²⁹ Ibid., 94.

³⁰ Ibid., 104–5.

mother tongue, as it was visible that what we knew was more imperfect, lower”.³¹ He consciously tried to overcome this obstacle, which not surprisingly was very difficult without any external assistance or even a simple dictionary.

Finally, he found assistance in these efforts in socialist mobilization. The alignment of cognitive pursuits of proletarian autodidacts and political languages to explain the world was an important factor of political mobilization. Political language explained the world, then offered a particular form of cognitive epiphany. Social processes, structural constraints and mechanics of the world were convincingly connected with the everyday experience of the factory worker. For some not entirely obvious reason, the most self-reflexive testimonies about this shift are written by people of the far left (SDKPiL or PPS-Left; that is Rudnicki's case as well). One may guess that this is connected with the highly theoretical party culture fueling the reflective effort of crafting the political self. Another reason might be the higher inner-party upward mobility of working class militants, allowing them to live political lives worthy of being written down with the resources to do it. Suffice to say, those memoirs which are highly original, of literary value and of length sufficient to investigate broader biographical processes, were written by committed militants who were politicized men of letters with a longer party career behind them. Thus, the authors were not mobilized in the revolution but usually earlier; in 1905 they were already trained agitators, just like Rudnicki.

However, such a path and corresponding experience is also represented in more typical biographies of rank-and-file workers. A description of a turbulent childhood is an important part of many life histories. Here the narrators who were able to reach some degree of upward social mobility describe hardships imprinted in their memories, so as to sketch ardent educational pursuits against this backdrop. The not always merry days of urban childhood nevertheless offered some space for personal development, fantasies, dreams, thought and speech. A number of working class children did have some time for play and very moderate education. This relatively “open” time was abruptly

³¹ Ibid., 107.

put to an end by economic hardship – the necessity of wage labor. Among the still-existing artisan cultures with a relatively high level of literacy, there had been chances to organize alternative home education;³² in the context of large factories hiring unskilled workers, time reserves and intellectual resources were no longer available. This confrontation with unpleasant reality and unrealisation of dreams and aspirations is a common memory in the written workers' biographies:³³

Because I had not known life yet, with its economic relationships, I started to dream about a career as a doctor, a lawyer or other similar professions. However, after leaving the old yeshiva I soon got disappointed. I noticed the class division of society: richer and poorer. I realized that the entry through the gates of European culture is not that easy, as I imagined that these are not abilities which suffice; above all what needs to be [available] is money, and this is the most important [thing].³⁴

Working class adults were acutely aware that those early educational opportunities, which later often defined their future life courses, were mostly a matter of luck or incredible stubbornness;³⁵ as in the story of Franciszek Kujawa, a boy taught by an old political militant of Social-democracy, luckily living nearby:

He stroked my head and began to ask if I attended school – I replied that for such poor children as I there was no place in school, because whenever my mother had taken me to the school there had been no place. The teacher for sure wanted to get a bribe, and in our family there was no money for bread. [He asked:] And can you read and write – I can read because my mother has taught me, but she cannot write so she has not taught me. [Asking again] And do you want to learn how to write – I replied, that very much because boys who were attending school did not want to play with me because I could not write. [He replied] From tomorrow onward I will teach you how to write – you want it desperately. I was waiting eagerly for this tomorrow, the night seemed to last forever. I woke up very early, and like never before and after I waited eagerly for this moment when

³² Interesting examples from England may be found in Johnson, “Really Useful Knowledge: Radical Education and Working Class Culture.”

³³ It seems to be a pan-European pattern of worker autobiography. After all, working-class life course was similar in many contexts, despite differences in the proletarianization patterns and local industries. See for instance Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge, and Freedom*, chaps. 4–5.

³⁴ Mojżesz Kaufman (Mojśze Mezryczer), *Przyczynki do historii żydowskiej organizacji PPS*, “Niepodległość” 1935, vol. XII, 26.

³⁵ This also seems to be a broader pattern. Those who change their educational and social position usually recollect some form of external biographical intervention, see Maynes, *Taking the Hard Road*.

I would finally start to learn the art of writing (...).³⁶

Not only are enchantment and longing described here but there is also a complex dynamic of pain of rejection, awareness of exclusion and awaiting self-assertion. It is supplemented by a cognitive passion often present among future autodidacts, later party leaders, political militants or class-milieu writers of the inter-war years. The awaited teaching was not a regular transfer of conceded knowledge from the enlightened elite to the people but instead a horizontal *bricolage*. Knowledge was re-appropriated in order to be passed along further in an alternative, class-based educational milieu. There it might have been later re-articulated and reused for these milieu-specific purposes. The roughly educated children often recirculated their skills either teaching other children or reading newspapers or books aloud to their illiterate or barely literate parents and relatives.³⁷ Moreover, the childish universe hitherto directed to the everyday concreteness of the working class family life faced an alternative order of the abstract, seemingly useless practice of writing; the reading experience triggered in the narrators an urge to rebuild their embodied knowledge, also their class habitus, and to use their minds and muscles differently than before. “At the beginning – recalled Kujawa – the art of writing was very difficult for me. Drawing lines and circles on one side of the notebook was more tiresome for me than digging potatoes for the entire day, or chopping wood out of an entire trunk (...).”³⁸ This difficulty itself created a spirit of reverence and exaggerated attention in respect to the rebuilding of the self.

The writers willingly create the impression that home-bred talents among the popular classes demanded extreme durability and persistence, if not some particular form of wit or even cunning, to be maintained. There is something of “poaching” in the presented attempts to gain access to knowledge and development in the stories told by past autodidacts. Those “hidden transcripts” are

³⁶ Franciszek Kujawa, *Wspomnienie z pobytu mego w byłej SDKPiL i KPP*, APŁ KW PZPR 1923, p. 15-16.

³⁷ Łęczycki, *Mojej ankiety personalnej punkt 35, 40*. Broader on reading practices see Krajewska, *Czytelnictwo wśród robotników w Królestwie Polskim, 1870-1914*.

³⁸ Franciszek Kujawa, *Wspomnienie z pobytu mego w byłej SDKPiL i KPP*, APŁ KW PZPR 1923, p. 15-16.

forms of resistance directed not only against the access restrictions imposed by the “ruling classes”, embodied in various forms of financial obstacles or lack of proper institutions. It is not only against various kinds of elites not willing to grant access to the possibly dangerous knowledge.³⁹ The writers were aware of the fact that they had to also question and outwit the tacit rules of their respective communities and their own habits and convictions.⁴⁰ Not only did some of them become subcultural inter-class subjects, the intelligentsia-workers, but also they had to remain on guard against the constraints of their advancing life-course.

Analyzed narratives confirm the patterns recognized by working class life-cycle historians. Adventures in the free-spirited pursuit of knowledge were more typical of young workers.⁴¹ Once the time of apprenticeship ended, there was a regular factory job available; young single males were in their better years, sometimes able to spend surplus cash on a newspaper, a shared book, maybe some popular entertainment or just fuel for a lamp to read after dusk. In those vivid years there were opportunities for small triumphs, used by narrators to stress their engagement and interest in spheres other than work:

We sometimes spent evenings more seriously (...), on conversations about inventions, about science and about superstitions. We used to buy, I remember, popular and educational brochures by Arct [a Warsaw bookshop] and we learned on our own, however one could. Sometimes one of us brought an illegal printing. The rest ate it up like delicious

³⁹ The metaphors used to describe these autodidactic subversions are inspired by works on popular resistance and obstinacy such as M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley, Calif. ; Los Angeles, Calif: University of California Press, 2011); James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Alf Lüdtke, *Eigen-Sinn: Fabrikalltag, Arbeitererfahrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse Verlag, 1993).

⁴⁰ See Olbrzymek, *Wspomienia starego robotnika 1893-1918*, “Z pola walki” 1927, no. 4, 52-53; Łęczycki, *Mojej ankiety personalnej punkt 35*, 87. Some other ways of creative appropriation of the read content out of the box are documented in David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England, 1750-1914* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Martyn Lyons, “The Reading Experience in Workers-Autobiographies in 19th Century Europe,” in *Reading Culture and Writing Practices in Nineteenth-Century France*, Studies in Book and Print Culture (Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

⁴¹ Some remarks on general patterns of working-class life cycle and its transformation, see Martin Kohli, “The World We Forgot. The Historical Review of the Life Course,” in *The Life Course Reader: Individuals and Societies across Time*, ed. Walter R. Heinz, Johannes Huinink, and Ansgar Weymann, Campus Reader (Frankfurt/Main: Campus-Verl, 2009). Life cycle as topic of autobiography is examined by Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge, and Freedom*, chap. 3; Elizabeth Bidinger, *The Ethics of Working Class Autobiography: Representation of Family by Four American Authors* (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Co, 2006); James Simmons, *Factory Lives: Four Nineteenth-Century Working-Class Autobiographies*, Nineteenth-Century British Autobiographies (Peterborough, Ont. ; Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 2007).

prey. For instance, I was once able to get hold of a collection of revolutionary songs. (...) From those songs we learned to express our grievance.⁴²

This is also evidence of the connection between materials read in the past and ways of writing in the (narrators') present. Some writers were perfectly aware of this relationship, openly thematizing the resources they used for understanding and later describing the world around them. The resulting self-assertion is brought forward as an evidence of the biographical change. Working class writers display their courage to openly resist and question authority figures.

A socialist veteran, tanner Michał Ostrowski tells how he was taken to a hospital, still under religious jurisdiction, and was to undergo a compulsory confession; he vehemently resisted, responding to the medical staff:

My faith is grounded in my will and reason, these are my convictions, which I consider my personal issue and that is why I won't allow religious practices to be forced upon me. I am a philosopher, and I believe in what science has investigated.⁴³

Such a statement was an expression of a certain accomplished, resistant self of the writer. Even if it is a pure literary creation or a highly stylized memory – a description of words and deeds as imagined rather than those done and spoken – the very mode of presentation of the narrator to his readers speaks for itself.

The biographical dynamic is narrativized in a form resembling bourgeois *Bildungsroman*, re-articulated in the mode of socialist transformation from a passive victim to an active and resistant challenger against the existing oppressive circumstances.⁴⁴ Like every autobiographical writer, a

⁴² Bronisław Fijałek, *Życiorys*, personal folder, AAN AODRR, folder 1520, p. 1.

⁴³ Michał Ostrowski, *Wspomnienia*, AAN AODRR, personal folder 4386, f. 2, p. 12.

⁴⁴ Commentary on such narrative devices allowing to integrate the biography may be found in Maynes, *Taking the Hard Road*, chap. 2; See also Steinmetz, "Reflections on the Role of Social Narratives in Working-Class Formation: Narrative Theory in the Social Sciences." More about particular socialist eschatology of light, activation and emancipation see Halfin, *From Darkness to Light Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia*.

working class one is a *bricoleur*, recycling stock patterns to express his life story which was also lived in real time along external benchmarks. In the case of politicized working class autobiography, the meaningful world of work had to be replaced by other forms of emplotment, acquired from socialist literature (where often a collective subject underwent the process of maturation and awakening in history) or novels, saturating working-class writers with bourgeois personality models based on individual pursuits and heroism.⁴⁵

The pattern of struggle against all odds for self-formation also comes back when writers describe later attempts to stay on the track of self-development. Some attempted to “cheat” their life course, corrupting it through a combination of the approaching stage of life with goals acquired before. Ostrowski writes:

I had an enormous will to be educated and just after leaving the orphanage I tried to read a lot. I was most interested in ancient history and natural sciences. Unfortunately there was nobody around who would have given me any advice, so I read everything randomly. (...) I always admired people, who had at least some schooling and I felt my nothingness, because I did not have this key to knowledge, as I understood that school gives the foundation and with me there was no such foundation and I always felt sad and I dreamed that I would get a wife – a friend, who having any education could help me in further educating myself.⁴⁶

This time the attempt failed miserably: “my ‘Florka’ [the wife's name] did not like my comrades, because they only used to tell fantastic fables about stupidities but did not dance.”⁴⁷

Political initiation

If a stubborn autodidactic effort failed, and any biographical assistance of the elder or educated

⁴⁵ On the non-accidental inter-dependent relationship between bourgeois and working class narrative patterns and the role of politics as a vehicle for working-class writing, see Regenia Gagnier, “Social Atoms: Working-Class Autobiography, Subjectivity, and Gender,” *Victorian Studies* 30, no. 3 (1987): 335–63. See also Maynes, *Taking the Hard Road*, 322.

⁴⁶ Michał Ostrowski, *Wspomnienia*, AAN AODRR, personal folder 4386, f.1, p.2/1.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 2/2.

wives was not at hand, the chance came from the worker's political involvement. Not only did parties spread literacy and new languages to describe the world, but they also organized more general education, such as open lectures or meetings, as demonstrated in the previous chapter. It was in a collective form of broader education, but above all it was political action where individual intellectual pursuits could also come to fruition.

Beforehand, the everyday life of workers in Russian Poland was seldom interrupted by a spark of political zeal. Considering the short life expectancy, there was an entire generation between the scattered protests. The Łódź riot from 1892 was by early 1900 a vivid part of communicative memory; it was not a direct point of reference, however, but a distant story retold by the older generation of workers, not those most active in the heyday of 1905.⁴⁸ Thus, the stories of political beginning are told against the backdrop of mundane activity, endless toil, and hopelessness, narrativized as a fresh awakening, a slow move toward light, life and hope, rather than a taking of the baton of revolutionary struggle from the older veterans. The veterans, however, sometimes played important biographical roles as crucial external actors spreading the news; they sometimes acted as biographical caretakers and educators infecting the narrators with germs of disruptive thinking and the initial imagining of a world different than the actual present.

Curiosity might also initiate a chain of events that pushes the young adept into deeper involvement. It could happen because of some form of positive outside pressure, but also due to external persecution. Sometimes, a stigma of improper behavior was reflexively changed into a positive identity as a part of biography management in the time of writing (and probably as well in the time of action). Józef Skowroński, a young worker from Zgierz, attended an ill-defined circle of "moderate protestants of Polish-socialist provenance".⁴⁹ There he got interested in the critique of

⁴⁸For the generational forgetting of experiences and lost conclusions from past political upheavals, see Andreas Suter, "Kulturgeschichte des Politischen - Chancen und Grenzen," in *Was heißt Kulturgeschichte des Politischen?*, ed. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (Berlin: Berlin : Duncker & Humblot, 2005).

⁴⁹ In his wording: *nieznaczące kółko protestantów polsko-socjalistycznego tołku* (sic!). Most probably he meant just those who used to protest, affiliated with PPS. *Wypis z ankiety personalnej Józefa Skowrońskiego*, in AAN, AODRR, Józef Skowroński, sygn. 11365.

religion, which removed the veil of mystery from the religious ritual, thus resonating with his natural curiosity. Putting the acquired ideas into practice, he decided to investigate the Host, to check if it really contains “the blood of Lord Jesus”. This scientific enterprise did not gain the endorsement of his mother, who after beating him severely gave him up to the priest. This immediately resulted in a forced escape to Łódź, a bigger city without the direct control of the clergy as in the previous semi-urban local community. As a result, he “joined the PPS and became an active member”.⁵⁰ This is how a “moral career” of a revolutionary could be reconstructed.⁵¹ In this case, the grip of standardized narrative is loosened, and a certain contingency of the biographical process is revealed.

In other cases, however, the ideological and experiential genesis of political commitment is covered with a thick crust of obviousness; the party road and political activism seem almost as natural as subsequent stages of the life course. As one of the narrators put it: “The labor movement started. Workers began strikes in factories, and I as a boy was needed in the party to distribute the leaflets”.⁵² Just like that. Such a presentation confirms the ideological choice as the right one, reassuring the coherence of the told biography as a correct, unidirectional way of the revolutionary subject called upon to fulfill its historical task.

These laconic expositions notwithstanding, the political initiation was not always an easy process. It was a long and demanding intellectual journey and sheer access to the long-desired fresh ideas was fairly limited. Often a significant other, a kind of biographical patron, is introduced as a crucial protagonist of the biography. Such a patron either intervened in a crucial moment of the biographical path, as for instance by awaking educational aspirations, or was just a political gatekeeper. A friend, family member or just a more sympathetic party agitator not only provided the

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ On origins of the concept see Erving Goffman, “The Moral Career of the Mental Patient,” *Psychiatry* 22, no. 2 (1959): 123–42, doi:10.1521/00332747.1959.11023166.

⁵² Ignacy Kuświk, *Moje wspomnienia*, APL, KŁ PZPR, syg. 11442, p. 3. A similar “natural” way through friendship and personal bonds was described for instance in Marcelli Staszewski, *Mój pamiętnik*, APL, KW PZPR w Łodzi, syg. 1951. Strikingly, sometimes any reasons or broader reflection on political choices made their way even to book-size memoirs of a (future) active politician, see Jan Kwapiński, *Moje Wspomnienia 1904-1939* (Paryż: Księgarnia Polska w Paryżu, 1965).

narrator with contact to the party structure, but also played an important role in the process of politicization. This was not an extended process.

Zygmunt (...) talked a lot about a revolution, that every worker should be a socialist – and socialism leads to liberation and freedom – by then in the house various people gathered, and one avoided us [the younger freshmen]. I was desperate to hear something but I have only known something from Zygmunt later.⁵³

Actually, it was even occasionally difficult for already committed workers to contact other militants plugged into the party structure. In conditions of illegality they were reluctant to reveal who they were, or even respond to outsiders asking them about their party allegiance. Oftentimes, the first point of contact was leaflets distributed broadly and “randomly” (I return to the structure of circulation in Chapter 3).⁵⁴ Those luckier or more stubborn were able to get a political journal in their hands; however, it was expected they would pass it on. Such obstacles were common in memories of socialist adherents and nationalist freshmen alike. I will now zoom in to the nationalists, as socialist paths are already presented more broadly in other sections.

Biographies of the NZR members are authorized recollections of the movement and they are clearly uttered as a reclaiming of polemics against the dominant memory. It was not because Polish nationalism was weak (quite the contrary) but because the NZR was separated from its main current.⁵⁵ When the NZR fostered the gathering and publishing of memoirs in the 1930s, it was already long detached from the National Democracy, a nationalist party drifting to the almost fascist right in interwar Poland. The national democratic political syndicate, however, mobilizing workers along the nationalist, anti-minority and anti-Jewish lines, did not support a separate workers’ movement. Thus, the NZR memory was orphaned and the association attempted to claim legitimacy among the

⁵³ Edward Skórkiewicz, *Pamiętnik rewolucji 1905 roku w Zagłębiu Dąbrowskim*, APŁ, KŁ PZPR, t. 11718, p. 4.

⁵⁴ The party practice and the challenge of successful agitation are analyzed in the case of the SDKPiL in Radlak, *Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy w latach 1893-1904*; Samuś, *Dzieje SDKPiL w Łodzi 1893-1918*.

⁵⁵ On the NZR split with national democracy, see Monasterska, *Narodowy Związek Robotniczy, 1905-1920*. Some analysis of its reasons is offered in Crago, “The ‘Polishness’ of Production: Factory Politics and the Reinvention of Working-Class National and Political Identities in Russian Poland’s Textile Industry, 1880-1910.”

insurrectionist tradition of the Polish workers. It therefore rivaled the then dominant memory of the right, militarist faction of the PPS, by that time enshrined as a prehistory of Piłsudski's camp.

It was hard to choose among the number of nationalist biographies because of their scarcity, and structure. Consequently, I will attempt to build a collective biography of a novice nationalist militant out of the more fragmentary individual testimonies. During the revolution, the National Democrats abandoned the insurrectionist tradition and were partially co-opted by the Russian state, seen by them as a guarantor of order against revolutionary anarchy. Then the nationalists enjoyed slightly broader margins of legality, later tramped on by the tsarist reaction. Initially, however, this milieu shared the experience of conspiracy with the socialists.

In such underground conditions, one of the future nationalist militants, Michał Kosiorek “dreamed about joining the secret patriotic organization because illegal work for Poland excited [him]”. Only after a long period of asking around and later occasional cooperation in distribution of printouts was he admitted “to the first secret meeting”, where he “was informed about the aims and tasks of the NZR”.⁵⁶ Another national activist, Jan Posiak, picked up some “patriotic literature” in the physician’s waiting room. Later he “read not only alone but accompanied by a couple of colleagues. In this way an informal, loose circle of workers was formed, collectively using the doctor's library”.⁵⁷ A huge wave of new members entered the movement during the revolution. The NZR was officially founded in 1905, allowing for mass mobilization. As a result, Michalina Klimkiewiczówna, a female nationalist activist “joined the organization in 1905, when people massively flocked to political parties – everybody was taken by a psychosis of struggle for a better tomorrow and freedom for the country”.⁵⁸ Even if the political agenda of the NZR was openly hostile to the revolutionary turmoil, general invigoration and rise in political interests perpetuated its growth.

However, other nationalists, in their recollections of political beginnings, tend to focus on the

⁵⁶ Michał Kosiorek, *Skład bibuły w Warszawie*, “Kiliński” 1936, No 1, 36.

⁵⁷ Jan Posiak, *Dzielnica “Górna” w Łodzi*, “Kiliński” 1936, No. 3, 108.

⁵⁸ Michalina Klimkiewiczówna, *Praca organizacyjna w Żyrardowie*, “Kiliński” 1936, No. 3, 134.

interplay of the new political agenda with some older commitments passed on to them by parents or some more incidental teachers. The *topos* of the national tradition or spirit is introduced, which are carried forward or revived by the narrator's participation.⁵⁹ This evokes certain primordially of national feeling, thus allowing the narration to converge with the basic tenets of their nationalist commitments. One of the narrators recalled that:

when the nationalist proclamations (*odezwy narodowe*) reached our factory, we became interested in their content and I have to admit that they appealed to my feeling stronger, with certain sentiment, and they moved my heart; none of the socialist leaflets could do that. All socialist leaflets were based on calculation and materialism, whereas from the nationalist leaflets faith was flowing, heartedness, a burning zeal which took the heart.⁶⁰

Such construction was also strengthened by the dynamic of the overall political mobilization. Nationalist workers for a long time were a minority, so they tend to stress this primary, “deep” conviction as the reason for their adherence – a reason good enough to win over previous, allegedly only incidental, socialist fascinations. Maksymilian Brzezinski admitted that initially it was the socialists who were better prepared for political agitation. However, “it was the cause itself, which helped us [nationalists], as it reached the hearth of the Polish worker”.⁶¹ This clearly indicates the more polemical setting, where equals could have adhered to competing political programs and identities.

These primordial commitments mobilized to back up political identity forged in a polemical setting also bore traces of mobilization against the other. Polish nationalists tended to suggest that the socialists were affiliated with the Jews, which helped them to discredit political opponents in the eyes of some workers. Anti-Semitic undercurrents present in nationalist materials were successful tools of political mobilization. This further encouraged the use of political antisemitism as a means to secure

⁵⁹ For example, see Maksymilian Brzeziński, *Dzielnica „Zielona” w Łodzi*, “Kiliński” 1936, No. 1, 17-18; Feliks Piskorski, *Z nad dobrzanki*, “Kiliński” 1936, No. 3, 102-103; Jan Posiak, *Dzielnica “Górna” w Łodzi*, “Kiliński” 1936, No. 3, 108; Bronisław Żukowski, *Pamiętniki bojowca*, “Niepodległość” 1929-1930, Vol. 1, 115-116.

⁶⁰ Czesław Łączny, *Początki buntu*, “Kiliński” 1936, No. 1, 24.

⁶¹ Maksymilian Brzeziński, *Dzielnica „Zielona” w Łodzi*, “Kiliński” 1936, No. 1, 17-18.

the problematic unity of the Poles. (I investigate this further in Chapter 3.)

For instance, Józef Drzewiecki (Dejot), a railway worker from the Dąbrowa basin, explained this growing hostility, at the same time presenting the major anti-Semitic *topoi* of the nationalist discourse of those days, known already from Chapter 1. They were fanned further later on and reached their pinnacle in the 1930s, when this narrative was written:

Naturally, one resisted the socialists [*socjalom* – in Polish a more derogatory expression] on every step by debunking their specious program. The PPS-members in deranged fury attacked our rallies, and at mass meetings and demonstrations they tore up and desecrated the banners with the white eagle [Polish national emblem], shouting «Down with the white goose». (...) Moreover, the ringleted comrades [*pejsaci towarzysze* – euphemism for the Jewish socialists] were numerous and controlled the socialist activists, they contributed significantly to the abomination of Marxist slogans and the jewing of the PPS ranks with individuals who endlessly, along the Talmudic receipts, called [*podjudzali*] for a struggle against the gentiles.⁶²

Antisemitism was not the only emotion behind nationalist mobilization. A framing more convergent with the general will to improve, successfully perpetuated by the socialists, also found a place within the nationalist writing. Some of the narrators also constructed a certain practical sociology of the movement, comprehending their own story as part and parcel of a broader social process while at the same time being able to feel more important,⁶³ exempting themselves from an introspective analysis.

Among workers hopes of a better future had awaked, social movement developed and coagulated, but maybe what had been happening then should not yet be called a social movement, because so far nothing social had not been created yet. Regarding the masses, the workers were only preparing to a struggle for their future rights.⁶⁴

⁶² “jewing” [*zażydzenia*] – the act of making Jewish, contaminated with Jewishness – a derogatory expression with clearly anti-Semitic undertones. Józef Drzewiecki (Dejot), *Okręg w Zagłębiu Narodowego Kola Kolejarzy w 1905 roku*, “Kiliński” 1936, No. 3, 175.

⁶³ On specificities of the working class memory, see Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 1991). About problems with the bourgeois biography genre applied to working class story, see Maynes, *Taking the Hard Road*; Lyons, *Ordinary Writings, Personal Narratives*.

⁶⁴ Czesław Łączny, *Początki buntu*, “Kiliński” 1936, No. 1, 24.

This narrative is an interesting example of a deep teleological structure organizing events in a story of a hidden maturation and politics germinating “beneath the ground”, unavoidably leading to a future upsurge. There is a hypostatized collective subject presented, the workers, who supposedly had undertaken actions, normally assigned to the individuals, as those unspecified “preparations”. Strikingly, this is the narrative of a nationalist militant, apparently sharing these premises. However, for him the Polish inter-war nation state was already a project putting into practice those “future rights”, which certainly would not have been the case for a left-leaning socialist.

However, in the political cauldron at the turn of the century, additionally heating up in 1905, identities were still quite labile. Thus, the reverence to the organization was further enhanced by various procedures confirming the status of belonging. They were much more present among the nationalists. Moreover, in nationalist milieus the structure of belonging was more explicitly hierarchical. Nevertheless, the acceptance into the secret and hierarchical order was a source of significant pride. Stanisław Parkot-Wójt, after years, still underlined the emotional impact of the initiation ceremony:

A celebration of acceptance to the organization and the oath made a huge impression on me. I grew in my own eyes; I felt like a human bearing on his shoulders new obligations about which I had not been thinking before.⁶⁵

The staged dignity of such procedures might also backfire. One of the socialist “converts” recollected the rapid switching of sides. After the secret oath of fidelity to the cross (*wierność na krzyż*) the leader tried to convince the novices of the resurrection of the aristocratic Poland (or at least it was perceived and remembered this way). When the listeners objected to this, they were slandered as “foreign socialists”. The rebellious workers left the meeting in order to later look for an appropriate

⁶⁵ Stanisław Parkot-Wójt, *W NZR, katordze i na sybirze*, “Niepodległość” 1935, Vol. XII, 222.

organization which would combine their patriotic allegiance and reservations against the old class and state privileges (that is, PPS).⁶⁶

Often the story of political alignment is presented as turbulent and far from obvious, which renders the final choice a well-grounded one. Indeed, the political sphere was highly fractured, which affected the actual paths of narrators, but also the past experience of plurality urged them even more to present assumed affiliations as conscious choices. In this vein, the story of initiation often assumes the form of a drama. However, the once assumed mantle of a party militant, with accompanying sociality of the circle, the union or the party, offered much more than the initial excitement. In the life course of a political activist, a crucial role was usually assigned to the practices of political life with its mastery, alternative hierarchy and solidarity in battle. They constituted a sense of belonging abundantly described by narrators.

Belonging and recognition

Socialist or nationalist mobilization intervened in repetitive working-class life. Thus, part and parcel of its appealing power was also the possibility to enter a new social context with its own hierarchies, time management and dignified self-assertion. The study of biographical materials leaves no doubt; few narrators mentioned the struggle for material improvements as an important incentive for joining the party. It remained so also among testimonies written under state socialism, when the default narrative suggested combining past efforts with resulting present welfare provisions. Some committed supporters of the Polish People's Republic constructed this bridge in their writing here and there, but it always remained a rather rhetorical embroidery and not the master frame of writing. The sense of belonging and recognition acquired within the movement is most clearly present in narratives of older workers entering the revolution as already-experienced militants. For them, because the

⁶⁶ Bolesław Mierzwinski, *Wspomnienia z czasów konspiracyjnej działalności w Łodzi i na wsi*, "Kronika ruchu rewolucyjnego" 1938, Vol. IV, No 3 (15), 168-169.

previous years had a very weak presence of any language of contention, the first contact with the movement was the most significant. This element is probably more important in circumstances investigated here than in other contexts marked by existing artisanal networks, being able to deliver these components for their aspiring members (as in the case of French or German working-class biographies).⁶⁷ The pride of affiliation, however, is also present in the stories of people mobilized in 1905. Despite the rapidity of the process leaving less time for self-reflection, in *post-festum* writing dominated by a dynamic sequence of revolutionary events there is also a place for belonging. In these cases it is solidarity in struggle if not brotherhood in arms which took the upper hand.

An apt example is Marian Płochocki (pseudonym Olbrzymek), a baker with a turbulent biography, later a Bolshevik and a veteran in the All-Union Association of the Old Bolsheviks, executed in the great purge of 1937. His biographical writing epitomizes a separate sub set, close to the well-researched “Bolshevik autobiographies”.⁶⁸ It consists of texts written by former SDKPiL and PPS-Left members who embraced the Polish Communist Party and in various circumstances immigrated to the Soviet Union. There they produced militant memoirs, fulfilling the requirements of the official memory of the Bolshevik revolution, which were also published in dedicated journals.⁶⁹ In this case, however, because of certain distance from the epicenter of the debate on the memory of the October Revolution, the “Polish” part of the memoir was relatively free from the direct constraints put on writing.

The son of a poor rural agricultural official, Płochocki left for vocational training in Warsaw.

⁶⁷ For examples see Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge, and Freedom*; Maynes, *Taking the Hard Road*. Scarce forms of artisanal solidarity are noted by those narrators who approached them; however, it is by any means common and is limited almost exclusively to Warsaw, see Wincenty Jastrzębski, *Wspomnienia, 1885-1919* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1966), 76.

⁶⁸ Reginald E. Zelnik, “Russian Bebels: An Introduction to the Memoirs of the Russian Workers Semen Kanatchikov and Matvei Fisher. Part I,” *Russian Review* 35, no. 3 (July 1976): 249, doi:10.2307/128404; Reginald E. Zelnik, “Russian Bebels: An Introduction to the Memoirs of the Russian Workers Semen Kanatchikov and Matvei Fisher, Part II,” *Russian Review* 35, no. 4 (October 1976): 417, doi:10.2307/128439; Halfin, *From Darkness to Light Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia*; Halfin, *Red Autobiographies*.

⁶⁹ It is worth mentioning that the very presence of journals publishing autobiographical materials actually contributed to the bigger production of unpublished manuscripts as well, as veterans had written them hoping for publication which did not necessarily come to fruition. Such materials might have been published decades later or remained forever archival manuscripts. About efforts to gather such materials in the Soviet Union, see Corney, *Telling October*.

As his father was unable to pay anything for his placement, he was hired as a helping “boy” in a bakery. There, long, unpaid labor and harsh conditions compensated for the lack of an entry fee. In his later writing he presents a story of his slow “awakening” (a trope typical for Bolshevik biographies and most prominent among SDKPiL narratives) from the “presence tightly filled with heavy, monotonous and murderous work” where “a day was so similar to any other day as brothers and there were 361 of them per year” [bakers had no free Sundays, only the major holidays].⁷⁰ In this predicament it was his inborn curiosity, and love of nature and culture, that helped him and offered the way out of an unbearable life. (Again, a typical element in autodidactic autobiography – narrators irresistibly listening to birds singing or a bourgeois girl playing the violin nearby, just as Płochocki used to do.) Among other bakers, as he suggested, a seed of change, a shift in attitude toward themselves, had still to be sewn.

The comparison of life and existence of then living as a baker [i.e. employee of a bakery, apprentice or low-rank unqualified “boy-helper” - WM] to the existence of a prostitute or a thief was right, not only in a metaphorical sense. The baker in the bakery was only a drudge, powerless and dumb, just like the tools he worked with; beyond the bakery he was only a drunken and rugged two-legged animal, who was disrespected by everybody, and he hated everybody for that. Because he himself was not able to respect himself.⁷¹

Precisely in this regard, party culture was an apt response. Political involvement and inter-party communication offered ways “to respect oneself”. Initially, the revolutionary circles were, for the narrator, covered by a mist of mystery, often stimulating curiosity and interest rather than addressing any specific grievances. The future revolutionary felt that in the beginning the older fellow workers in a bakery were unapproachable: “We were not aware at all in what name they were fighting and what they were dying for, but we felt that it was about a better life in a world for such beaten and

⁷⁰ Płochocki, *Wspomnienia działacza SDKPiL*, 25. Fragments from the biography of Olbrzymek (his party pseudonym) are of the same writer and are only different in detail, however shorter. If possible I quote from the earlier version, however in most of the cases later book is its verbatim copy.

⁷¹ Olbrzymek, *Wspomnienia starego robotnika 1893-1918*, “Z pola walki” 1927, no 4, 43.

kicked poor as we were, and we praised them as saints”.⁷² It is no wonder that, when recognized as equal comrades in common struggle, political novices felt dignified, just like Płochocki:

Only when Masłowski (another comrade with whom Płochocki was just printing a leaflet) informed [comrade Rosół] who I was, he shook my hand with his hand, hardened from work. It was factual, however not ceremonial, admittance to his circle.⁷³

In such a situation, an important gesture of acceptance was also the form of address. Relatively democratic party culture was a significant respite from the workshop reality where foremen and principals were not excessively polite and commonly called workers with the informal form of address implying a lack of respect. A change in this practice was later a common demand within the revolutionary struggle for recognition. Also, the opening words of address calling the receivers “comrades” in print was appealing among the workers thirsty for fundamental recognition. Płochocki describes the importance of the first contact with such a proclamation for his construction of selfhood:

The proclamation, copied on huge sheets of paper, started with the words: “Comrades, bakers”. I have seen old bakers wiping tears away from their drunken faces while reading this. So we were not working cattle, not two-legged animals but “comrades”, we – comrades... This feeling could be understood and shared only by these comrades-workers, who were themselves severely beaten up and kicked, and for whom the word “comrade” and “strike” were not everyday or technical terms but an acclamation of their belonging to the grand Workers Family. (...) I am firmly convinced, and I claim that this moment has had a huge, if not decisive, significance for us, bakers, to become people.⁷⁴

Such inclusion in the group was later secured by the practical sociality of the party circle, supportive comrades, cooperation between workers and intelligentsia agitators and effective networks

⁷² Olbrzymek, *Wspomnienia starego robotnika 1893-1918*, “Z pola walki” 1927, no. 4, 45.

⁷³ Comrade Rosół, called “the father”, was an old socialist veteran, working-class militant with much authority among SDKPiL workers. Płochocki, *Wspomnienia działacza SDKPiL*, 57.

⁷⁴ Olbrzymek, *Wspomnienia starego robotnika 1893-1918*, “Z pola walki”, 1927, No 3, 57.

of solidarity. In order to be successful, revolutionary movements, apart from sudden appeal triggered by the seizure of the moment, have to be responsive to some vital needs of their adherents. The form of belonging they deliver is one of the most important forms of such resonance. Research on social movements documents the emotional safety net that such adherence may deliver.⁷⁵ Revolutionary politics in the tsarist empire was also an important factor in reshaping forms of belonging. For many uprooted communities no longer able to maintain old communal networks, revolutionary activity seemed a paradoxical safe haven. This mattered especially for the populations lacking paths of social integration under the conditions of tsarist discriminatory politics, such as the Polish lower-ranking intelligentsia or the Jewish urban poor from the Pale of Settlement.⁷⁶ Tsarist national policies, even if oppressive in terms of language and cultural issues, did not put so many limitations on migration and occupation of Polish workers.⁷⁷ Thus, they were not suffering under direct threats of violence and discriminatory politics of the tsarist administration to the same extent as their Jewish colleagues from the Pale. Nevertheless, they also felt uprooted and longed for a new community of belonging.

In this context, self-assertion and recognition also occupied a prominent place among the motives of action reconstructed by the narrators. The situation of a factory worker under hierarchical work-culture and with class differences strengthened by national and ethnic tensions, was not easy.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Ron Eyerman, *How social movements move. Emotions and social movements*, in Helena Flam and Debra King, *Emotions and Social Movements*, Routledge Advances in Sociology 14 (New York: Routledge, 2005).

⁷⁶ In particular, this new form of affiliation as incentive for revolutionary mobilization is analyzed, for Polish Jews and Jews from the Pale, respectively, in Ury, *Barricades and Banners*; Shtakser, *The Making of Jewish Revolutionaries in the Pale of Settlement*. The general situation of the Jewish population in Russian Poland is analyzed in Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism*. For Jews of the pale see Tobias, *The Jewish Bund in Russia from Its Origins to 1905*; Stefani Hoffman and Ezra Mendelsohn, eds., *The Revolution of 1905 and Russia's Jews* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008). On the specific position of radical Polish intelligentsia, see Mencwel, *Etos lewicy*. On the broader context of imperial minorities, see Riga, "Identity and Empire: The Making of the Bolshevik Elite, 1880-1917."

⁷⁷ For the national policies of the late tsarist empire see Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia*. About particular Polish context in the multi-ethnic city of Łódź, and the changing situation of Polish workers, see Laura Crago, "Nationalism, Religion, Citizenship, and Work in the Development of the Polish Working Class and the Polish Trade Union Movement, 1815-1929. A Comparative Study of Russian Poland's Textile Workers and Upper Silesian Miners and Metalworkers" (Yale University, 1993); Kanfer, "Łódź: Industry, Religion, and Nationalism in Russian Poland, 1880-1914."

⁷⁸ On the peculiar ethnic and class composition of Łódź, see Janczak, "The National Structure of the Population in Łódź in the Years 1820-1938"; Pytlas, "The National Composition of Łódź Industrialists before 1914"; Kanfer, "Łódź: Industry, Religion, and Nationalism in Russian Poland, 1880-1914." More on the national dynamic in Polish factories see Crago, "The 'Polishness' of Production: Factory Politics and the Reinvention of Working-Class National and Political Identities in Russian Poland's Textile Industry, 1880-1910."

There was not much hope for making the personal situation better; channels of professional upward mobility were narrow. Thus, alternative forms of community capable of funneling such needs were highly desired. Consequently, socialist circles or nationalist associations responded to those grievances, being able to integrate newcomers into the relatively horizontal structures of recognition and communal prestige.⁷⁹ In addition, a committed militant might educate himself (more rarely herself), be heard, and then be acknowledged as versed in socialism or a “national issue”. By personal sacrifice, he or she might have striven for broader recognition as an agitator expert in political rhetoric and oral performance, or as a skillful organizer of the “party technique” (i.e. printing and distributing leaflets or newspapers). Assessing these skills when mentioning other people is a common trait in written biographies, testifying to the importance of those criteria for the networks of cooperation and friendship. Alternatively, a militant could become a member of a militarized defense squad, very directly demonstrating heroism in the face of political enemies and a much-desired form of manliness.⁸⁰ This may have led to injury, imprisonment or death, but was certainly accompanied by a chance to become a hero if not a martyr.

As a result, the first serious contacts with a party or other association reappear as important events in the life stories. When, for instance, an older worker already versed in socialism (or national literature) approached a young recruit, that was already a distinction. If, on top of this, a youngster was addressed as a comrade, this was an honorable award. The fact that such a form of address was common and universally accepted among the socialists did not change the situation – quite the contrary. For the newcomers it was not a widely recognized fact, and later they enjoyed being accepted as members of such a horizontal yet dignified community. A future SDKPiL militant was invited by such a biographical counselor:

⁷⁹ For similar mechanisms in early German social democracy see Welskopp, *Das Banner der Brüderlichkeit: die deutsche Sozialdemokratie vom Vormärz bis zum Sozialistengesetz*.

⁸⁰ Huechtker, “‘The Politics and Poetics of Transgression’. Die Revolution von 1905 im Koenigreich Polen.” On the socialist martyr cult see Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*, 56.

“Sit my comrade!” I was astonished. (...) I was called with this most dignified title for a human (...). With this word, comrade, he adopted me, considered me equal with himself, beckoned me with his hand.⁸¹

The magic of the seemingly horizontal structure and democratic culture of communication concerned not only personal relationships. For instance, in the words of one narrator, “an older worker” offered a participation in a party meeting, where one “could be informed why the state power takes socialists as a grave danger”, thus stimulating “first curiosity, then conviction” to “enter the path of revolution”.⁸² Narrators stress how their lives were henceforth constructed differently, no longer revolving around mundane toil, but interrupted by the reference to outside goals worthy of striving for. The sense of belonging and sharing in organizations as equals provided important elements of recognition and self-assertion so different from the scorn they remember on the shop floor. Having entered the organization, they expected exciting things to come, and they were not wrong. Apart from thriving public activities described in the last chapter, a crucial experience presented by narrators as a threshold in the development of their political consciousness was the strike.

The experience of strike

Much of the research in labor history has emphasized the maturing process of the labor movement through subsequent waves of struggles, strikes and protests. The standard narrative of the field, without a doubt, acknowledges the significance of singular acts of resistance and accumulated experiences for the future class formation on the subjective level e.g. the emergence of a militant worker.⁸³ Despite this, one wonders why relatively little has been written on the grassroots experience

⁸¹ Łęczycki, *Mojej ankiety personalnej punkt 35*, 61–62.

⁸² Tomasz Maciejowski, *Trzydzieści lat w walce*, in Spieralski (ed.), *Wspomnienia weteranów rewolucji 1905 i 1917 roku.*, 135. On a disappointment with a pointless apprentice without any chance not only to make a professional career but also to learn anything at all, see Olbrzymek, *Wspomnienia starego robotnika 1893-1918*, “Z pola walki” 1927, no 4; Łęczycki, *Mojej ankiety personalnej punkt 35*.

⁸³ See for instance Sewell, “Artisans, Factory Workers, and the Formation of the French Working Class, 1789-1849”; Howard Kimeldorf, *Reds or Rackets? The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1992).

of strike as a shop floor event reconfiguring the selves of its participants. Only the mandarins of the labor movement participating in the revolutionary process on the spot produced analyzes of the strike movement. For most theoretically- if not philosophically-oriented writers, the strike is almost a mythical act of resistance, as for instance in the work of George Sorel.⁸⁴ More down-to-earth interventions inter-weaved theoretical analysis with current agitation to push the movement forward, as in Rosa Luxemburg's writing on the very same strike waves I investigate here. While the practice of strike was examined in Chapter 1, here my contribution is to offer insights into the phenomenology of strikes from their participants and shop floor agitators, often engaging in vernacular theorizing on the strike's dynamic and significance.

One such agitator-theoretician was Wincenty Jastrzębski. His remarks on strikes are exceptionally revealing as they stick out from the overall memory culture of his party and forms of struggle exposed in parallel memoirs.⁸⁵ While strikes and mass mobilization were important for the left faction of the PPS and class struggle launched by the SDKPiL, within Jastrzębski's PPS-FR milieu a quasi-military heroism of street fights with tsarist troops was absolutely dominant.⁸⁶ Such an alignment corresponded with the nationalist goals of the party and was later solidified by the successful rebuilding of the party's self-defense into military structures crucial for the future struggle for Polish independence. Consequently, this aspect of memory was part and parcel of a successful story of the winners, codified by memory efforts in the Polish inter-war state. These semi-official party-centered memoirs from within the hegemonic memory mostly contained heroic memories of insurgents leading military resistance against the Russian autocracy.⁸⁷ They were published in

⁸⁴ Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, trans. T.E. Hulme and J. Roth (Dover: Courier Corporation, 2012), 148; Chiara Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007).

⁸⁵ One has to remember, however, that he later changed his mind and embraced the Russian Revolution of 1917, later even coming back to Poland as an economic negotiator of the Soviet government. This partially explains his oddity in respect to his former party comrades.

⁸⁶ On the ideological divergence of factions in this respect, see Jan Kancewicz, *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna w latach 1892-1896* (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984). The growing discrepancy of the party tactics before the split during the revolution is analyzed in Żarnowska, *Geneza rozłamu w Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej, 1904-1906*.

⁸⁷ An exemplary narrative written in a "militaristic" and martyrological mode is for instance Marjan Malinowski, *Z krwawych dni* (Lublin: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1919). Other numerous examples may be found in the interwar journal "Niepodległość" [Independence].

dedicated journals, various anniversary publications, or separate books, aligned with the parallel historiographical effort to document the “militaristic” struggle with “the foreign yoke”.⁸⁸ Indeed, Jastrzębski himself recalled the reluctance of his comrades to recognize the validity of his theorizing on strikes and the relevance of this form of struggle for the party goals. When he shared his excited remarks on the power of striking, his older colleague immediately condemned him as loitering on a “roadless track of syndicalism”.⁸⁹ He was immediately moved to be trained in the party “military school”.

In general, however, Jastrzębski's story bears many typical traces of the political militant biography. His relatively affluent background, with a father-miller sharing exquisite meals with a local priest (“baked hooded crows”), gave him the initial impulses for development. However, the father wasted his property on drink, which, along with later illness and the death of both parents, made a poor orphan out of the young Wincenty. In his writing, the elements of the tragic literary form allow for the exposition of the narrator to struggle with obstacles, which he successfully overcame due to his intellectual zeal and political activity. During the 1905 strike wave he was already an experienced agitator, sent by the party to mobilize agricultural workers. This experience allowed him to have a broad reflection on the nature of manorial work, and, above all, to have an insight into the significance of strike in the working class struggle.

He considered the strike a factor that demonstrated the importance of workers and their labor in maintaining general social existence, let alone productivity. Abstaining from work was direct evidence of who was the real mover of society – when workers dropped out, cities as they knew them

⁸⁸ For instance, journals prominent in maintaining this tradition in the interwar period are filled with similar memories of street fights with Cossacks, tales of bomb-throwing heroism, and Siberian martyrdom. See for instance “Niepodległość” from 1930 onwards edited by Leon Wasilewski or “Kronika ruchu rewolucyjnego w Polsce. Organ Stowarzyszenia więźniów politycznych”, edited by Jan Krzesławski and Adam Próchnik. There were also numerous book publications presenting such a military history of the nationalist socialist movement. One of the well-established authors championing the genre was Stanisław Martynowski. See Stanisław Martynowski, *Łódzka dziesiątka bojowa* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Stowarzyszenia Byłych Więźniów Politycznych, 1928); Stanisław Martynowski, *Łódź w ogniu* (Łódź: Drukarnia Udziałowa, 1931); Martynowski, *Polska bojowa*. There were also attempts to canonize the street tactic as a cornerstone of the military expertise in the later, independent Polish state, see for instance Adam Błotnicki, *Przez rewolucję 1905 r. do legionów 1914 r.* (Lwów: Nakładem “Panteonu Polskiego,” 1929).

⁸⁹ Jastrzębski, *Wspomnienia, 1885-1919*, 146.

ceased to exist (see also Chapter 1). This worked also on a smaller scale; for instance, the manorial economy collapsed after farm laborers had refused to work. This gave Jastrzębski insights into the personal phenomenology of strike:

The strike uncovers the natural class consciousness of wage earners deeply hidden in their souls. Its righteousness and infallibility is confirmed self-evidently by the tangible reality of the strike, and it is reducible to a basic, almost natural truth: without the labor of farm-hand the manorial estate has no value. This truth (...) affects his [the agricultural laborer's] physical condition, his attitude, self-confidence, dignity and the conviction about the righteousness of his cause (...).⁹⁰

There is no doubt that all the involved parties of a conflict were usually perfectly aware what was really at stake, and they expressed it explicitly in press, leaflets and reports. Even if staged as a minor misunderstanding, the ultimate goal was to lessen the domination of the owner, and this confrontation of wills made an impression on Jastrzębski:

Everybody already knew what it was all about. So the faces of all those gathered acquired noble shapes, it looked like somebody washed out of them all the everyday sorrows and in their place put one great grievance; under the pressure facial lines hardened.⁹¹

In many cases factory or manorial relationships were never again as before. All the people involved were able to “see, understand and draw conclusions, bordering a riot”. Also, for Jastrzębski himself, “two weeks of strike (...) gave more class consciousness than the entire *Communist Manifesto*”.⁹² No wonder that from the very beginning, every strike, even of seemingly minor importance, was comprehended as an act of direct participation in a broader struggle, just as it was explained by socialist agitators. This allowed the narrators to inscribe individual effort and sacrifice for the broader struggle of the whole social group. And on the flip side of that, a successful strike caused the rare

⁹⁰ Ibid., 138.

⁹¹ Ibid., 140.

⁹² Ibid., 139.

case of the power of a collective action directly changing the position of the individual. The strike fostered interweaving of a particular experience with the universal cause.

The influence of strikes on workers, and the accompanying reconfiguration of places workers might inhabit in the broader social communicative space, is a prolific topic of writing. More experienced narrators, like Franciszek Łęczycki, especially engaged in a practical analysis of strike experience, with all the conceptual apparatus the party had given them. Not only do they stress enhanced networks of solidarity but also a newly assigned sense to the individual life and action.⁹³ This acquired dignity was also present on a very direct, mundane level of the shop floor reality, as the strike was also a renegotiation of factory relations of power. After all, it was the workers who had a say during those days.

The strike ended after 2 weeks with a partial success; factory owners were forced to give up. A hundred times more important was the moral victory and awareness that it was only a first step in the forthcoming struggle (...). The proletariat understood that it could fight and win if only the movement were a common thing, gathering the masses (...). [I]t awoke the feeling of class solidarity, and the so-called patriarchal relationship between employer and employee was forever gone.⁹⁴

This reconfiguration of the political space affected not only the general relationship hidden behind the labor contract or moral economy of employment. Strikes, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, were one of the main pillars of the revolutionary public activity. In the memories of participants, they are a paramount setting for retracing of the fragile limits of the possible. For instance, in seemingly unimportant descriptions of events, a profound questioning of the balance of power is detectable. Writers were most excited with the gradual pushing of the hitherto powerful forces from their lives. They gained the upper hand over the hated forms of power even if for only a short moment.

⁹³ This dimension is also clearly detected in written material created on the spot, as letters, on the neighboring context see Shtakser, *The Making of Jewish Revolutionaries in the Pale of Settlement*. On the changing balance of power see Karwacki, "Walka o wprowadzenie tzw. „konstytucjonalizmu fabrycznego” w latach rewolucji 1905-1907 w Łodzi."

⁹⁴ Łęczycki, *Mojej ankiety personalnej punkt 35*, 104.

Let us have a look at the narrative micro-structure of a testimony, seemingly written just to record basic facts, as part and parcel of the orchestrated effort to gather the prehistory of the “Polish proletariat” in the socialist state:

The police commander arrived in a coach assisted by Cossacks (...), and *asked to be allowed* to speak to those gathered. When he was *allowed to speak*, he *started to ask* those gathered to disperse because otherwise bloodshed might happen. As a response shouts were heard “Down with him” and he *was not allowed to speak any more*. (...) Finally *the troops left*, the tables were *carried in* – and the speeches *commenced* – it was the first day. On the second day our Citizen's Militia *appeared*, *the tsarist police was not visible*, *they were hiding* or walked around dressed casually [*italics mine* – WM].⁹⁵

The entire sequence testifies to an active pushing away of the structure of domination and reversing previous hierarchies. In the place of the old domination, alternative activities emerged. New constituencies immediately entered into the evacuated space of power. The implicit feeling of triumph over the forces remaining unquestioned before is a repetitive theme in the narratives of less-involved militants, often joining the movement only in 1905. It might concern the tsarist police or troops, but also a foreman (carried out on a wheelbarrow as described in the previous chapter) or a factory owner forced to negotiate. Every strike, no matter how economic the demands might have been, was also a purely political gesture. The goal of the strike was to get political empowerment and a right to make public claims. One cannot overestimate the significance of such an experience for the workers' definition of the self. It changed their place in the social imaginary – their own, as well as the one assigned to them by other social strata.

If power may be recognized by resistance, the symptom of its questioning is reaction. Here, the resulting response was a harsh class struggle from above and a massive mobilization of the factory owners. This resulted in a nearly universal lockout of the great factories in Łódź launched in late 1906 and many smaller attempts in other cities to threaten employees with the closure of factories and

⁹⁵ Edward Skórkiewicz, Pamiętnik rewolucji 1905 roku w Zagłębiu Dąbrowskim, KŁ PZPR, t. 11718, p. 5.

rehiring of staff. They were launched in order to at least superficially regain absolute control over the workplace. The great Łódź lockout; launched in December 1906, encompassed all seven of the largest factories in the city and affected 22 thousand workers. This meant that almost 100 thousand people lost any hope of income in the winter months.⁹⁶ Lasting several months, it ended with a defeat of the workers' committees and triggered an intense debate all over the country with many members of the intelligentsia involved in negotiations or organizing charity for starving factory crews (part of this debate is examined in Chapter 4). The issued proclamations of the factory committees and declarations of the factory owners left no doubt that all those involved were aware of the real stakes of the conflict. It was not because of a minor disturbance in Poznański's factory that the owners decided to cut short their own profits for a lengthy period. And it was not because of this single issue that workers struggled (and starved) for so long.⁹⁷ Above all, the goal of industrialists was to yet again seize absolute control over their factories, power over which had been severely undermined by strikes and general self-assertion of the crews eager to take control over their workplaces. Strikes were not, however, the only forms where new identities might be forged.

Street heroism and masculine ethos

Emerging ethos of the class struggle and shop floor solidarity was inseparably mixed with working-class re-articulation of the insurrectionist tradition. The excitement of fighting in the streets competed with the gains of the economic struggle. Class-oriented parties trying to build mass organization bent over backwards to discourage such an individualistic militarism. The early engagement described in autobiographies – even if later inscribed in a broader historical mission – was not free of boyish heroism and peculiar romanticism of illegality. The distribution of leaflets and

⁹⁶ On great Łódź lockout see Lewis, “Labor-Management Conflict in Russian Poland: The Lodz Lockout of 1906-1907.”

⁹⁷ Abundant quotes from primary sources might be found in a documentary narrative of one of the participants on the side of the PPS, see Aleksy Rzewski, *Lokaut łódzki*, “Niepodległość” 1931, Vol. V.

proclamations may be recollected as a mundane, if dangerous, activity, but political commitment could be combined with more fantasy as well. In such passages a biography resembles a picaresque novel, a familiar genre for proletarian readers as such literature was available in popular libraries and willingly read. Patriotic Polish publications also presented more light-hearted characters appealing to popular readers. As a result, some of the biographies are stylized as adventure stories.

Eugeniusz Pieńkowski, a self-proclaimed “child of the street” had been implanted with patriotic zeal by an underground teacher early on. As a truly urban kid, he immediately turned his knowledge of the urban space from below (as holes in fences, various secret passages so precious in boyish runaways) into a resource in his struggle, for instance to smuggle political materials. His childish conspiracy used to also take more explicit dimensions, such as using particular “weapons” against tsarist functionaries. Shooting at tsarist troops, and above all, horses – then running in panic – with a blow-gun made of a small straw and beans, was after all great fun.⁹⁸ Such an arsenal was turned into a lethal weapon of the weak when the target was a tsarist troop climbing to the top of a chimney to remove a red banner placed by militant workers the previous night.

Playing revolution might deliver many emotions. It remained so, even after the stakes of the struggle were already much more profound. Another juvenile socialist remembered that:

For a youngster as I was it was really exciting to sneak through the fields and bushes to an arranged meeting place (...) I must confess that during the first weeks belonging to the military organization [a department of a Polish Socialist Party – WM] was for me the greatest adventure of my life. Gaining awareness, understanding of the aims of our struggle came only later.⁹⁹

Once understood, however, the political involvement and its accomplishments were of paramount significance. The simplest acts became part and parcel of an honorable struggle even if they were

⁹⁸ Eugeniusz Pieńkowski, *Wspomnienia “dziecka ulicy” z lat 1905-1907*, “Niepodległość” 1932, Vol. VI, 233-235.

⁹⁹ Józef Szynkielewicz, *Młodość nie lęka się śmierci*, in Spierański (ed.), *Wspomnienia weteranów rewolucji 1905 i 1917 roku.*, 166.

composed of normally mundane activities.

When we copied the first exemplar of a proclamation (and it was done clearly and perfectly) tenderness touched all of us: tears of joy, though strongly suppressed, filled our eyes and our voices were dull, everybody attempted to hide the emotion and remained silent so as not to be taken for a “sissy”.¹⁰⁰

Apparently, in this autobiography the point of reference was a specific proletarian ethos of action which organized emotions accordingly. The self-assertion was attained by a masterful action, street heroism, public performance as a speaker or agitator, and the autodidactic effort, combined in various proportions according to individual opportunities and skills. This ethos was highly masculine, as the above quoted fragment unambiguously demonstrates, and it supported a particular, politicized form of manhood.¹⁰¹ In its extreme form it was epitomized by a militarized ethos of the “combat squads”. While virtually every party maintained such groups, their practice became most prominent in official enunciations of the right faction of the PPS, later turned into the separate PPS-Revolutionary Faction. As the party increasingly called for military resistance against tsarist police and troops, shootings, throwing bombs and other militarized forms of action came to the fore of its activities. Its officially maintained image and internally propelled militant ethos evolved accordingly. Its later memory culture also revolved around such street heroism, combat sacrifice and a dubious mixture of excitement with violence and romantic insurrectionism.

Speaking from a sober distance, one of the narrators told of how he was fascinated by street violence:

I became an ardent supporter of terror; I simply hallucinated about various images of terrorist acts. A bomb became a daily dream for me, and a revolver, even a good one, did not have charm like the bomb. My imagination worked intensively; throwing bombs at

¹⁰⁰ Waław Koral, *Przez partię, związki, więzienia i Sybir. Wspomnienia drukarza z działalności w ruchu socjalistycznym i zawodowym 1898 — 1928*. (Warszawa: Związek Zawodowy Drukarzy i Pokrewnych Zawodów w Polsce, oddział Warszawa, 1933), 33.

¹⁰¹ Manliness as an important element of the socialist ethos and public performance of workers is stressed by Welskopp, *Das Banner der Brüderlichkeit: die deutsche Sozialdemokratie vom Vormärz bis zum Sozialistengesetz*.

governors was simply a deep spiritual experience. It seemed that such a vivid struggle soon would bring complete freedom, because tsarist servants would flee from Poland to Russia.¹⁰²

The spiritual dimension of “bomb-throwing” had a firm foundation in the emotional background shared by those people. Such a militant, if not *military*, ethos, and the charms of street heroism allowing for individual triumph over hated state power and everydayness, was attractive to young workers. The layered, long-bred feeling of hopeless oppression could finally be revenged and overcome in a short yet priceless moment of triumph.

Confronted with such strong emotions, party leaders had a hard time persuading excited workers that military action on the streets was not always the best way to act. One of the agitators regretted that even “the conscious working class youth was eager to start a fight and dreamed about a gun with love like about a girl”.¹⁰³ Mundane work for the party, printing and organizing factory committees or strikes were not that exciting. Moreover, they were not directed against the tsarist police apparatus, hated more and more because of the growing repression. Sometimes violent acts were deemed to be the only possibility to push workers' demands further, especially when parties called for moderation or wanted to stick to the accepted semi-legal forms of organizing.¹⁰⁴ One of those who got frustrated with the work for the party and preferred to “beat the Muscovites” admitted: “I was not satisfied [with socialist party-centered activities], because all that had been done was not a job of a Polish soldier, and I, and many others wanted to be one”.¹⁰⁵ In addition, the heroic image and prospect of carrying a weapon excited people even more. This promised easy troubles for

¹⁰² Ludwik Śledziński, *Wspomnienia z Łodzi 1899-1901 (dokończenie)*, “Kronika Ruchu Rewolucyjnego” 1937, Vol. 33, No 1 (9), 29.

¹⁰³ Rudnicki, *Stare i nowe*, 372.

¹⁰⁴ Surprisingly, even among nationalist workers associated in the NZR, the ideal of a street fighter took hold, regardless of the openly anti-revolutionary rhetoric. This movement appealed to the calmness and reasoning of the Poles, not allowing themselves to get involved in allegedly foreign affairs of the Jews and the socialists. The interwar protocols of the medal committee offer insight into the assumed personal characteristics of the movement's genuine hero. There, biographical notes written to “nominate” fallen veterans for rewards are full of reverence to the “relentless struggle with the Muscovite invasion”, see AAN NZR, *Materiały Komisji Odznaczeniowej*, AAN, syg. 41/IV, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ Kazimierz Pielat, *Z pamiętnika bojowca*, “Niepodległość” 1938, Vol. XVII, 83.

recently-formed party battle squads, and was instantly recognized as such:

We had many volunteers to the combat squads, some drafted because they [wanted that they] would be nicely called “fighters”, that they would have a shiny party “browning” [the most popular pistol – WM], after the rules were read aloud to them, many dropped out (...).¹⁰⁶

Here as well, one should see a desperate attempt to acquire the alternative self of sorts, equipped with some dignity and agency. The “fighter” might have left behind the passive “worker”.¹⁰⁷ Such masculine street hero ethos was further promoted by the peculiar martyr cult spread in the socialist and nationalist materials alike. Socialist leaflets eagerly commemorated past founding-father figures, as members of the early socialist “Proletariat” party, executed by tsarist police apparatus in the mid-1880s.¹⁰⁸ Another generation of martyrs consisted of socialist militants shot dead in the streets in 1905 or captured and hanged thereafter. They were venerated either as persons (especially Marcin Kasprzak and Stefan Okrzeja), or as more anonymous paradigm worker-victims of the tsarist autocracy. Apart from being a form of collective remembering and important cement securing the new collective identity of the militant working class, such “heroization” was also an important gesture of class-based self-assertion. The national hero, most often of noble class origin and benign character, struggling with the foreign yoke and vices of the modern world, was an extremely important figure in the Polish collective imaginary of the late 19th century.¹⁰⁹ Needless to say, it was a very elitist personal muster. Thus, re-appropriating it by investing in socialist militants as heroic figures of working class origin

¹⁰⁶ F. (full name unknown) Bereza, *Wspomnienia z dni rewolucyjnych czyli przebieg rewolucji z roku 1904 i dalej*, AAN, Instytut Badania najnowszej historii Polski, Wspomnienia nadesłane do redakcji pisma Niepodległość 1930-1937, sygn. 357/4, folder 3, p. 44.

¹⁰⁷ Some remarks on performing masculinity during the street fight, see Huechtker, “‘The Politics and Poetics of Transgression’. Die Revolution von 1905 im Koenigreich Polen,” 96.

¹⁰⁸ Lucjan Blit, *The Origins of Polish Socialism, the History and Ideas of the First Polish Socialist Party, 1878-1886*, International Studies (Cambridge [Eng.]: University Press, 1971); Norman M. Naimark, *The History of the “Proletariat”: The Emergence of Marxism in the Kingdom of Poland, 1870-1887* (Boulder; New York: East European Quarterly ; distributed by Columbia University Press, 1979).

¹⁰⁹ Magdalena Micińska, *Mędzy królem duchem a mieszczańinem: obraz bohatera narodowego w piśmiennictwie polskim przełomu XIX i XX w., 1890-1914* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Leopoldinum Fundacji dla Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1995); Nikodem Bończa-Tomaszewski, *Źródła narodowości: powstanie i rozwój polskiej świadomości w II połowie XIX i na początku XX wieku* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2006).

was an important gesture necessary to secure the new place of workers in their own social imaginary.

This democratization of heroic pantheon notwithstanding, all those forms were largely organized around the nucleus of the male-dominated ethos. Less-militarized forms of public participation were also largely male-oriented. Public gatherings and mastery in polemical speaking were accompanied by highly masculinized sociability of the labor union and the tavern.¹¹⁰ The exceptions had to be carefully negotiated, as described in Chapter 1. Unfortunately, the sources are also mostly male-dominated; not many working-class women decided to write.

The self and the political – conclusion

The rationale of this chapter was to reconstruct the layered selves of political militants. I analyzed their narratives detecting stable elements stemming from the conventionalized writing form but also a patterned working class life course. Such conduct offers a possibility to investigate careers of political militants, in their own eyes shaping their selves in the moment of writing. Their self-reflexive vernacular sociology of education, mobilization and action sheds light on the entangled relationship between biography and politics. The abundant resources of reflexive practical reasoning are mobilized precisely where intense deeper biographical work is needed to understand and incorporate the changes into a ready-made subject, expressed in writing. To the extent that the writers are accomplished political subjects, they personify the transformation of the regime regulating political participation of workers. Their biographies are inscriptions of change, and the subjective, narrativized course of this change is real in respect to its biographical consequences.

Undoubtedly the memory culture and the regime delimiting the speakable and important from the irrelevant and impermanent facilitated the inclusion of political commitments to any written life story. As a scholar of the working-class life course comments: “political activity provided working people with a level of self-awareness and a sense of purpose that could both structure a life and

¹¹⁰ Welskopp, *Das Banner der Brüderlichkeit: die deutsche Sozialdemokratie vom Vormärz bis zum Sozialistengesetz*.

motivate writing a life story”.¹¹¹ It was through politics that working class narrators gained conviction that their lives were worth telling as a story. “Political life” along with narrative devices drawn from respective political languages is the main form of emplotment which give the stories their narrative features. They enable writers to convey events from their lives in a meaningful way. This process of convincing the self about the value of writing *through* and *in* politics is also reflexivized in the writing itself:

I have no ability and physical possibility to put [my biography] on several sheets of paper. Even more I understand your wish [the agenda of the communist party in Soviet Union who commissioned the memoir] that these few sheets should include a serious chapter and not a short talk about my fiery youth and about inevitable old age of a man-wanderer beyond borders of his homeland. Thus, in a most comprehensive and succinct way in few images I tell that I was an active member of the revolutionary movement in Łódź since 1904.¹¹²

Such fragments demonstrate how important politics was for reshaping the way those people understood themselves and their role in society; the very fact they had decided to write is mediated evidence of how they changed. Such a strong commitment shaping the entire self-definition sometimes remained the main frame of reference for the narrators, who decades later still wrote as a part and parcel of the revolutionary effort:

I wish that an unknown, sensitive youngster, after having read this, could understand how much beauty, happiness and joy could be gained in life from disinterested, humble work in the name of a great idea. (...) If I would like to live again, it is only so as to be able to die for the revolution, in this “last struggle”. It is my only unfulfilled dream from the beginning of my conscious life.¹¹³

The strong presence of conventionalized strategies of emplotment and weaving the self into the

¹¹¹ Maynes, *Taking the Hard Road*, 39.

¹¹² Józef Skowroński, biographical testimony, untitled, AAN, AODRR, sygn. 11365, p. 1.

¹¹³ Józef Nowicki, *Wspomnienia starego działacza*, “Niepodległość” 1936, Vol. XIII, 37.

historical process are evident.¹¹⁴ After all, reading biographies that emerged in the past is to ramble in the mists of a threefold mediation: that of past subjective experience, that of memory, and that of the (equally past) politics of writing. The examined autobiographies are highly diversified regarding these dimensions but not necessarily along the lines of simple divisions between political parties.

What differentiates them most is the type of political involvement and the place of the revolution in the biographical sequence. The stories of revolutionary upsurge in activities, more typical for a broader group of workers, were usually written by shop-floor militants and not future professional party functionaries. They are far less extensive and not so abundant in ethno sociological theorizing or ethnographic detail. While being, to a lesser extent, a part of the fully-fledged autobiographical genre, they mimic the alleged official story of their respective party. Thus, the more typical, mass experience of political mobilization and intervention of the revolutionary event into the biographical process may be reconstructed from pieces of narratives, rather than followed in larger biographies. The longer autobiographical texts, in turn, describe paths of the party functionaries with a working class background. It is there, among more prolific biographical writers, where literary patterns are recycled in a creative bricolage in order to craft the autobiography. This patterned distribution is also an indirect piece of evidence of the impact politics made on the intellectual careers of the militants.

In both cases, the 1905 event intervenes in the processual unfolding of biography, albeit in different ways. While simpler stories stress the importance of the revolution, in those more developed ones it is an intensification of practices already performed. For the first group, the 1905 Revolution was a significant political initiation, oftentimes, however, without a direct affect on professional career: they never ceased to be shop floor workers. Nonetheless, the revolution triggered a cognitive switch, that is, introduced additional layers of sense mobilized to live one's life, and later to write

¹¹⁴ For some remarks on political biography as a genre, applying mostly to elitist, professional politicians' biographies but to some extent also relevant for present investigation, see George Egerton, "Politics and Autobiography: Political Memoir as Polygenre," *Biography* 15, no. 3 (1992): 221–42, doi:10.1353/bio.2010.0368. See also Andrews, *Shaping History*.

down its course. For the second group, however, the 1905 threshold often sealed the career of a professional militant, either because of a personal conviction or police persecution. What is crucial in such biographies is the slow path of leaving behind the class-specific culture and habitus for the prize of estrangement if not exclusion from class. For already liminal persons on the edges of class, it was the feeling of “moral estrangement from both their own class and the larger society – their marginality – that attracted them to the idea of a class movement that promised to erase the boundaries of class”, as one labor historian describes the motivation of the working class “moral vanguard” in the Russian context.¹¹⁵ This dynamic parallels the entanglement of the proletarian public sphere examined in Chapter 1. It harbored resistance and a way out of class-specific limits, but simultaneously was forced to adapt to dominant patterns in order to be considered as legitimate public practice.

Otherwise, the retrospectively constructed life course in the testimonies from different political milieus and produced in different historical circumstances is strikingly similar. It is much more a class- and site-specific narrative of a militant life than a memory culture orchestrated by any particular political milieu. In the same way, the 1905 upheaval functions within narratives as an axial event reorganizing the self and giving sense to writing both for its ardent supporters (for whom it was a foundational myth for the collective memory of the revolutionaries) and opponents, who nevertheless recognized its significance. Autobiographies testify to the formation of the new type of self, embedded in the broader space of sense. What was done, read and spoken was hence understood by narrators first and foremost as a part of a broader collective biography of a class or nation striving for future improvement. The undertaken actions were inscribed in a form of narrative organizing the relationship between the self and the world, with certain formal features, unfolding from a beginning to an end, revolving around certain turning points and, being populated by a stable set of

¹¹⁵ Mark D. Steinberg, “Vanguard Workers and the Morality of Class,” in *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Ronald Grigor Suny (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1994), 67; See also Jacques Rancière, *The Nights of Labor: The Workers’ Dream in Nineteenth-Century France* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

protagonists.¹¹⁶ This gave the respective actions a sense when they were performed, and analogously, this emplotment also allowed the writers to weave events into a meaningful story written as an autobiography later. Militants clearly remember the revolutionary practice, as part and parcel of a broader effort, just as it was suggested to them in the ideological language which they had just acquired:

The autodidactic effort was approached from the point of view of the future work in revolutionary lines. One read intensively, one discussed days and nights, one repeated every school-year since then. And all of this for Her – for the Revolution.¹¹⁷

Hence, the new conceptual resources were largely successful. New activities offered alternative realms of mastery and self-improvement. Among peers, new forms of recognition and respect emerged because of acquired wisdom and the willingness to share with others, as for instance an expertise in public speaking. An important factor contributing to the popularity of the labor movement was precisely this will to improve and the actual promise of improvement. A harsh life could barely be changed, but one could aspire to mastery in an alternative civil society, which mattered for many of the narrators discussed here. It might have been mastery in speaking or bravery in struggle; both offered the structure of sense – of life, work and sacrifice. Here lay the charm of socialist reading circles, successful economic strikes, but also street militias securing demonstrations with weapons, or expropriating tsarist finance by robbing convoys of money for party purposes.

The resulting biography is a retrospective, layered construction of the self; life story as memorized, recollected, narrated and used in real time for self-maintenance. As such, the working-class narrative as a collective literary form with specific *loci communes* is an important element of working class cohesion and capability for action. Thus, it is also a factor important for the political

¹¹⁶ Steinmetz, “Reflections on the Role of Social Narratives in Working-Class Formation: Narrative Theory in the Social Sciences.”

¹¹⁷ Józef Nowicki, *Wspomnienia starego działacza*, “Niepodległość” 1936, Vol. XIII, 39.

place of workers.¹¹⁸ The accomplished selves manufactured in writing were also effective as social agents in history. In this context, the analysis performed on all the narratives, socialist and nationalist alike, demonstrates a predominantly shared repertoire of motives. On a formal level, alternative education, political mobilization and turbulent events of the revolution had a similar imprint on their writing and self-definition. Such a finding is contrary to the picture stemming from more event-based analysis showing growing hostility, or investigation of political languages also displaying growing divergence and antagonism, as analyzed respectively in Chapters 1 and 3. Nonetheless, accumulated experiences were largely framed in interchangeable ways. Even if ideologically the national question were the main bone of contention, militants on all sides shared feelings of class oppression and national sentiments. They were not erased even in much later recollections, already written within defined memory cultures. This shared pool of experiences may help to explain the fluidity of the political field and the successful co-opting of the majority of the working class population to the Polish nation state after 1918. This loyalty mattered especially during the Polish-Bolshevik war of 1919-1921 and was maintained even after the Polish state began to fulfill the prophecies warned about by far left regarding the class domination smoke-screened by national unity.

After all, in the working class biography, the revolution was not an ordinary thing. It was an unexpected rupture, long memorialized and recollected as an axial event in the lives of narrators. Perhaps for themselves it was the only “historical” event in a life not always worthy of extensive reappearance in written form. The revolution was a rupture in the repetitive rhythm of days which brought about their own share in their own history. In the words of a female worker:

But in this ceaselessly continuous, dull everyday labor, in which one day resembled any other – there were such moments which I have remembered for my entire life. They have caused me to remember them as they were yesterday, even if today the years gone have blurred the recollection and images in my memory. The fact that I have brought up my children as militants in our cause is a merit of those days from the 1905. It was hard, but

¹¹⁸ On the role of the working class narrative, see Steinmetz, “Reflections on the Role of Social Narratives in Working-Class Formation: Narrative Theory in the Social Sciences.” The model of class formation, where narratives are an important aspect of its subjective component see Katznelson and Zolberg, *Working-Class Formation*.

I am proud of [those days and 1905 events] because I had a chance to participate in them.¹¹⁹

Biographies are told in a register stemming from the process of political mobilization. As stories of conversion, they merge the processual time of unfolding life and the “eventful” rupture of the revolution. The revolution intervenes as an event reconfiguring the self and its attitude to the world or solidifies the once acquired militant identity. It is an axial event organizing other elements: 1) frames explaining the present situation and its possible change; 2) narratives about beginnings, perils and goals, and about protagonists of the drama, friends and villains. They were later all means to make a story out of one's life, to be convinced that it is worth writing at all; that is, to bear witness to something beyond itself, to have a meaning worth commemorating and sharing. Ultimately, isn't this entanglement the best evidence of the importance of the political commitments in reshaping the writer's self? The rhetorical means of this reshaping, the construction of the new militant self in agitational texts, and more generally, the changing role of language within the political are examined in the next chapter.

¹¹⁹ *Wspomnienia weteranów rewolucji 1905 roku. Zwyciężyliśmy... mówi tow. Bronisława Łuczakowa – emerytka pracy*, APŁ, KŁ PZPR, sygn. 11484, p. 3.

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Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy.

NOŻOWCY, PROSTYTUCYA I RZĄD CARSKI.

Robotnicy!

W ciągu trzech dni od dnia 24 maja Warszawa była widowiskiem niezwykłego wybuchu ludowego: oto masa robotnicza rozbijała domy rozpusty i w krwawy sposób rozprawiała się z alfonсами, handlarzami dziewcząt złodziejami, i paserami. W ten sposób lud Warszawy wypowiedział swój sąd doraźny o tak zwykłych i koniecznych objawach kapitalizmu, jak prostytucja i złodziejstwo.

Albo ten wybuch nienawiści ludowej był w rzeczywistości najgłośniejszym oskarżeniem policji i władzy carskiej w ogóle. Mianowicie, jak to zaznaczają wyraźnie gazety tutejsze, ludność Warszawy była poprostu oddana na łup nożowców, złodziei, uwodzicieli i handlarzy kobiet, a policja i władza cała, zamiast czuwać nad bezpieczeństwem ludności, zajęta jest tylko myślą tropienia rewolucjonistów lub mordowania dzieci, kobiet i starców w czasie demonstracji ulicznych. Nikomu nie jest tajemnicą, że policja dzieli się łupem z szajkami złodziei, sutenerów i handlarzy mięsem ludzkim. Pod rządem zdyktującego absolutyzmu, który od góry do dołu składa się z łapowników, karnokradów i zbirów, nikt w Warszawie nie czuje się pewnym czci, mienia i życia. W dni wypłat nożowcy bezkarnie wydzierają z rąk robotnikom zarobki, a opierających się kaleczą i zabijają. Sutenerzy pod osłoną bezczynnej władzy porywają zaczęli siłą ucieżki kobiety, aby je wciągnąć w domach rozpusty.

Zrozpaczona ludność robotnicza, nie widząc żadnej pomocy ze strony organów bezpieczeństwa publicznego, postanowiła wreszcie sama ukrocić tę plagę. Jeszcze przedtem robotnicy, uzbrojeni w rewolwery, zaczęli odwiedzać kryjówki nożowców i karać ich śmiercią za poczynione im krzywdy, rabunki i zabójstwa. Wreszcie masa robotnicza, z początku żydzi sami, potem z robotnikami polskimi, zaczęli mścić się na właścicielach lupanarów, sutenerach i paserach. Policja, ta sama, policja, która dzieli się zyskami prostytucji, patrzyła obojętnie jak tłum rozbijał domy rozpusty i sprawiał krwawe sądy doraźne. Władza która ma pod swoim zarządem prostytucję i ochrania ją jako instytucję publiczną, nie tknęła palcem, aby bronić ciemne i nieszczęśliwe ofiary wyzysku i chuci. Tylko domy najbogatszych kokot ochraniały silnymi kordonami żołnierzy i żandarmów.

Wśród ludu rozeszła się pogłoska, że policja pozwoliła przez 3 dni rozprawiać się ludowi w ten sposób. W każdym razie faktem jest, że przez pierwsze 3 dni nikt tłumowi nie przeszkadzał w tym burzycielskim i krwawym dziele i, dalej, faktem jest że dopiero na czwarty dzień pojawiło się ogłoszenie generał-gubernatora, zapowiadające srogo represje przeciw temu buntowi sumienia ludowego. Przez 3 dni policja carska zdradzała prostytucję carską, zdradzała swych własnych towarzyszy, dzielących się z nią zyskami prostytucji. A kiedy lud zburzył już nędzne mienie najbardziej nieszczęśliwych prostytutek i średnie zakłady rozpusty, kiedy nadchodziła kolej na bogate damy, utrzymywane przez panków i oficerów—dopiero wtedy na czwarty dzień generał-gubernator wystąpił z odezwą, nazywając ten ślepy wybuch samoobrony ludowej „czynami wstrętnymi i ohydnyymi”.

Robotnicy! Ten czyn tłumy rzuca jaskrawe światło na rozprzeczanie i demoralizację władzy carskiej. Ten czyn to najgłośniejsze świadectwo historyczne, które przez wieki opowiadać będzie, że ludność Warszawy oddana była przez władze na łup rzeźmieszków, sutenerów i handlarzy kobiet, swego mienia i życia. Ale to był ślepy czyn nieswiadomego tłumy, który chciał zniszczyć prostytucję i złodziejstwo, nie rozumiejąc, że można je zniszczyć tylko razem z kapitalizmem, który jest źródłem i złodziejstwa i prostytucji. Nieswiadomy tłum nie rozumiał, że całe to rozpanoszenie się nożowców i sutenerów, wszystkie ich nadużycia przekraczające miarę zwykłego złodziejstwa i prostytucji—są skutkiem gospodarki policyjnej i rządowej absolutyzmu. Prostytutki—to ofiary wyzysku kapitalistycznego, nożowcy—to ofiary despotyzmu rządowego, który prześladowa oświatę, niszczy dobrobyt i hodzi takich wyrzutków społeczeństwa. To policja, to rząd carski dopuścił do tego, aby Warszawa znalazła się z jednej strony w rękach rządowych zbirów, mordujących lud na ulicach, z drugiej strony w rękach złodziei, nożowców i prostytucji, gwałcących część naszych kobiet, czyhających na nasze zarobki i życie.

Więc każdy świadomy robotnik powinien teraz wyjaśnić swemu owemu ślepem tłumowi, że nie wypienimy nożowców, nie ukrucimy na stałe nadużyć prostytucji, nie stworzymy bezpieczeństwa mienia i życia, dopóki niewypienimy samej polpory tego zła, dopóki nie obalimy despotyzmu. Porządek bezpieczeństwa w Warszawie, jak w całym kraju i państwie może zapanować dopiero po zburzeniu absolutyzmu, po zdobyciu demokratycznych swobód republikańskich.

Przec z rządem, ładującym terror nożowców i nadużycia prostytucji!

Przec za sprzedającą policją, dzielącą się zyskami nożowców i prostytucji!

Wiśch żyje Rewolucja!

Warszawski Komitet,

Socjaldemokracji Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy.

Warszawa, w Maja 1905 r.

613841488

Figure 4. Typical layout of a political leaflet, this one published by SDKPiL. Polish National Library in Warsaw

CHAPTER 3

CALLING PROLETARIAN SELVES – SPEAKING OUT POLITICAL ACTION

Often [the leaflets] were found in aisles of workers' houses or directly in flats, inserted in chinks of not so tight doors, or stuck on walls, fences or telegraphic posts, in factories on machines, in workers' lockers for cloths and tools. The youth read those propaganda materials willingly, passionately, almost openly discussing.¹

In the vast majority of memoirs left by workers, as in this quoted above, leaflets were the main point of contact with political ideas and message carriers of the parties. In police reports, leaflets were singled out as having particular power to enrich revolutionary spirit on the streets, and they were the most common evidence mentioned in court records and archives of the secret police, Okhrana, to prove the guilt of recently arrested suspects. Their production was seen as a significant success, and those who printed them were the most venerated heroes. There was something exceptional in those sheets of paper, which made them so important for all those around. As material evidence of the political processes, they deliver an insight into political languages in action, topics of debate, and the rapid change of identities pushed forward by political actors.

In the particular circumstances of the tsarist empire, the revolution marked the rise of politics in a new key, as Carl Schorske called it. The old, aristocratic mode of doing politics was no longer carefully questioned by bourgeois liberalism, but smashed by politics gauged to move “the masses”.² The revolution fostered the emergence of mass politics when new groups of people were massively mobilized and parties grew in numbers, no longer being salon conversation clubs or conspiratorial circles.³ In Russian Poland, however, in contrast to Austro-Hungary, it was not the parliament which

¹ Łęczycki, *Mojej ankiety personalnej punkt 35*, 59–60.

² Schorske, “Politics in a New Key: An Austrian Triptych.”

³ Blobaum, *Rewolucja*.

focused attention and spurred mobilization. Even if the Duma triggered numerous debates and electoral campaigning was intensely conducted, it was not the place where the parties forged their constituencies and vice versa. The new parliament was too much of a smokescreen for persisting autocracy, the empire was too fractured nationally, which molded separate public spheres, and the representation of lower echelons of society and more radical political forces were too meek to spur a real debate. As a result, political programs meticulously honed at party rallies years before were now put into practice on the revolutionary street.⁴ There, they were confronted with rising emotions, collective action and antagonistic competition, possible to be mastered only by effective agitation.

It was the mass agitation in the streets, in the factories, and to some extent in the villages, where the transformation of the political actually happened. The infrastructure of this agitation were the leaflets, not only widely read but also orated and debated. Thus, while investigating the political as a historically changing regime of communication, the written utterances are not merely a source giving insight into something beyond itself; the utterances materialized on paper and deployed on the streets as leaflets were themselves the acts of speech constituting the political realm. Accordingly, their massive use meant significant change in the relationship between speech and action. This transformation was comprised of several dimensions. On an unprecedented scale, speech gained agency in the squares and factory courtyards. What was said was directly interwoven with what was done. Political utterances ceased to be a mere part and parcel of detached polemics conducted for the sake of ideals only. Political reasoning gained much more direct impact in real time, urging people to act on short notice. How it was done, however, differed between the active political milieus.

Conflicting parties were not only pushing rival vocabularies, but also coded action in their utterances in alternative ways, creating varying (albeit equally new) circuits between words and deeds.⁵ Such spaces of action corresponded with basic shared assumptions about the world and

⁴ Porter, "Democracy and Discipline in Late Nineteenth Century Poland."

⁵ Such approach (to the parliamentary debates) was presented in the introduction to: Steinmetz, *Das Sagbare Und Das Machbare: Zum Wandel Politischer Handlungsspielräume. England 1780 - 1867*.

political agency ascribed to different social groupings. Rival theoretical grids gave birth to differently structured political languages and relatively stable ways of rendering social reality with specific fields of (in)visibility.⁶ Tacit assumptions about the political audience fueled milieu-specific attitudes toward the speech acts, producing particular interaction with the political newcomers. The direct interpellation of subjects and forging of collective identities proceeded differently. Even if all authors of agitational texts were deliberately constructing their utterances as impact-directed, they were doing so according to varying convictions about political communication. These convictions included assumed and desired roles and agency of those addressed and awareness about opponents. Thus, such texts may be investigated in order to explain varying modes of confrontation with the new political circumstances. Moreover, political utterances acquired growing dialogical, polemical and antagonistic qualities. Consequences thereof were severe as these texts rapidly forged and reconstructed identities and redrew social boundaries.

These evolving potentials of political speech and the accommodation of political languages to the new circumstances of the politics in a new key are the subjects of this chapter.⁷ Its main goal is to understand the changing role of speech in the new mode of politics, i.e. to explain the transformation of the political in respect to language. The main source preserving the contours of the political communication are party-led journals, brochures and, above all, more elusive political leaflets – their number, regularity and evolution over time give a broader overview of change during the revolution.

First of all, these material vehicles of political agitation carried not only worldviews or, simply speaking, ideologies. The exposition on this basic level is needed to comprehend the complexity of the political field. However, detailed reading also reveals other dimensions. Forms of addressing the reader and polity, tacitly assumed in the language of the leaflets, traced the contours of emerging and changing identities beyond simple adherence to this or that political program. Correspondingly, I look

⁶ Pocock, *Political Thought and History*, chaps. 4–5.

⁷ Some preliminary remarks regarding this problem, namely the new role of language in politics, were presented in the introduction to Steinmetz, *Political Languages in the Age of Extremes*.

at the core concepts of political discourses as active means of perceiving the situation, alternative narratives as giving new meaning for the old institutions, and forms of knowledge allowing the world around to be comprehended. What was the vision of society beyond these programmatic statements? How were the discrete, singular experiences combined in a broader world-view? This primary impact of the leaflets constitutes the first group of issues I address below.

Secondly, the language of leaflets reconfigured the domain of the speakable and the doable.⁸ As acts of speech uttered within a dense communicative context of the revolutionary street and factory, the leaflets encouraged action and presented its particular forms as possible and significant, remaining in synchronic competition. They cast receivers as positioned in a given way in respect to their social surroundings and circumscribed the regimes of possible activity. It happened not only via particular calls to action, but also through more convoluted semantic and syntactic structures. Depending on the political milieu, they rendered the receivers as potentially active or passive, put under the pressure of normative expectation or victimized by the oppression they experienced. Thus, I focus on elements of worker-directed discourses such as performative apostrophes and grammatical renditions of subjectivity in order to shed light on the placement and self-placement of workers in the broader social order. How were the current events connected or disconnected from the deliberate and conspicuous actions of workers? What modes of action were presented as possible? To whom were the working-class readers encouraged to obey? By addressing these issues, I trace the language in action.

The third investigated dimension concerns the political seen as a field of forces and its diachronic reconfiguration. The 1905-1907 escalation bore witness to how words gained power to mobilize people. Initially, it was socialist mobilization which proved successful due to effective class-based politics. National Democracy and their labor branch, the National Workers Union, took the nation, and not class, as the basic form of affiliation. The forging of such national unity, however, was

⁸ Steinmetz, *Das Sagbare Und Das Machbare: Zum Wandel Politischer Handlungsspielräume. England 1780 - 1867*.

difficult to engender among the workers due to unique historical circumstances, the experience of exploitation, and longstanding socialist agitation. Fighting an initially uphill battle, national democrats nevertheless succeeded in securing stable support and even re-mobilizing the workers previously striking in the name of socialist ideals. This process was aided by reference to a strong negative figure of the Other. When “nationalism began to hate”, antisemitism appeared to be an extremely effective mobilizing device and Jews started to be used as a negative, constitutive point of reference for the construction of national unity among the Poles.

These three dimensions of the discourse of the leaflets can also be sequenced as dominating tendencies along the revolutionary process and thus they are presented here in due order – from primary impact, to synchronic competition, to diachronic reconfiguration. Let me now expose the methodological strategies mobilized for scrutinizing these three broad sets of issues.

Political life materialized – leaflets, proclamations and reading publics

Within the emerging public sphere *for* workers, and in the growing extent *of* workers, the patterns of contact with the written word varied. The oldest forms were brochures or booklets that were several dozen pages long. They were read among still-narrow circles of agitated workers before the revolution, and later remained the source of political knowledge for those already versed in the basics of a given ideology. They were fairly priced, thus were distributed among close adherents and used for more focused, personal agitation.⁹ Another category consisted of party-published periodicals,

⁹ Some of them were translated from socialist “classics”, some written by Polish authors. Sometimes writing them created an international career, for instance in Russia. More detailed analysis for Russia and Poland, respectively, see Pearl, *Creating a Culture of Revolution*, chap. 3; Marzec, “Vernacular Marxism. Proletarian Readings in Russian Poland around the 1905 Revolution.” The most important titles can be detected thanks to the detailed bibliography of Zanna Kormanowa, *Materiały do bibliografii druków socjalistycznych na ziemiach polskich w latach 1866-1918* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1949). I list editions analyzed by myself elsewhere, sometimes republished later: Wilhelm Bracke, *Precz z socjalistami!* (Drukarnia Partyjna PPS, 1904); Ignacy Daszyński, *Pogadanka o socjalizmie* (Lwów: Latarnia, 1900); Karl Kautsky, *Zasady Socjalizmu (Program Erfurcki)* (Nakładem Wydawnictwa “Życie,” 1911); Karol Kautsky, *Nauki ekonomiczne Karola Marksa*, Biblioteka socjalizmu naukowego (Warszawa: Książka i wiedza, 1950); Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, *Czy teraz nie ma pańszczyzny?* (Londyn: Drukarnia Partyjna PPS, 1903); Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, *Jak się narodzi rządzą?* (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Wydawnictw Ludowych, 1906); Tomek Kujawczyk, *Ojciec Szymon*

which were also popular among those already convinced.¹⁰ Brochures, and to some extent party journals, were read among socialist circles and workers aspiring to them, studied in silence or recited in small groups, later contemplated, before finally resonating in public meetings. Larger books were laboriously studied in dimly-lit basements and prison cells, or popularized during illegal discussion circles. The main reading material, however, to which workers were exposed was political leaflets.

These single-page leaflets were the most easily available material distributed secretly in the factories and streets and used broadly to encourage and bring in new supporters. They were also used for current communication between party organizations and workers.¹¹ As an important pillar of printed socialist agitation, they undoubtedly contributed much to the politicization of workers and their general reading activity. Indirect evidence of their influence can be interpolated in the vast fragmentary data of titles and copies published.¹² The popularity of leaflets fostered their standardization, and soon they formed a genre of sorts with a fairly typical layout and structure. As the “party technique” was quite well-developed, the leaflets were almost always printed (in different techniques and quality but certainly not handwritten). The opening line was a direct address to the receivers, an exposition of the situation followed and the leaflet continued with a political analysis,

(London, 1896); Jan Młot, *Kto z czego żyje?* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1952).

¹⁰ On illegal socialist press, see Kmiecik, *Prasa polska w rewolucji 1905-1907*; Myśliński, *Polska prasa socjalistyczna w okresie zaborów*. On publishing activity of National Democracy see Urszula Jakubowska, *Prasa Narodowej Demokracji w dobie zaborów* (Łódź - Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1988); Aneta Dawidowicz and Ewa Maj, eds., *Prasa Narodowej Demokracji, 1886-1939* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2010).

¹¹ On the role of the leaflets, see Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*; Krajewska, *Czytelnictwo wśród robotników w Królestwie Polskim, 1870-1914*; Żarnowska, *Robotnicy Warszawy na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*. In other national contexts, the importance of leaflets and brochures for rank-and-file Marxism was demonstrated in Andrew G. Bonnell, “Did They Read Marx? Marx Reception and Social Democratic Party Members in Imperial Germany, 1890-1914,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 48, no. 1 (March 2002): 4–15, doi:10.1111/1467-8497.00248. For useful terminology and classification of “ephemeral literature” such as leaflets see Herbert Pimlott, “‘Eternal Ephemera’ or the Durability of ‘Disposable Literature’: The Power and Persistence of Print in an Electronic World,” *Media, Culture & Society* 33, no. 4 (May 1, 2011): 515–30, doi:10.1177/0163443711398690.

¹² For instance, according to estimations of Władysław Karwacki, for 162 days of the year 1906, SDKPiL issued and distributed 992000 copies of various publications in Łódź only. The Łódź workers' committee of the PPS published 30000 copies in Polish of a leaflet commemorating the first anniversary of the outburst of the revolution. In addition, 10000 and several thousand in Yiddish were distributed, accompanied by another couple thousand leaflets received from the central committee. At the same time, Social Democrats distributed 1500000. In conditions of conspiratory illegal work, it is hard to assume that the publishing quotas were overestimated considering the needs. In addition, if a leaflet reached an interested worker, it used to be recirculated further, read aloud and discussed. For estimations, see Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*, 170. About titles and topics see the almost complete bibliography: Halina Kiepuska, *Bibliografia pism ulotnych rewolucji 1905-7 w Królestwie Polskim*, Bibliografia pism ulotnych rewolucji 1905-7 w Królestwie Polskim (Warszawa: Biblioteka narodowa, 1963).

party-sponsored solution, and ideological commentary in varying proportions. The text was closed by a call to action, or if it was conspicuously impossible, by some indication of a future triumph. There was almost always a signature of the organization which issued the publication, usually at the end, augmented with specification of a particular party committee (central, or local from a particular city). As a political genre, the leaflets were well-embedded in oral agitational culture. Their content deliberately mimicked a political oration with its direct address to the reader and accompanying battle cries. On the other side of the communication circuit, the oral-written distinction also tended to be blurred as the leaflets were often read aloud and discussed. While leaflets were “loose” fliers distributed broadly in all possible places, the same content was often used in proclamations: larger sheets of paper stuck somewhere to be displayed till some policeman did not remove them. The leaflets constitute the most homogenous and coherent corpus, which allows me to accomplish a relatively systematic analysis (details are described in methodological appendix). Moreover, it was the leaflets that most directly mediated between political language and action.

These publications were the material substrata of the beginnings of mass politics in Russian Poland. Written and created by parties, they quickly became crucial in politicizing the relatively narrow circles of workers that existed before the revolution. However, while in retrospect one may observe the gathering of storm clouds at a much earlier time, it was the revolutionary upsurge which caused the hurricane to burst forth. A proclamation found in the early morning, when the factory whistle signaled the beginning of work, was often the first step of political initiation.¹³ These impromptu readings encouraged workers to further explore options and consequently to become a party member.¹⁴ Furthermore, these were the leaflets which shaped the polemical zeal of contrasting party programs,¹⁵ and not infrequently they were a decisive factor in switching party affiliation.¹⁶

¹³ See for example Łęczycki, *Mojej ankiety personalnej punkt 35*, 59–60..

¹⁴ Szczepan Michalski, *Wspomnienia*, APŁ KŁ PZPR, t. 11541, k. 6; Feliks Piskorski, *Z nad dobrzanki*, “Kiliński” 1936, no 3, 102-103.

¹⁵ Antoni Deka, *Ankieta personalna z życiorysem*, APŁ, KW PZPR, syg. 1958.

¹⁶ Maksymilian Brzeziński, *Dzielnica “Zielona” w Łodzi*, “Kiliński” 1936, No 1, 24; Bronisław Żukowski, *Pamiętniki bojowca*, “Niepodległość” 1929-1930, Vol. 1, p. 115-116; Łęczycki, *Mojej ankiety personalnej punkt 35*, 66; Pestkowski, *Wspomnienia rewolucjonisty*, 55..

Leaflets were the basic message carrier in the process of communication between parties and their supporters; for instance, they were used to spread information about the party's policies, calls for strikes, present political programs and, finally, they were places of polemics with other political narratives, thus constituting the substrate of the emerging proletarian public sphere.¹⁷ Consequently, even people who were not direct supporters of any party or represented a different political faction were exposed to the language of leaflets. The leaflets offered them new ways of comprehending the world and introduced expressive concepts describing newly emerging social and political phenomena and language of a much more abstract character than their everyday and professional vocabulary, stemming from direct experience in the workplace. Therefore, the workers became, in the most general sense of the word, participants in the modern political semiosphere and users of the social and political concepts communicated through the contents of the leaflets and proclamations.

Correspondingly, I consider those leaflets as 'performative texts', presenting and inducing certain modes of activation of the subject. As speech act theory¹⁸ and its intellectual history applications argue, both the performative and pragmatic dimensions of language ought to be taken into account. By investigating "the intended force with which the utterance is issued"¹⁹ one may examine what writers say in a text, but also shed light on what they are doing in saying it. In this analysis, an additional element is the application of such a theoretical framework to mass political communication. A corroborative method utilized in this research collates the intended illocutionary force of the texts (usually but not always written by party intelligentsia) with its (supposed) perlocutionary efficacy intervening into subjectivities and cognitions of the social world among the receivers (workers with different levels of political involvement and civic education). One can summon here three indirect bodies of evidence justifying the possibility of reaching conclusions about

¹⁷ Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*, 169–70; Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*.

¹⁸ John L Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975).

¹⁹ It was of course Quentin Skinner who demonstrated how political thought and concrete interventions in politicking could be read as Austinian performatives. Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 82. See also Kari Palonen, *Quentin Skinner: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Key Contemporary Thinkers (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press ; Distributed in the USA by Blackwell Pub, 2003).

the workers' political subjectification from proclamations and leaflets.

First of all, the authors of the leaflets were deeply embedded in the workers' setting, thus producing a discourse responsive to the needs and cognitive capacities of the receivers. There is evidence of such feedback and consequent reshaping of party discourses.²⁰ Thus, the leaflets were more or less tailored to clarify new concepts and processes in an understandable way, well enmeshed in the contextual background and vocabulary which was familiar to the receivers. Such political statements, in order to be felicitous interventions, need to resonate powerfully with the intellectual capacities, space of experience, and emotions of the receivers. Consequently, the development of political language in leaflets testifies to the accompanying change among workers – the minimum knowledge required to understand it was probably relatively widely shared among the readers. Such a situation is confirmed by biographical testimonies reporting the (successful) struggle to understand the leaflets and the political enlightenment accomplished at the same time.²¹

Moreover, biographical narratives and memoirs of actively-involved workers very often point to the leaflets and proclamations as their main point of contact with new ideas and this contact was a crucial factor in their ideological peregrinations.²² There is no reason to assume that the narrators are wrong in their assessments nor manipulating or reconstructing their pasts in a way aimed to distort this particular aspect.

Last but not least, the very formal structure of the proletarian biographical narratives, as analyzed in the previous chapter, indirectly confirms the impact of the political language of the proclamations. These biographies are usually quite standardized, “ritualized” teleological narratives,

²⁰ This confirmed by documents and memoirs indicating the deliberate attempts to tailor the content of political materials to the needs, interests and competences of the receivers. See Wiktor Marzec and Kamil Piskala, “Proletariacy czytelnicy — marksistowskie i socjalistyczne lektury we wczesnej proletariackiej sferze publicznej Królestwa Polskiego,” *Sensus Historiae* Vol. XII, no. 3 (2013): 83–103; see also: Krajewska, *Czytelnictwo wśród robotników w Królestwie Polskim, 1870-1914*.

²¹ Łęczycki, *Mojej ankiety personalnej punkt 35*, 58–61; Rudnicki, *Stare i nowe*, 111–13; For a broader depiction of this problem, see Marzec and Piskala, “Proletariacy czytelnicy — marksistowskie i socjalistyczne lektury we wczesnej proletariackiej sferze publicznej Królestwa Polskiego.”

²² See for example: Maksymilian Brzeziński, *Dzielnica “Zielona” w Łodzi*, “Kiliński” 1936, No. 1, 24; Antoni Deka, *Ankieta personalna z życiorysem*, APŁ, KW PZPR, syg. 1958; Feliks Piskorski, *Z nad dobrzanki*, “Kiliński” 1936, No. 3, 102–103; Szczepan Michalski, *Wspomnienia*, APŁ KŁ PZPR, t. 11541, k. 6; Władysław Kossek, *Kartki z życiorysu proletariusza*, in: Spieralski (ed.), *Wspomnienia weteranów rewolucji 1905 i 1917 roku*.

retroactively reconstructing the biographical path to mature political commitment and cognitive enlightenment (a kind of socialist epiphany). However, these petrified identities, narrative patterns, metaphors, and the general political agenda which saturates the biographies as the main stylistic measures employed by the narrators to make sense of themselves and the world, are very close to those deployed in the proclamations, which – as I argue – were the main factor of political subjectification and intellectual emancipation (including the path to the world of letters).

Having said that, it is easily graspable with a diachronic look at political discourses during the revolution that the transformation of the political was not unidirectional. It is clearly not a simple story of cognition, mobilization and emancipation. A complex process of political transformation profoundly reshaping the landscape of political languages and commitments occurred. New political forces were created, new identities forged, and due actions performed. A careful examination of the crystallization of political blocks and transformation of affiliations among freshly politicized proletarians encourages us to pay more attention to the logic of discourse as such.

This logic, deplorable in the given historical circumstances, executed certain constraints on political thinking and action. Any ideological transformation does indeed owe much to the intentional conduct of key actors such as politicians, conceptual innovators, agitators, grassroots leaders, contentious claimants, and striking workers. However, a discursive change and corresponding action is an outcome of the complex interaction of intentional actions with structural constraints of the sign system. These constraints, in turn, are deployed in the given historical circumstances in a different way. Any abstract logic or structural conditions are not operative without being re-articulated (and thus altered) in actually existing historical actualization.²³ The awareness of this sharpens the analysis of non-personal, non-conscious and non-subjective discursive and interpretative schemes and constraints which do shape politics in the at hand social-historical context, both on the side of political

²³ Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, Phronesis (London: Verso, 2000), 190.

elites and that of the massively mobilized common people.²⁴

Political actors, acting in a sedimented setting of social logic, economic circumstances and so on, are actively competing to connect words with the world in a way that is true and politically operative, according to their political commitments, and disseminate particular discursive deployments and identities. However, not every position is imaginable and possible to take. Moreover, some paths are viable, but others are blocked, counteracted by others or simply not possible to ground in any massive response. Only some ideas “grip” the subjects and are reinforced by a kind of a recursive feedback loop between the contentious mass groups and party leaders or intellectuals trying to direct political events in a desired direction.

In other words, political activists from competing ideological milieus were all pushing rival vocabularies, carrying along particularly patterned social imaginaries, culturally-embedded structures of senses and politically defined friend-foe distinctions. However, these terminologies were not to be developed entirely arbitrarily. They could not have caught on unless the sentiments, desires, and concerns of some larger audience could be successfully reconstructed and articulated through them. Thus, the activists were not able to invent and disseminate entire worldviews as if they were applying paint to a blank canvas, but neither were the activists merely giving words to pre-existing sentiments. Last but not least, some discursive strategies backfire and unintended consequences play a crucial role in the redevelopment of political discourses and corresponding popular politics.

Party programs were a bedrock for emerging political identities among workers. In what follows, I analyze programs and ideological agendas as expressed in political leaflets, that is performative texts actively interacting with their readers on the streets and shop floors. Reference to the efficiency

²⁴ It is also worth noting that it is slightly misleading to rigidly differentiate between masses or the people and intelligentsia or elites and associate with any of these groups any particular qualities (as ideological standpoints, tendencies to certain actions or anti-Semitic predilections). One may observe that “the masses” were as diverse as the intelligentsia and there is no prescribed unity among these groupings. It would be, however, on the grounds of various theories of the masses or crowd psychologies, particularly constructing their object – the masses – along the lines of conservative fears (for some interesting remarks on this problem see Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy*). However, despite awareness of this fact, fluent writing demands synecdochic representation, thus occasionally I also use such binary terms to refer to certain social strata.

of this mobilization through the process of tracing the revolution allows one to investigate the ideological shifts, built identities and exclusionary logic inherently present in a serious reconfiguration of the political field. It is now important to examine how the process unfolded.

Assault on the old regime

Soon after the initial January general strike spread, workers parading through cities and raiding factories to put a stop to any remaining production, found, or were given, party leaflets. Without doubt, socialist parties were not controlling the tumultuous events, but they tried hard to do so. According to their current capacities, they immediately printed leaflets informing the workers of what had happened in Petersburg, and later in Łódź and Warsaw, and called for further action. The initial enthusiasm notwithstanding, an important challenge for the new political forces mobilizing the masses was to undermine the grip of the existing power over the people on the imaginary level. As is widely documented in literature on tsarist Russia, pro-tsarist attitudes among peasants were not uncommon, although not necessarily because of any “naive monarchism”.²⁵ In Russian Poland the foreign character of the tsarist rule impeded its legitimization, but the centuries of class oppression carried out by the Polish nobles and the very fact that it was finally the tsar who had given land to the peasants and abolished the remains of second serfdom enabled the Russians to claim a certain legitimacy among the peasants “over the heads” of the Polish elites. These attitudes to some extent also existed among the urban working class, who were usually of peasant origin. In 1905, there were still petitions sent (or planned to be sent) by the workers to the Russian administration in the vain hope that it would support, or at least protect, the workers against the local bourgeoisie.²⁶

Because of this latent attachment, the political parties were eager to convince the workers of

²⁵ Madhavan K. Palat, “Regulating Conflict through the Petition,” in *Social Identities in Revolutionary Russia*, ed. Madhavan K. Palat (Houndmills ; New York: Palgrave, 2001); Stephen Frank and Mark D. Steinberg, *Cultures in Flux Lower-Class Values, Practices, and Resistance in Late Imperial Russia*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001)..

²⁶ Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*, 176..

the savage and hostile nature of the tsar and the illegitimacy of the entire autocratic Tsarist regime. Consequently, the de-legitimization of the tsarist rule and dissolution of its transcendent grounding was put into effect mainly by contesting the very concept of the tsar. Above all, however, protesters had to be convinced about the weakness of power willing to crush their upheaval (and thus, given incentives for further riot), even if they already had no doubts concerning the very legitimacy of the tsarist rule. Tsardom, usually embodied in the very term “tsar”, was put in the crossfire of libelous accusations and verbal humiliation.

Bloody Sunday in Petersburg was used as an effective platform for this purpose. What the Russian workers experienced directly in front of the Winter Palace easily demonstrated that outward loyalty to the tsar would not prevent the repressive apparatus from bloodily suppressing all their claims. Moreover, hostility against the tsar was the main point of reference unifying the heterogeneous demands in the first phase of the revolutionary upsurge²⁷. The most common phrases (according to the lexicometric analysis) pointed to the criminal character of the regime, depicting the tsar as a directly-involved villain stained with worker's blood, and the despotic, autocratic, invasive and foreign genesis of the tsarist rule (*zbrodniczy rząd carski, rząd morderców, rząd samowładny, rząd despotyczny, krwawy car, despotyzm carski, rząd krwawego cara, rząd najeźdźczy*).²⁸ This critique was enforced by presenting the inabilities and weaknesses of the tsarist regime. This, subsequently, was used to demonstrate the feasibility of political struggle and the chances for a successful future overthrow of the existing order.

Along with the rise of the revolutionary tide, these open calls for the overthrow of the tsarist rule on the way to creating a new society were issued with increasing frequency. The receivers might read that: “Our worst enemy and severest oppressor – the Muscovite tsarat – is already staggering

²⁷ Wiktor Marzec, “The 1905-1907 Revolution in the Kingdom of Poland – Articulation of Political Subjectivities among Workers,” *Contention* 1, no. 1 (2013): 53–74.

²⁸ Andrzej Chwalba, “Rola socjalistycznych druków ulotnych w kształtowaniu wiedzy i postaw politycznych robotników w dobie rewolucji 1905-1907,” in *Spółczesność i polityka* (Warszawa: DiG, 1993), 163; Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905-1907*, 175.

under the pressure of the revolutionary movement, and its downfall is inevitable”;²⁹ or “the tsarat is weakening, so we have to bash the walls of the invader with huge hammers, till on the debris we can build our better lot”.³⁰ Later, as the tsarist repressions became more severe and the situation began to be framed as an outright struggle, these calls were even more hostile: the tsarat which was to be fought against was “a mad dog dying in a sea of blood”³¹, which “dies as a monster, (...) suffocated with a knee [pushed] on its chest and fist upon its eye”!³² References discrediting the tsar and *tsarat* (a contemporary word for Russian autocracy) comprise the most common topic in the printed party materials. Over half of all leaflets and proclamations contain such a critique, as though the automatic association of the tsar with the worst things imaginable was a main pillar of change. Nonetheless, the old order of legitimacy and the autocratic political edifice were crushed, which workers on the streets confirmed in a very direct way.

Revolution and socialism – core contested concepts

The presence of language in the new forms of politics was very tangible. The revolution was an event ushering new groups into the public and introducing to them a social-political language of a new type. Singular concepts carrying complex but also contested meanings were important pillars of agitation and allowed to comprehend the world around in a new way. The new public presence of concepts may be considered against the backdrop of a classic presentation of conceptual change by Reinhart Koselleck. It was initially grounded in the research of high-brow political treaties contemporary to the entrance of the German political and social vocabulary into modernity in the 18th and early 19th centuries.³³ Modern concepts were later introduced to broader audiences and therefore

²⁹ Do społeczeństwa polskiego. Chwila obecna jest przełomową..., CKR PPS, AAN APPS, 11/II-2, k. 41-42a.

³⁰ Towarzysze! Mury wszechrosyjskiej twierdzy..., ŁKR PPS, 14 Jan. 1905, AAN, APPS 305/III/35, pdt 6, k. 15.

³¹ Robotnicy! Od dwóch miesięcy blisko sercem Polski robotniczej..., ZG SDKPiL 1 July 1905, AAN SDKPiL, 9/VII-t. 5, k. 32-32a; AAN SDKPiL, 9/II-t.23, k. 63-64; APŁ PGZŻ 12/1905/II k.738-739.

³² Na 1 maja 1906. r. Międzynarodowe Święto robotnicze w roku rewolucji..., ZG SDKPiL, Apr. 1906, AAN SDKPiL, 9/VII-t. 6, k. 17-20a.

³³ Reinhart Koselleck, “Einleitung,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972), xiii–xxvii.

their qualities are important for the present investigation as well. The modern conceptual change was comprised of four dimensions: (1) The temporalization of categories removed the idea of an eternal stability or repeatability, and injecting a temporal dimension enabled one to grasp process-related meanings and experiences. (2) Social and political concepts and language became an important factor of political struggle, being contestable and thus ideologized. (3) The politicization of concepts fostered the partiality of meaning and nourished the polemical dimension of language, since then used as a weapon. Concepts became an active determinant of historical change shaping perceptions and actions of historical actors.³⁴ (4) The fourth dimension, i.e. democratization, is not reducible to relatively elitist, “high brow” political writings. When the impact of political language on the populace broadened (the emerging of a reading public, multiple public spheres, and, later, mass political movements), the new qualities of concepts began to create an unprecedented imprint on the political process. The once time-saturated, ideologized and politicized concepts were also deployed in discourses spurring on mass political mobilization of new groups of people.³⁵ Massive distribution of political leaflets, often the first point of contact with systematic written discourse and political ideas, intensified this dimension among workers of Russian Poland. They debated and acted motivated by concepts such as revolution or socialism, which, on the other hand, underwent significant changes when confronted with the new political reality.

One of the most widely-discussed concepts of modern times – revolution – played a far from obvious role. The idea and concept of a revolution and a revolutionary were widely entrenched in socialist discourse for years, and were backbone concepts in socialist writings in Polish virtually from

³⁴ Koselleck, “Begriffsgeschichte and Social History.”

³⁵ These three dimensions can be grasped in the language of political philosophers and ideologues, who, as conceptual innovators, reshaped the semantic fields of the basic social-political concepts. Such sources were also the focal point for the usual conceptual history research. Newer works debate the possibilities of writing history of concepts in the 20th century with enlarged sensitivity to new users and circulations, and described further thresholds in the history of concepts after the primary modern change analyzed by Koselleck for the – roughly – 18th century. See Christian Geulen, “Plädoyer Für Eine Geschichte Der Grundbegriffe Des 20. Jahrhunderts,” *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History*, no. 7 (2010): 79–97; Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann et al., “Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe Reloaded? Writing the Conceptual History of the Twentieth Century,” *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 7, no. 2 (January 1, 2012), doi:10.3167/choc.2012.070204.

their first significant appearance in the late 1870s and 1880s.³⁶ Thus, these concepts were used relatively often in printed materials before 1905. However, revolution meant a profound, general change of the social order to come in the future, instead of concrete, material events and actions which one could participate in. Consequently, the word revolution was, in the vast majority of cases, supplemented with an abstract adjective, forming collocations such as, for instance, “social revolution” or “people's revolution”.

As with many modern concepts, this one is also saturated with a temporal and normative surplus – it prognosticates the desired future rather than describes any empirical chain of events.³⁷ Correspondingly, the socialist discourse contained the already singularized concept of a revolution comprised of ideo-typical characteristics, coagulating into a collective singular. Thus the content of particular events withered away, yielding to the general idea of the revolution as an act not only comprised of seizure of power or reversal of roles between masters and slaves but the universal emancipation of all people. This conceptual content was emphatically re-articulated in the particular context of 1905 in order to give meaning to unprecedented social and political events.

Surprisingly quickly after Bloody Sunday the concept of revolution started to be used descriptively, as referring to the current events. Already on the 23rd of January, SDKPiL proclaimed: Workers! On Sunday, 22nd of January, a revolution broke out in Petersburg”.³⁸ This declaration created a coherent view of the occurring events as part of a revolution. The concept of the revolution, with all the semantic burdens it carried along, served as an unambiguous articulation of various heterogeneous struggles and dispersed acts of resistance.³⁹ General strikes, peasant struggles,

³⁶ Blit, *The Origins of Polish Socialism, the History and Ideas of the First Polish Socialist Party, 1878-1886*.

³⁷ Historical Criteria of the Modern Concept of Revolution, in: Reinhart Koselleck, “The Historical-Political Semantics of Asymmetric Counterconcepts,” in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 155–91.

³⁸ Strajk powszechny i rewolucja w Petersburgu, ZG SDKPiL, 23 Jan 1905, Daniszewski, *SDKPiL w rewolucji 1905 roku: zbiór publikacji*, 65–67.

³⁹ About the heterogeneity of struggles, see Shanin, *The Roots of Otherness*. Of course this process resembles (and to some extent consciously repeats) that which occurred during and after the series of events we are used to describing as the French Revolution. Initially disarticulated and as a whole unprecedented events began to be presented, interpreted and remembered in relatively coherent categories – as a revolution, see Hunt, *Politics, culture, and class in the French Revolution*; Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*.

multiple school strikes, and the very diversified context throughout the entire Russian empire were combined into one coherent narrative about an epochal event – a revolution – in which all the people involved in these multiple instances would participate.

Such an act of initial linguistic baptism was, at the outset, problematic.⁴⁰ The articulation of a set of events and the act of naming them retroactively created a coherent entity with definite characteristics, which subsequently enabled further mobilization to act. Bloody Sunday, and locally the January general strike, became a cornerstone of the future revolutionary identity. A crucial step in this process was introducing a coherent and common term, which would describe all the heterogeneity of struggle. Furthermore, the still preserved temporal and normative saturation of the concept of revolution allowed the participants to see and interpret their activity in given, meaningful categories, also offering them a sense of belonging and a common lot, supplementing the particular political identities induced in those days. However, the detailed meanings saturating the concept of the revolution were diversified and contestable.

Distinct shapes of the concept accompanied different political identities, visions of the historical process and envisioned community, being part of the “structure of theoretical thinking” of particular parties.⁴¹ Whereas SDKPiL and the left wing of the PPS envisioned revolution as a teleologically and normatively understood action leading to a definite, general social transformation (thus being the closest to the precedent socialist use of the meaning), the core of the PPS imagined revolution as a military confrontation with the foreign army, paralleling the main goal of the party – the struggle for socialist independence. In contrast, in the discourse of the NZR the revolution was at best a descriptive term referring to the disorder in the Polish Kingdom.

Moreover, the NZR materials provide clear evidence of the contestable nature of the very term

⁴⁰ Saul A Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980). This act of naming executes its power also within academic discourse. After all, as these events do not meet the criteria of revolution properly speaking formulated by political science or historical sociology to call something a revolution, see C. Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (Vintage Books, 1965); Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

⁴¹ Possart, *Struktury myślenia teoretycznego a kontrowersje ideologiczne: polemiki w publicystyce PPS w okresie rozłamu 1906-1908*.

in those days. It was momentarily supplemented with a derogatory component as an undesired, dangerous social transformation menacing Poland if the socialists put their insane ideas into practice.⁴² The nationalists were deeply aware of the performative significance of the concept, bringing the new revolutionary movement into life. Thus, the legitimacy of the term and feasibility or even reality of the revolution was not only contested but outright rejected by them:

A great slogan of revolution was thrown toward you. This slogan kindled your hearts and minds and a noble anger and grief against our eternal oppressor – the tsar – encompassed you. Unexpectedly you all stood up to fight, exposing your defenseless breasts for the shots of vicious Muscovite soldiers.⁴³

Apart from reducing the revolution to a “thrown slogan”, the NZR openly declared its fictitious and false character. It stated for instance that: “So a general revolution is a deliberate lie of the socialists. It is nonexistent and it will never come, because there are no conscious forces among the Muscovite people”.⁴⁴ Thus, the NZR clearly opposed calling the occurring events by the unifying and sense-giving name of ‘revolution’.

The term revolution functioned as the negative pole in the polarized discourse of National Democracy, converging with chaos and anarchy,⁴⁵ associated with the hostile interests of the socialists and Jews in seducing benign Polish workers. Thus, the “Polish worker in the name of Jewish and Muscovite interests, in the name of a fictitious revolution”⁴⁶ could only cause his own misfortune. Similarly, the nationalists bent over backwards to affiliate the concept of socialism with dubious

⁴² Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus! Bracia Rodacy! Słyszeliście chyba wszyscy..., Komitet Zagłębia Dąbrowskiego NZR, Mar.-Apr. 1906 r., AAN NZR, 41-II, k. 34.

⁴³ Bracia robotnicy! Rzucono wam wielkie hasło rewolucyj. Hasło to rozpałiło wasze serca i umysły... Narodowo-demokratyczna Młodzież Rzemieślnicza i Robotnicza, APL PGZZ 12/1905/I, k.119.

⁴⁴ Bracia robotnicy! Znowuż krążą po kraju naszym pogłoski, partie socjalistyczne..., ZG NZR, 1 June 1905, APL PGZZ, 390, k. 382-383.

⁴⁵ Rodacy! Parokrotnie od początku wojny obecnej wzywaliśmy Was trzeźwości..., Komitet Centralny Ligi Narodowej, 1 Aug. 1905, APL PGZZ 12/1905/II k. 918-919; APL ZDiPU, 411, k. 28. More on the topos of anarchy, important for virtually all political languages in the game, but invested with different meanings, see Marzec, “Beyond Group Antagonism in Asymmetrical Counter-Concepts. Conceptual Pair Order and Chaos and Ideological Struggles in Late 19th – Early 20th Century Poland.”

⁴⁶ Bracia Rodacy! Strejk powszechny, zapowiedziany przez socjalną demokrację na poniedziałek nie udał się..., ZG NZR, 1 July 1905, BN DŻS.

practices of anarchy, if not, as I will demonstrate below, outright declared it a sort of Jewish conspiracy against the Poles. Even within socialist milieus, however, the concept of socialism was far from unanimous.

The concept of socialism was ushered in gradually, with growing presence along the unfolding of the revolutionary process. This corresponds with the rise and fall of socialist parties which initially followed one step behind the mass movement, trying to tune in with its contention and later seizing much more influence and gathering numerous adherents, just to later on lose support because of the nationalist counter mobilization (see below). The spelling changed accordingly. At the beginning there is a larger presence of the older form [socyalizm], allegedly more “foreign” and perhaps with some “aristocratic” flavor. It remained prominent among political enemies eager to stress its alien character – unfitting and dangerous in Polish circumstance. Among the socialists themselves it gave way to a Polonized form [socjalizm], which gradually took the upper hand.

“Socialism”, in the discourse of the (socialist) leaflets, functions as an umbrella term, a conceptual token signifying a set of meanings and values, referring to such values as solidarity, freedom, and lack of exploitation. Thus, “socialism began to gather under its banner the entire, large proletarian family, unifying all the suffering, all willing to get rid of the yoke of bondage.”⁴⁷ When this happens, “the idea of brotherhood, freedom and equality will triumph – the idea of socialism”.⁴⁸ Socialism here is a normatively and temporally saturated concept, conveying both a set of values and the future state of society. It seems that party writers either assumed that the readers already knew what it was all about (a highly problematic assumption indeed), or else they just wanted to provide a universally appealing signifier, which many could adhere to without going into details. As a result, the leaflets were an immediate means of communication, grounded in the existing knowledge of the readers. It is not the case, however, that socialism functioned like this in all the materials due to a lack

⁴⁷ Towarzysze! Towarzyszeki! Od lat 17-tu proletarijaci świętuje dzień 1-go maja, a świętowanie to jest dlań jutrznią nowego życia i jest zapowiedzią burzy. mającej zahuczeć wkrótce nad głowami jego ciemiężców..... CK PPS, 30 April 1906, AAN, APPS 305/III/34, pdt. 4, k. 26

⁴⁸ Towarzysze i Towarzyszeki! Cały świat robotniczy święcił święto..., Łódź Committee of the PPS, 3 May 1906.

of precision or general impossibility to define it. It was quite accurately and extensively defined and explained in larger brochures, which circulated in a much different way.⁴⁹

It was in the leaflets, however, where particular concepts or meanings, important in shaping a general socialist world-view, were disseminated. In the days of highest enthusiasm, sometimes the poetic imagination took over rhetorical sobriety. The fragment below is highly indicative of the bombastic style, sometimes resembling a religious sermon merged with a call to battle, which can be found in the materials of both socialist parties. The example embodies the particular mixture of religious and enlightenment metaphors deployed to carry the idea and banner of socialism, which made a long-lasting imprint on their readers. At the same time, the example is dense enough to also include an occidental geopolitical imagination and the whole set of meanings coding the opposite poles of the desired socialist freedom and the Tsarist yoke.

The western wind – this was the large gust of the proletarian idea, the workers' struggle for freedom, for socialism, which having flown over all directions of the world and everywhere having awakened millions of the laboring and the exploited to a new life, reached from the West to the enormous, frosty graveyard of the Tsarat [Tsarist lands], and started to blow and blow, till it fanned the sparkle of light in the heads, and the flame of riot in the hearts among a broad mass of the laboring and exploited, till they were resurrected and went to break the ages-long icy cascade of the Tsarat.⁵⁰

Obviously, the reading material introducing socialism was not always that melodramatic. A broader analysis exposes a well-revealing bifurcation. There are two basic subsets of meanings which

⁴⁹ A good example of this type is a text translated from German, Wilhelm Bracke's *Precz z Socjalistami* [Down with the Socialists]. Its argumentative structure resembles the common polemical situation, which socialist beginners might have encountered pretty often. The brochure is a stylized answer to the critiques and attacks on socialism executed by the doubtful. Apparently such a polemical handbook of arguments was attractive also for those readers who themselves were not so sure what socialism could mean and what goals its proponents pursued. The brochure clarifies that socialism is not the parceling out of land but common ownership, that it won't bring the abolition of property but its true realization is when everybody retains the right to retain what he or she has created and the like. Bracke, *Precz z socjalistami!* Originally published as *Nieder mit den Sozialdemokraten!*, Braunschweig 1876. About further brochures see Marzec, "Vernacular Marxism. Proletarian Readings in Russian Poland around the 1905 Revolution." On similar publications in Russian, see Pearl, *Creating a Culture of Revolution*.

⁵⁰ Rok Rewolucji. Dzień 22 stycznia zamyka pierwszy rok Rewolucji w caracie, która taki sam przełom stanowi w dziejach ludzkości, jak przed stu laty Wielka Rewolucja Francuska..., ZG SDKPiL, 1 Jan. 1906, AAN SDKPiL, 9/VII-t.33, k. 2-3a.

were associated with “socialism” in the (socialist) leaflets. In most of the cases (as the above quoted) socialism is a general, and vague term, being an object of adherence. All socialist parties ritually end their proclamations with the slogan “long live socialism” (or something similar). Both PPS (later two factions) and SDKPiL used expressions such as “under the banner of socialism” and “idea of socialism” widely. More detailed reading, however, reveals that what was meant by the concept of socialism might differ significantly. Where a broader context is available, one can recognize two sets of meanings: (1) Socialism was defined as a set of political ideas or just as a movement, something one can adhere to, participate in, etc. This is more compliant with the contemporary dictionary meaning and common use in earlier literature, both polemical and socialist.⁵¹ There is also a challenger to this meaning, however. (2) Socialism might be understood as a future state of affairs, a world without exploitation that one can long and fight for, something which will come in the future as a system of social organization.

The most interesting thing, though, is the fact that both meanings were distributed between socialist parties in a non-random way. Whereas PPS consequently deployed the first meaning, associating itself with socialism as movement and encouraging workers to join, SDKPiL much more often, and predominately, used the time-saturated concept of socialism as a future state of affairs. One may only wonder which meaning is hidden behind more general formulations, but neat distribution of the specified meanings suggests that battle-cries of “Long live socialism!” might have been intended differently by the authors embedded in different semantic cultures of respective parties. Perhaps, SDKPiL as more integrated with international socialist culture, the German SPD and the Russian SD, introduced the change according to the pan-European patterns. The more indigenous Polish tradition was still maintained among PPS writers. The difference is also present in party

⁵¹ See for instance the so-called “Warsaw dictionary”, the most prominent setter of the language norm for those days. In “official” language this concept was not widely recognized – in the Warsaw dictionary socialism is mentioned only as an example of collectivism, and in other entries on betrayal and cheating, as an example of (rejected) ideological manipulation (“nie mnie brać na socjalizm”). The separate entry defines it as a social-political-economic system aiming at the equation of rights and redistribution of property, Adam Kryński and Władysław Niedźwiedzki, *Słownik języka polskiego* (Warszawa: nakładem prenumeratorów i Kasy im. Mianowskiego, 1901).

programs from that period. This bifurcation would cause severe side effects in the future. Already in the political languages of socialism deployed from 1905 on, it is strongly visible that PPS was not the party aiming at the “socialist” transformation of society, but instead understood “socialism” as a movement allegedly leading to some other goals, that is, a nation state.

The socialist leaflets were numerous and successful in achieving their goals. Alternative ideas were only introduced gradually. The resonance of the audience had to be taken into account, and the already accepted convictions could not have been condemned straight away. Thus, the nationalists were testing the limits of what could be said without rejection. At the beginning, they uttered shy suggestions that “we believed that socialism was a defense of workers” but “yesterday we saw that's a lie”.⁵² Later there was no longer a need for such timidity, and growing antagonization ushered in open expressions of hostility and called for outright violence with instructions to “struggle against all bandits stalking in our city, regardless if they are social scum, without party affiliation, anarchists or bandits of socialism, we must crush them and eradicate them”.⁵³ These slanders notwithstanding, for many, socialism was a core concept, which introduced a broader perception of the surrounding world.

Mapping the social space

Political discourses were also aimed to deliver a general political orientation and ability to map causal and structural connections between various instances of everyday experience. Correspondingly, the leaflets and proclamations explained the mechanism of exploitation, the results of the partitions and Russian rule, and the reasons why the state army supported factory owners in their struggle with the workers. These steps were not ineffective, as some of the narrators quoted in the previous chapter testified, for instance recollecting the act of “becoming a mature man” and “comprehending life in a

⁵² Do Braci Robotników i całego społeczeństwa. Towarzysze! Rodacy!, National Democracy (signed as “a group of workers”, as such significant in this context), Warsaw, 4 Nov. 1905, BN DŻS IA 4h Cim.

⁵³ Rodacy! Dnia 3-go marca r. b. zamordowany został robotnik fabryczny, a leaflet of the Central Committee of the Association of National Defense (one of the impromptu National Democratic political emanations), Warsaw, 6 March 1906, BN DŻS IA 4h Cim.

different way” after having read a leaflet.⁵⁴ The means to do so was to provide coherent explanations of ongoing processes and connect otherwise discrete events and actors in a broader picture of the social world. For example, let us consider the following quote from before the revolution, explaining the role of the tsarist administration in the economic crisis:

The Muscovite tsarat is full of anxiety over the poor’s revolt; thus it tracks them down diligently and with its brutal paw suppresses any striving of workers for a better living. Police, gendarmes, snoopers and troops – here are the physicians that the tsarat gives us to heal the crisis!⁵⁵

Similarly, the leaflets offered a coherent conceptual grid, enabling workers to project what they experienced – declining wages, violence, lack of recognition – onto a broader social-political configuration known as “Muscovite tsarat”, “tsarist autocracy” or “capitalism”.

Moreover, the overall economic situation was the subject of scrutiny in the leaflets, in order to counter claims such as, for instance, that the workers themselves caused the crisis by their strikes. A lot of attention was focused on introducing and explaining various workers’ institutions that were planned for the socialist future or already existing in the capitalist West and which were not under autocratic rule. Some of them were presented as possible to be built at that point in time, in order to improve working conditions on the spot. In this case, the focal point was to demonstrate what, concretely, would be brought by a given solution: for instance, politicized labor unions intervening into the vicious cycle of capitalist exploitation.

The labor unions have to participate in the political struggle, after all it is their cause! The capitalist wants to lengthen the labor day without restraint, wants to reduce workers' wages, does not want to spend money for protective measures, which would limit the factory accidents, does not want to introduce healthy work conditions because all of these cost money. Thus, where strong professional associations do exist, there they force the

⁵⁴ Władysław Kossek, Kartki z życiorysu proletariusza, w: Spierański (ed.), *Wspomnienia weteranów rewolucji 1905 i 1917 roku.*, 18..

⁵⁵ Towarzysze! Nie widać końca kryzysu, który już tak dawno panuje..., CKR PPS, 13 Nov. 1901, in Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 1*, 20.

capitalist to limit the working time, increase wages, introduce protective measures and healthy work conditions.⁵⁶

Coming to understand an alternative to what life could be was a powerful experience. It was usually connected with growing anxiety and a subsequent struggle to understand both the surrounding world and the socialist message itself. This message, however, was not intelligible all at once. One of the proletarian autodidacts recollected this experience as follows:

We faced unknown issues, begging for explanation, inducing anxiety and an exciting threat of danger. Not always were all the terms known, but the crucial content remained clear among the proletarian children and left no doubt. It was understandable. The proclamations were a call for a struggle against harm and exploitation, poverty and degradation.⁵⁷

The ideological content of the proclamations was responsible for turning the workers into political subjects of a particular kind. The language of the leaflets constructed class and national identities as well as political affiliations. Last but not least, this political communication induced contentious stances – positions that disrupted the existing distribution of appearances.

Interpellation and modes of action

The leaflets questioned the principle of integration of the body politic and stimulated reordering society across its divisions. They stimulated the multidimensional process one may call – after Jacques Rancière – subjectification.⁵⁸ For this process, the exclamatory and direct language used in the leaflets mattered on a very immediate level. They addressed the readers in particular ways, which

⁵⁶ Obłuda pod maską bezpartyjności. Od kilkunastu lat walczy klasa robotnicza Polski i Rosji o prawo łączenia się w związki..., Komisja Organizacyjna Związków Zawodowych SDKPiL, BN DŻS; APŁ KGP 1581, k. 4-11.

⁵⁷ Łęczycki, *Mojej ankiety personalnej punkt 35*, 60.

⁵⁸ Jacques Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics*, 21 (London: Verso, 2007); See also Jean-Philippe Deranty, *Jacques Rancière: Key Concepts* (Durham: Acumen, 2010).

were not always obvious. Acclamations of human dignity imbued in the content and style of the proclamations, containing, for instance, grammatical structures implying the unity of the writer and the reader through a collective “we”, were an important pillar of workers’ self-recognition. A previously quoted SDKPiL supporter described the first contact with such a proclamation addressing the readers as “comrades”; according to him it was an experience of a “huge, if not decisive, significance so as to become humans”. Bakery workers finally “were not working cattle, not two-legged animals but comrades”.⁵⁹ Similarly, almost all leaflets, bearing a trace of oral speech transposed in time through writing, began by addressing the audience. Already these opening expressions were crucial for calling the newly interpellated subject to action and rendering it in a particular mode of being and relationship to a broader social whole. While reading these variegated and not accidental phrases: Comrades! [also in the female form], Proletarians! Workers and workwomen! Colleagues! Brothers, Poles!; the receiver, without being aware of it, entered into a class of persons addressed in a particular way, and identified with such a group.

Such direct expressions of address directed toward workers/receivers had a large impact. Considering the fact that such an expression is seemingly inclusive, regardless of whether it was issued by a political ally, polemicist or enemy, it is not easy to avoid being self-classified as an addressee. To some extent the reader becomes a comrade, a worker, a brother or a Pole, even if it was not his or her primary identification before. The interpellating apostrophe is constructed in a way which prevents rejection – assigning oneself to the outer, non-included group would mean self-exclusion from a general community, almost a human co-being. On the one hand, similar expressions were responsible for inducing a certain construction of the self, integrated in broader discourses, ideological dispositives, institutions and, above all, regimes of power. On the other hand, though, they stimulated language-induced empowerment, gaining one's own subjectivity *qua* dignity and an elementary self-conscious attitude to the self and the outer world.

⁵⁹ Olbrzymek, *Wspomnienia starego robotnika 1893-1918*, “Z pola walki”, 1927, no. 3, 57.

The opening interpellating formulas were diversified and clearly indicative of the mode of subjectivity to be induced by a particular partisan discourse. SDKPiL called out to the addressees as “comrades”, “workers” or “proletarians”, stressing a class identity and bridging the gap between a writing and reading subject (we all are comrades, *and* workers as well). Similarly, PPS preferred “comrades” [also in the feminine]⁶⁰ stressing the socialist tradition and solidarity, albeit not of a class-exclusionary kind (less often they called out to workers as an explicitly defined group). In contrast, the NZR used the form “compatriots” [Rodacy!] or “brothers and countrymen” [Bracia Rodacy], inducing national identification, already carried within it an ethnic component (the word “*rodacy*” in Polish is derived from *ród*, which is connected with family affiliation or parentage), which was not without significance in a multi-ethnic setting with growing inter-group tensions. In turn, the equally often utilized expression “Brothers workers” stressed this national unity, but simultaneously separated within it a certain subgroup, implicitly suggesting its particular vocation in an organic division of roles in the national body. This corresponded with the hierarchic vision of the nation, which was typical of the Polish National Democracy.⁶¹

This effect of the concepts was multiplied by the grammatical structure of the leaflets, using different means to convey the activity of receivers and their corresponding place in the social totality. The mode of speech and syntax of sentences referring to action delimited the borders of the speakable and the doable, as Willibald Steinmetz notes in respect to the English parliamentary discourse.⁶² For instance, the PPS leaflets often focused on tsarist oppression experienced by the workers. They stressed the violence of the oppressor as a hostile foreign force (“the government of conquest is harassing us”). This corresponds with the rejection of the “foreign yoke” and alleged necessity to overthrow it to regain freedom. Simultaneously, it builds a trans-class community of suffering, strengthening the national project of the party. The PPS publications also contained many utterances

⁶⁰ Thus, explicitly including female members and readers which was not that common at the time.

⁶¹ Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*.

⁶² Steinmetz, *Das Sagbare Und Das Machbare: Zum Wandel Politischer Handlungsspielräume. England 1780 - 1867*.

asserting or stimulating the activity of workers. “There, where hitherto a despondency and slavish obedience ruled – one of the leaflets announced – a sense of honor and personal dignity was awoken”. “And we – the leaflet continued – want to live a free life of our own, we must become free and independent people”.⁶³ While the asserted state of affairs was conflated with calls to action, assertion of a *desired* state of affairs acted also performatively: “From miserable, gray slaves, despised by everybody, who were dragged through the mud by every chump, we became people, the great freedom fighters”.⁶⁴ Words of the PPS writers appealed to the workers’ dignity and courage, supplemented by political agency which profoundly reorganized the former distribution of places, the ascribed right of speech and the regime of political visibility.

The PPS leaflets, in the majority of cases, deploy the “we” form to build a sense of community between workers and the authors of the text, the party and the entire society. This reconstructed the assumed imaginary institution of society and separation of places within it, and thus new places of contentious utterance were created.⁶⁵ The newly acquired status of the workers was broadly announced and carried along a powerful message. The workers became a collective political subject, self-conscious of its place and recognized by others as a legitimate claimant or at least the force of fear:

[W]e gained very much, because we became a social class, which society and government started to consider seriously. All the bourgeois parties want to please the workers with their friendship, all the journals write about workers and for workers, all attempt to win the workers. This is a great victory!⁶⁶

⁶³ Nasza deklaracja polityczna. Towarzysze i towarzyszki! Gniewiony i nękanymi przez..., ŁKR PPS, 5 Feb. 1905, AAN, APPS 305/III/35, pdt. 6, k. 18; APŁ KGP 1515 II, k. 518.

⁶⁴ Towarzysze Robotnicy! "Gorze Wam, bracia, iżecie słuchali socjalistów", krzyczy rozwyrzona reakcją rządu..., Okręgowy Komitet Robotniczy Zagłębia Dąbrowskiego PPS; Okręgowy Komitet Robotniczy Zagłębia Dąbrowskiego PPS, BN DŻS IB Cim.

⁶⁵ Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 37.

⁶⁶ Towarzysze Robotnicy! "Gorze Wam, bracia, iżecie słuchali socjalistów", krzyczy rozwyrzona reakcją rządu..., Okręgowy Komitet Robotniczy Zagłębia Dąbrowskiego PPS; Okręgowy Komitet Robotniczy Zagłębia Dąbrowskiego PPS, BN DŻS IB Cim.

Correspondingly, the grammatical structure of PPS leaflets (later PPS-Left) indicates active, conscious action on the side of workers. They also contain many calls to action directed at this kind of entity. The subject of such action is a collective of workers which decides the course of events:

Comrades! Of proletariat's own will, under the command of the proletariat the normal course of events in our cities was stopped for a few days! With a strong hand, armed with solidarity, the working class of Łódź, in solidarity with the proletariat of the entire Poland, derailed the bourgeois life, and the government and the bourgeoisie were initially hopeless in the face of the workers' dictate.⁶⁷

Slightly different rhetorical strategies of construction of the political subjects may be detected in SDKPiL publications. Here the dominant form are direct apostrophes to the workers calling for action. The postulated activities are justified with some form of normative necessity imbued in the sentence structure. These modal normative utterances (“Proletariat must...”, “One has to fight...”, “We, the workers, must be ready to the task awaiting us...”) are usually referring to a more general order of justification (the historical dynamics of the revolution, historical laws). The party is in charge to detect those laws and is a depositary of the historical course of events. Party functionaries may detect the resulting necessary actions of the revolutionary workers. This reference to the objective historical process is complicit with the intellectual horizon of the Second International, of which SDKPiL was a faithful adherent.⁶⁸ Within middle socialist echelons of socialist parties, the laws recognized by scientific socialism and predicted course of events described by Marxism were often the legitimization of current decisions. Bearing a seal of highly revered science, it was a quite effective strategy of building a convincing program and mobilizing for action among European Socialist left those days.

This way of thinking may seem too complicit with stiff theorems and the arbitrary will of the party functionaries imposed on the workers' constituencies. This rigidity notwithstanding, one has to

⁶⁷ Do łódzkich robotników. Towarzysze! Zwoli proletariatu..., ŁKR PPS, 8 Feb. 1905, APL PGZZ, 390, k.251-252.

⁶⁸ Dave Renton, *Classical Marxism: Socialist Theory and the Second International* (Cheltenham: New Clarion, 2002).

remember that it was the SDKPiL which attempted most vehemently to build a horizontal bond with the workers through the employed mode of communication and inner-party “workerist” ethos. For instance, the party writers unanimously and unambiguously recognized the agency of workers and constructed a sense of unity above the inner-party occupational divisions. The corresponding language of the leaflets prevalently used forms suggesting the identity of the writer and the reader, and the (working class) addressee was not distinguished from the (intelligentsia) writer or the party leadership. In these leaflets the “we” form encompassing all of these groups is the most common. Apostrophes are directed to the workers, but the body text constructs the common, working class-based task of the revolutionary struggle, of which the writers are part and parcel. This structure is epitomized in passages like the following, from a 1st of May proclamation:

Against these hostile efforts, against the tight-knit phalanx of the counterrevolutionary elements, which aim at reversing this great movement of the people to the old flume, which wants to solidify for ages the bondage and exploitation, we the workers, we revolutionaries, swordsmen of light and freedom, on the first day of May we utter our proud slogans.⁶⁹

In critical moments, the leadership of the socialist parties did not abstain from the form of command or even direct order. There were two sorts of circumstances when it indeed happened. The leaflets opposing the draft used the strong form of order, thus mimicking and counterbalancing the military style of the due government announcements. The same occurred when the socialists were trying to impede anti-Jewish pogroms. This testifies the determination in preventing anti-Jewish atrocities but simultaneously signifies the fact that allegedly some of the receivers indeed required such a strong slap on the wrist.⁷⁰

Contrary to its exceptional status in socialist printings, the poetics of command and creation of

⁶⁹ Towarzysze! Robotnicy! Zbliża się dzień 1 maja, dzień święta robotniczego i demonstracji rewolucyjnej..., ZG SDKPiL, 1 April 1907, in Daniszewski, *SDKPiL w rewolucji 1905 roku: zbiór publikacji*, 545–547.

⁷⁰ Wiktor Marzec, “Under One Common Banner. Antisemitism and Socialist Strategy during the 1905-1907 Revolution in the Kingdom of Poland,” *Patterns of Prejudice*, no. forthcoming (2016); Michał Śliwa, “The Jewish Problem in Polish Socialist Thought,” *Polin*, no. 9 (1996): 14–31.

hierarchical distance are common in nationalist publications. On the grammatical level it is clearly visible that for the NZR writers (mostly non-working-class members of National Democracy), the workers had a neatly delimited, prescribed place in their imagined social structure. Correspondingly, the authors of the NZR publications aimed at a recreation of this structure among their readers. In order to reach this effect, the language of the leaflets utilizes command and order, and creates a didactic relationship to the workers, who are methodically separated from the writing subject. The pragmatics of language create distance through deployment of the second person plural and imperative clauses. An exemplary statement might be as follows: “Brothers! Do not let the foreign soldiers harass you”.⁷¹ Simultaneously, a sense of belonging to the higher-order community is suggested. This community, however, is hierarchically differentiated. This separated groups of different status, power and political visibility, and the workers remained on its lower levels. The social distance grew when the leaflet directly instructed workers from the position of knowledge and power, as in the following example.

We warn you that nowadays when industry and commerce are in disarray, we cannot gain any concessions from the capitalists. We warn you that strikes won't give anything apart from ultimate poverty and despair. We warn you that today there is poverty and misery all over the country because of the work of the socialists.⁷²

In similar instructions, the political imagination of National Democracy is revealed. Even if the social distance between the writers of intelligentsia and the working class readers was similar in all political parties, it was the national democratic discourse which created the steepest hierarchy. It presupposed a hierarchical social order, establishing the vertical relationships between groups composing the unity of an organic but functionally specialized nation. Thus, the integration of

⁷¹ Bracia robotnicy! Trzy tygodnie minęło, jak zaprzestaliście pracować, Koło Okręgowe Stronnictwa Demokratyczno-Narodowego w Łodzi, in Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 2*, 205–206.

⁷² Baczność, Bracia Robotnicy, bo grozi nam nowe niebezpieczeństwo! Przez cały rok ubiegły 1905 obiecywali nam socjaliści we wszystkich swoich gazetach, odezwach i przemowach poprawę losu..., Komitet Okręgowy Narodowego Związku Robotniczego na Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, Feb 1906, BN DŹS IB Cim.

community through expressions as “brothers” is immediately supplemented by classification into groups hierarchized according to their access to power, knowledge and political position, where the workers are subsumed under the intelligentsia control. These hierarchical orders of speech and corresponding discipline over the working class receivers were soon to gain prominence as National Democracy and the NZR obtained a growing presence in working-class politics.

Considering the grammatical means of conveying action and agency, there is also a noticeable temporal change. The revolution encompassed periods of upsurge and decline, multiplied repressions and relative respite. The presence of different modes of speech in the leaflets varied accordingly; the pragmatics of language registered ups and downs of the revolutionary process. In the initial phase, the socialist parties were not controlling the course of events. However much they wanted to be seen as doing so, in reality they were relatively impotent in the face of the power of the revolutionary streets. Merely one day after Bloody Sunday in Petersburg, the SDKPiL leaflet asserted that “now over those crowds to a growing extent hovers a leading spirit of the Social Democracy”.⁷³ The statement was manifestly untrue. However, if such a declaration were able to resonate with popular emotion, it might bring an immense growth of influence for the party. The working-class protest might be inscribed into the social-democratic program, thus presenting the party as a main proxy of the workers' struggle. This stimulated shop floor identification with the organization.

Subsequent leaflets of all socialist parties were important vehicles of subjectification through openly proclaiming working class agency and confirming it on the grammar and language level. During the biggest wave of strikes (January and October 1905) there were numerous examples of praising the possibility of action and the power of organized workers. Almost every sentence of the leaflets those days is assigning an active role and revolutionary dignity to the workers. This must have had a strong appeal to those lacking recognition. In those texts, workers were no longer a passive mass either condemned because of moral deficiencies or at best deserving pity, as prerevolutionary

⁷³ Strajk powszechny i rewolucja w Petersburgu, ZG SDKPiL, 23 Jan 1905, in Daniszewski, *SDKPiL w rewolucji 1905 roku: zbiór publikacji*, 65–67.

bourgeois press presented them (I investigate this issue in detail in Chapter 4). In the leaflets they now became an active part, changing the course of history. One of the proclamations announced:

The working people of the whole Russia and Poland rose to fight for freedom and rights! (...) We made the first revolutionary step already, we won the first huge victory over the tsarat! We have awoken the entire Polish proletariat to action in solidarity. The general strike, this massive demonstration of our powers, shook the tsarat. In order to overthrow and crush it entirely, a huge amount of work and still, enormous sacrifice is needed.⁷⁴

The leaflets explicitly acknowledged the performative dimension of struggle – the fact that it is in action when political subjects capable of further steps are forged. Thus, it was argued that political freedom has to be secured through revolutionary practice and not donated from above; the latter only results in confirming the passivity of its receivers. “The popular Freedom can not be and won't be introduced by the tsar himself or a government pack of thieves. The true Freedom could be introduced only by the people.”⁷⁵ This writer, perhaps Rosa Luxemburg herself, is here applying the conceptualization of political freedom, which was acquired through struggle, to agitational material.⁷⁶ For sure, the leaflet corresponded with the theoretical premises of the SDKPiL. Therefore, not only explicit slogans but also deeper conceptual structure of political agitation paralleled broader theoretical thinking of a given party.

The mode of action ascribed to various groups fluctuated along the change in revolutionary dynamics. In moments of upsurge, the calls for action were intensified, in phases of relative calm, but when certain concessions were already gained, this was replaced by performative constataions that acknowledged the state of affairs they were intended to produce.⁷⁷ Now it was the “tsarat” which was

⁷⁴ Towarzysze i Towarzyszki! Lud roboczy całej Polski za pomocą olbrzymiego strejku powszechnego, Warszawski Komitet Strejkowy PPS, 12 Feb 1905, BN DZS, IB Cim.

⁷⁵ Towarzysze! Robotnicy! Lud roboczy całej Rosji i Polski powstał do walki..., Łódzki Komitet SDKPiL, 29 Oct. 1905, in Daniszewski, *SDKPiL w rewolucji 1905 roku: zbiór publikacji*, 258–259.

⁷⁶ This aspect figured prominently in Luxemburg's theoretization of the revolutionary movement made on the spot, above all in short but theoretically sound correspondences, see Róża Luksemburg, *O rewolucji. Rosja 1905, 1917* (Warszawa: Książka i Prasa, 2008). I have presented analysis of those writings elsewhere, see Wiktor Marzec, “Róża Luksemburg i konstruowanie podmiotu politycznego,” *Praktyka Teoretyczna*, no. 6 (2012): 155–81.

⁷⁷ Na 1 maja 1906 Niech się nasze święto święci... Robotnicy! Lat temu 14 w dzień 1 Maja..., Komitet Łódzki SDKPiL,

rendered passive in the leaflets, or if it acted actively it was just a swan song of a dying monster desperately trying to fight back. Some of the leaflets announcing the new might of workers were not entirely wrong. There was a change going on, and such sentences started for a while to not merely call for change but also describe the actual situation around:

There is nothing of the past humility, pusillanimity. The awareness of past harms is awoken, the need for hard struggle with capital grows, the idea of solidarity encompasses broader circles in the name of the workers' cause.⁷⁸

This surge in working-class self-assertion, however, was constantly undermined by conflicting party programs. Initially, they merely induced ambiguity, but later their unintended consequence was also a surplus communicative competence of workers. But after all, they ushered in a high level of intra-class warfare between the adherents of conflicting political identities, and additionally between different ethnicities populating the cities.

The route of political differentiation

After the first phase of a general resistance against further participation in a system of oppression, the amorphous refusal gradually changed its character. The aforementioned hardships of the working class life and growing popular opposition provided opportunities for political mobilization initially championed by the PPS.⁷⁹ The impetus for a proletarian riot began to crystallize by means of opposition towards an all encompassing systemic oppression, which found its initial

April 1906, in Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 2*, 182–184.

⁷⁸ Do robotników fabryki Biedermann. Towarzysze! Mało jest chyba fabryk, gdzie postawa zarządu..., ŁKR PPS, 5 July 1906, in *Ibid.*, 272–274.

⁷⁹ It is worth mentioning that shop floor activism was much more infiltrated by the left wing of the PPS, so the disseminated agenda was even more consciously socialist and economically focused than the general picture of the PPS in those days may have suggested. On earlier, already indicative, divisions concerning factory activism, see Jan Kancewicz, *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna w latach 1892-1896* (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984), on growing differences and ultimate split in the PPS see Żarnowska, *Geneza rozłamu w Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej, 1904-1906*. Because of this withdrawal of the significant part of the PPS from factory agitation, the general influence of the party on workers was initially severely limited, see Crago, "The 'Polishness' of Production: Factory Politics and the Reinvention of Working-Class National and Political Identities in Russian Poland's Textile Industry, 1880-1910."

incorporation in the Tsarist regime. A proclamation of another major combatant for workers' political commitments, SDKPiL, might be deemed typical for this early phase: "Our biggest enemy, and the protector of all our enemies, is the Tsarist regime. We shall direct our struggle against it!"⁸⁰ In the beginning, almost every political program was at least partially based upon a rising hostility against the Tsarist regime.⁸¹ Indeed, such a negative reference was an important factor of its coherence and intensity in the first phase, although it is not clear to what extent conscious an anti-tsarist political agenda was directly at play among workers. Suffice it to say that initially, among socialists, as well as among the industrial bourgeois, the strike was interpreted as a political expression of resistance against the autocracy.

The very articulation of a voice of refusal and a partial recognition of this act as legitimate in a broader social context certainly was a milestone. After this first achievement, the economic demands gained more significance, aiming at a more concrete utilizing of the mass political action. These struggles also won partial success, but this success severely affected the character of subsequent strike waves – the support, or just acceptance, by non-proletarian social strata diminished or entirely disappeared. The negative unity against the occupant receded to give place to an antagonism defined in economic terms, due to successful economic claims inducing further ones and the ideological work of socialist parties of all denominations as well. The bourgeois was relocated in its political position and included in a group that was hostile towards proletarian demands; the division not of "the people vs. the foreign invader" but "the people vs. the regime of exploitation (the Tsar along with capitalism)" began to organize the political field at the midpoint of 1905.

The social composition of the local bourgeoisie played an important role in this transformation. Although it was a very heterogeneous group, during this reconfiguration it was clearly defined in economic and not ethnic or national terms by its opponents. It was certainly important that German or Jewish entrepreneurs were not necessarily sharing anti-Russian attitudes held among the Polish

⁸⁰ Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 1*, 104.

⁸¹ Żarnowska and Wolsza, *Spółeczeństwo i polityka*, 5–6.

elites. As a result, they found it easier to cooperate with the tsarist administration in anti-labor policies, using military squads in factories not excluded. It was, therefore, easier to reclassify them as a part of the regime of exploitation along the Russian state.⁸² Thus, the ethnic component was active negatively (not providing a national or ethnic solidarity in practice and perceptions) but it was not significantly played out as a possibly anti-Semitic undertone of class-based discourses.

Meanwhile, the programmatic offers by socialist parties (SDKPiL, PPS, but also Bund) and different sets of political identities demanded special procedures aimed at relational differentiations, especially in the context of rhetorical presentations to agitated workers. During mass-meetings in factories, speakers competed with each other, fighting with argument, and referring to the emotions of the gathered crowd of listeners. Usually, they concentrated on the basic, easily perceptible differences in political programs, or referred to various types of affiliations precious to workers, as described in Chapter 1.

SDKPiL unanimously called for class unity convincing the audience that the time of victory could be approached only by “ties between workers of all nationalities”.⁸³ In comparison, PPS promoted the postulate of rebuilding a Polish nation state while acknowledging the principle of class struggle, the struggle of proletariat against bourgeois.⁸⁴ Among its members, there was no concord about the means of bringing socialist independence into reality, or about possible alliances between different nations and classes. Although such a proposition, due to this double delimitation, potentially excluded some groups, it still appealed to many, meeting their hybrid and multiple identity of a Pole-proletarian (though PPS worked also among Jews). Parties federating the Jewish proletariat, also numerous, attempted to find a place for a distinct religious, national, or linguistic, identity.⁸⁵

⁸² For an intersection of class and national politics (which for a long time was more anti-German than anti-Jewish!) see Crago, “The ‘Polishness’ of Production: Factory Politics and the Reinvention of Working-Class National and Political Identities in Russian Poland’s Textile Industry, 1880-1910.”

⁸³ Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 1*, 239.

⁸⁴ Jan Tomicki, *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, 1892-1948* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1983), 77.

⁸⁵ Zimmerman, *Poles, Jews, and the Politics of Nationality the Bund and the Polish Socialist Party in Late Tsarist Russia, 1892-1914*; Hoffman and Mendelsohn, *The Revolution of 1905 and Russia’s Jews*; Ury, *Barricades and Banners*.

As a result, the controversies concerned in most of the cases the national question, relationship between nation state and socialism, principal goals such as autonomy or independence, and appropriate means as cooperation with Russian socialists or a separate struggle (as supported by SDKPiL and PPS, respectively). The opinion on current tactics also diverged, with PPS being much more inclined toward military-style action against tsarist officials performed by dedicated squads, and SDKPiL strongly opposing it in favor of the mass mobilization of factory workers in a party-led movement. Sometimes forthcoming strike days were announced deliberately in order to differentiate one socialist party from another, and not as an outcome of a broader political strategy. Of course, that brought some confusion and weakened the party's influence among workers as well as attenuating the overall political struggle.⁸⁶ Tensions emerging from the necessity of demarcating identity also grew inside parties; in SDKPiL it was mainly polemics about Rosa Luxemburg's theory of "organic incorporation", and in PPS disputes concerned the increasing tendency towards a national-independence military struggle and differences in the attitude towards class struggle. This conflict eventually lead to a split in PPS: PPS-Lewica ("the Left") and PPS-Frakcja Rewolucyjna ("Revolutionary Faction") emerged as the outcome.⁸⁷ Thus, the fragmentation of the socialist movement increased.

The formal characteristics of the political discourse of the parties evolved accordingly. Already before the revolution the socialist parties published polemics in their more theoretically-oriented journals. Even if using the same concepts and basic premises, the assumed forms of community or meaning given to the events were different. For instance, when SDKPiL materials present the June barricade fights in Łódź, they describe them as part and parcel of the broader, historical process of the revolutionary struggle of the international proletariat. PPS in turn, narrativized the events as an outburst of riot in response to the tyrannical tsarist oppression. Thus, the perception of events differed.

⁸⁶ Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim*, tom 2, 142.

⁸⁷ Żarnowska, *Geneza rozłamu w Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej, 1904-1906*. A sophisticated analysis of difference in political thinking behind the split is presented in Possart, *Struktury myślenia teoretycznego a kontrowersje ideologiczne: polemiki w publicystyce PPS w okresie rozłamu 1906-1908*.

In the first case, the presentation was complicit with the socialist orthodoxy of the Second International. In the second case, it was framed according to the insurrectionist tradition of the PPS, eager to stress the oppressive and foreign character of the tsarat, against which the socialist Poles should direct their blows. Another example is the bifurcation in the meaning assigned to the concept of socialism examined before.

Such a fragmentation also triggered a necessarily self-reflexive attitude to one's own discourse. The differences in defining the terms and framing the reality around them were obvious for the writers and at least some of the readers.⁸⁸ Thus, texts had to incorporate this in their own argumentative structures, utilizing much more advanced forms of inter-discourse than any simple presentation of the party program on a particular issue.⁸⁹ Consequently, leaflets, and above all, party press used self-reflexive explanations of differences between programs and concepts as their building blocks. They were supplemented with ironic re-appropriations and mocking of the opponent's position or well-advanced forms of sarcasm. At least to some extent the reading competence of the audience had to follow, otherwise such articles would become completely impenetrable and useless for agitation.

To complicate the situation even further, the positions of the parties switched. For instance, socialist parties initially unanimously boycotted the Duma elections but later SDKPiL decided to take part in the next round (after the Tsar dissolved the first Duma) for agitational purposes. Adding insult to injury, at the beginning the party leadership was hesitant to even make the final decision. Correspondingly, the coverage of Duma elections had to explain the entire process, give arguments for changing the decision and maintain credibility among the workers. All the decisions were extensively justified and the leaflets contained abundant explanations about rejected political institutions and their more desired alternatives.⁹⁰ Tactical moves did not always correspond to strategic goals, however. Nonetheless, both types of action might have unintended consequences

⁸⁸ Łęczycki, *Mojej ankiety personalnej punkt 35*, 66; Rudnicki, *Stare i nowe*, 408.

⁸⁹ Marc Angenot, "Social Discourse Analysis: Outlines of a Research Project," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 17, no. 2 (2004): 199–215, doi:10.1353/yale.2004.0008.

⁹⁰ The self-thematization as a feature of modern political languages is described in Steinmetz, *Political Languages in the Age of Extremes*, Introduction.

stimulated by these self-reflexive explanations. They significantly contributed to the advancement in the communicative competence imbued in the printed communication.

These processes entered a new phase where the nationalists started to rival socialist parties in mobilizing workers. Rosa Luxemburg, not only an acute analyst of the revolution but also a prolific author of many SDKPiL materials herself, noted in private correspondence:

Now the epoch when the positive views of the party might be just exposed in an agitational form is gone. Now every issue is a subject of the inter-party struggle. Moreover, it is an anachronism to limit this struggle to the PPS as the old custom would suggest. Now, while writing an article on autonomy [of Poland within Russian empire] one has to consider not only PPS but in equal extent ND [National Democracy] and PD [*Postępowa Demokracja* – Progressive Democracy, roughly the liberals], and even the conciliatory party [*Ugodowcy*, conservative faction aiming at negotiations with the Tsar in a hope of gaining some concessions for the Poles]. All their movements need to be taken into account.⁹¹

As a mirror process, the nationalist publications were initially uttered in the minority context. They had to constantly present the supported position as referred to other ones. Only slowly was it possible to move on from gentle suggestions that the socialists were mistaken or manipulated, to outright attack. Nevertheless, all the time the uttered arguments had to critically resonate with the same grievances and basic demands of working class life. For instance, there was argument against strikes; some posited that better wages might be acquired through cooperation with the Polish factory owners. When nationalists remained a timid contender, the intra-class animosities were still not a big deal, and despite the huge ethnic, religious and national differentiation of the urban population, the inter-group conflict had not been played out yet.

Those days, socialist parties unanimously called for the joint action of Polish and Jewish

⁹¹ Rosa Luxemburg's letter to Leon Jogiches-Tyszka, 26-27.10.1905, in Róża Luksemburg, *Róża Luksemburg: listy do Leona Jogichesa-Tyszki. 1908-1914*, Biblioteka myśli socjalistycznej, t. 3 (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1968). Examples of this pluralization and polemicization in socialist press, see for instance *Narodowa Demokracja a klasa robotnicza*, "Robotnik", 15 June 1905, No. 7; *Skłon sympatykiem socjalistów, Margraskij narodowym demokratą*, "Robotnik", 7 Aug 1906, No. 161; "Czerwony sztandar", 5 Jan. 1906, No. 37; *Dajcie sobie buzi*, "Czerwony sztandar", 11 Apr. 1906, No. 60; "Czerwony Sztandar" published also an entire cycle accurately describing and mocking the nationalists, *Z obozu hańby narodowej*.

workers, with PPS recognizing rights of both groups, and SDKPiL suggesting their common class identity.⁹² Such calls for battle were largely successful and workers of all origins marched together and acted in solidarity, celebrating the fallen victims from both groups.⁹³ Only sporadically did the socialists warn the workers in the leaflets that the proletarian unity and solidarity with Jewish comrades should be kept, in case Tsarist emissaries attempted to induce anti-Jewish unrest.⁹⁴ The tsarist government was explicitly credited with fanning antisemitism.⁹⁵ The fear of such a danger seemed predominant and similar voices intensified after the attempts to initiate pogroms unanimously associated with tsarist provocation.⁹⁶ Apparently, even though Russian officers already associated socialism with the Jews, they failed to convince the socialists themselves and their proletarian disciples. Moreover, their attempts were met with indifference by the workers and with an ironic re-appropriation by the socialist writers. For instance, the following PPS leaflet explicitly acclaims a lion's share of Jews sacrificing their life for the workers' cause:

The government is angry with the Jews (...) because the Jews take an active share in all revolutionary movements and do not spare their blood. (...) This Jewish blood, which melted with Polish and German flowing into street sewers of Łódź, this blood demands only one hatred – against the tsarat.⁹⁷

⁹² Leaflet of Łódź Committee of the PPS, July 1905, in: Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 2*, 371–72.; Leaflet of Head Committee of the SDKPiL, May 1905, in: Daniszewski, *SDKPiL w rewolucji 1905 roku: zbiór publikacji*, 165–66.

⁹³ Report of the policeman of Łódź, 21 June 1905, in Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 2*, 230–231.

⁹⁴ Leaflet of the Central Committee of SDKPiL, 14 November 1905, in: Daniszewski, *SDKPiL w rewolucji 1905 roku: zbiór publikacji*, 263–65.; Leaflet of Łódź Committee of the SDKPiL, 9 November 1905, in: Ibid., 271–272; see Leaflet of Workers Committee of Dąbrowa basin of the PPS, no date, APŁ, PGZZ 12/1905/I p. 598-599.

⁹⁵ Leaflet of Peasant Department of the PPS, 1 November 1905, APŁ PGZZ 12/1905/II p.1204-1205; see also: Łódź Committee of the PPS, 24 December 1905, APŁ KGP, 1553, p.3.

⁹⁶ The role of the tsarist secret services or even police and military in pogroms during the revolution was later confirmed, especially concerning the “closest” events in Białystok and Siedlce in 1906, see Paweł Korzec, “Pogrom białostocki i jego polityczne reperkusje,” *Rocznik Białostocki* III (1962): 149–82; Szymon Rudnicki, “Pogrom Siedlecki,” *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, no. 1 (2010): 18–39; Michał Kurkiewicz and Monika Plutecka, “Rosyjskie pogromy w Białymstoku i Siedlcach w 1906 roku,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 11 (120) (2010): 20–24; For a broader context of this time and variegated genesis of other pogroms see Shlomo Lombroza, *The pogroms of 1903-1906*, in: John D Klier and Shlomo Lombroza, eds., *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁹⁷ Łódź Committee of the PPS, July 1905, in: Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 2*, 371–372.

One thing is undoubted here: it was not a libel to be associated with the Jews, and claiming officially that the Jews are an important pillar of the socialist movement was not political suicide. The situation was about to change rapidly, however, with the growing presence of the NZR, tightly connected with National Democracy, on the political scene. The NZR, which was created in June 1905, was able to stably build itself simply by being around at a time of general growth in political activism.⁹⁸ After the October manifesto, when the Tsar granted some political freedoms to his subjects, political identities began to be displayed on the streets even more explicitly, as I have shown in Chapter 1. This spurred on the hostility against political and ethnic otherness, now visibly claiming a right of public expression.

The timing here is not coincidental: the beginning of National Democratic agitation among workers coincided with the rise of political antisemitism. However, I neither claim that it was the proletarian branch of National Democracy which was the sole harbinger of political antisemitism, nor do I look for the answer as to whether “elites” or “the masses” are to blame.⁹⁹ There are no simple causal connections which go directly in this or that direction. One should not replicate the elites-masses dichotomy, being undoubtedly present in the thinking patterns of the time but not sufficient as an explanatory matrix today. The issue here is a general reconfiguration of the political field, and the discursive constraints which made the rendition of National Democrats' preferred political identity impossible without the reference to the strong constitutive outside.¹⁰⁰ The construction of national unity and a corresponding nationalist proletarian identity was not an easy task. The management of fear of the Other threatening the community but simultaneously securing its unity, was the crucial step to be made. Using this negatively evaluated Other secondarily confirmed, validated and enforced already existing predilections of national democratic political leaders.

Making the national unity meaningful for the workers, although not devoid of any preexisting

⁹⁸ Monasterska, *Narodowy Związek Robotniczy, 1905-1920*, 15–45.

⁹⁹ As two paradigmatic answers to this question would suggest, see, respectively, Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*, 158; Ury, *Barricades and Banners*, 216.

¹⁰⁰ On early origins of national democratic antisemitism, see Krzywiec, *Chauvinism, Polish Style*.

elements to be built upon, was a process that had to be carried out against the everyday experience of shop floor exploitation, and the once deployed socialist mapping of the social world which had already become the common language to explain the world for the workers.¹⁰¹ Even if the same oppression could very often be coded nationally (Polish worker vs German foreman in the factory or the exploitation of German/Jewish entrepreneur), providing meaningful evidence of cross-class national unity was still a challenge. For sure the national identity of workers was not the artificial invention of the NZR and had some presence before the revolution. Laura Crago has convincingly documented its social and economic background in the preceding years. German cultural hegemony and organizational domination encouraged workers to construct themselves as working class Poles, striving for recognition of their cultural specificity (language, professional habits) and improving their job opportunities, mostly, though, against Germans and not Jews.¹⁰² Nevertheless, as a political program and coherent identity explicitly antagonistic in relation to the socialist coworkers, nationalism was an offspring of the revolution and the emergence of the NZR. Considering the range of support for the NZR among workers and the intensity of their engagement, it cannot be written off as the “bourgeois manipulation of uneducated masses” of unconscious workers.¹⁰³ What, then, did such a reconstruction of the political field and the political identities of workers look like in detail?

¹⁰¹ Marzec and Piskała, “Proletariacy czytelnicy — marksistowskie i socjalistyczne lektury we wczesnej proletariackiej sferze publicznej Królestwa Polskiego.”

¹⁰² Crago, “The ‘Polishness’ of Production: Factory Politics and the Reinvention of Working-Class National and Political Identities in Russian Poland’s Textile Industry, 1880-1910.” The general discursive framing of Polishness for a long time (till about the turn of the centuries) was rather anti-German, which can be seen, for example, in local newspapers, especially concerning the city of Łódź being under constant threat of being perceived as not Polish but foreign, German, even it were the Jews who constituted up to 1/3 of its population, see Kamil Śmiechowski, *Z perspektywy stolicy: Łódź okiem warszawskich tygodników społeczno-kulturalnych (1881-1905)* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Naukowe “Ibidem,” 2012).

¹⁰³ As the classical Stalinist historiography would have it, see Kalabiński, *Antynarodowa polityka endecji w rewolucji 1905-1907*. In Łódź NZR used to have extensive support. The local proletariat was composed of recent new-comers from poor village settlements with strong traditional values and religious beliefs. In the late 19th century, only 10 to 15 percent of inhabitants were born in Łódź, see Żarnowska, *Klasa robotnicza Królestwa Polskiego, 1870-1914*; Monasterska, *Narodowy Związek Robotniczy, 1905-1920*, 27. However, National Democratic thinking was heavily tainted by conscious obscurantism aimed at ruling over the masses, increasingly seen as a savage mob to be tempered urgently, see Marzec, “Modernizacja mas. Moment polityczny i dyskurs endecji w okresie rewolucji 1905-1907.”

The triumph of nationalism

The growth of the working class nationalism was a profound political transformation made through the medium of speech. These were “fighting words” that changed the political field.¹⁰⁴ The rapidity of the process and the step by step reconstitution of meaning given to the surrounding world testifies to the powerful role of language in the political. “We, the workers – Poles,” announced the proclamation of the NZR, “consider the national solidarity as a primary unity consolidating us together; our holiest obligation is above all to respect this solidarity (...)”.¹⁰⁵ That meant abstaining from strikes in the name of national prosperity. “We call You, then, brother-workers to interrupt occupations in factories, to firmly resist against the pressure of agitators, to hold back any manifestations, processions and, last but not least, military actions, bearing in mind the calamities it would bring”.¹⁰⁶ Initially, National Democracy and the NZR had to fight an uphill battle. To ground such a position and make forging a coherent national identity among workers more feasible, a reference to an outer enemy was of great assistance.

At first sight, a convenient enemy was at hand: Poland was partitioned under three imperial powers and young nationalism above all directed its political energies against them in order to struggle for independence in the long run. Nevertheless, a problem appeared in the very heart of nationalist attempts at political practice and mobilization. The long-present outer threat of foreign rule, which had taken away Polish independence, was the center of Polish romantic imagination¹⁰⁷ and later was inherited by the positivists.¹⁰⁸ National democrats were an offspring of this intellectual lineage.¹⁰⁹ However, it was impossible to use in the new revolutionary circumstances. The outer

¹⁰⁴It was Marc W. Steinberg who initially coined the term to comprehend the realities of the plural political field with utterances powerfully transforming the patterns of political mobilization and moral economy in Early industrial England, see Steinberg, *Fighting Words*.

¹⁰⁵ Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim*, tom 2, 174.

¹⁰⁶ Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim*, tom 1, cz. 2, 205–206; 656.

¹⁰⁷ Andrzej Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).

¹⁰⁸ Wojciech Modzelewski, *Naród i postęp: problematyka narodowa w ideologii i myśli społecznej pozytywistów warszawskich* (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1977).

¹⁰⁹ Brian Porter, “The Social Nation and Its Futures: English Liberalism and Polish Nationalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Warsaw,” *American Historical Review* 101, no. 5 (1996): 1470–92; Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*.

oppressor, as demonstrated above, during the revolutionary unrest was already a main addressee of political contention organized by the socialists.

No wonder then that the tsarist regime, although explicitly challenged by the National Democrats, was not the best candidate to secure the unity of the nation. Even though the Tsarat was a traditional enemy of the Polish national struggle from the very beginning, it was no longer an appropriate focal point of the negative unity for the newly constructed national identity of the workers. First of all, this was precisely the systemic oppression which was still attacked severely by socialists; thus, any replication of such an opposition would not allow the national democrats to differentiate themselves enough. Furthermore, and most importantly, National Democracy gradually distanced itself from any revolutionary fervor, becoming openly hostile to it at the end of 1905. Fighting revolutionary “anarchy”, managing fears of a destabilized society, and profiting heavily from the general fatigue with the revolutionary unrest, the National Democrats felt uneasy about defining the tsarist regime as the main enemy.¹¹⁰ Indeed, this would have been difficult to do while simultaneously condemning the skirmishes with tsarist troops with such intensity. Proclaiming to be main defenders of “order” and championing modern anxieties intensified by the revolutionary dislocation,¹¹¹ political practice of the national democrats to some extent converged with efforts made by the tsarist state, equally aiming at effectively governing this unrest and maintaining the existing order.

For instance, the national democrats referred to armed resistance or open street rallies as “anarchy demoralizing the spirit and decomposing national powers, or pointless riot (*ruchawka*)” and participating workers were referred to as an “unconscious mob, incapable of self-control”.¹¹² Applying all the elements normally associated with political enemies to this anarchic, chaotic and uncivilized pole of cultural signification was a logical next step. This also allowed them to effectively

¹¹⁰ This converged with a shift in Dmowski's position when he started to perceive the Russian empire as a lesser danger and an actor with whom he could tactically cooperate.

¹¹¹ Krzywiec, “Z taką rewolucją musimy walczyć na noże: rewolucja 1905 roku z perspektywy polskiej prawicy.”

¹¹² Leaflet of the Central Committee of the National Ligue, 1st of August, 1905, APŁ PGZZ 12/1905/II p.918-919, see also the leaflet of Łódź Department of the NZR, 27th of December, 1905, APŁ KGP 1553, p.6; National-Democratic Craftsmen and Workers Youth APŁ PGZZ 12/1905/I p.119

“suture” discontents of modernity to Jewishness and socialism/revolutionary anarchy. Unleashed market forces might have been added to the list of enemies equally well. Interestingly, however, capitalism largely disappeared from nationalist discourse during the revolution. The reason was a serious ideological transformation of National Democracy.

Party thinkers went a long way from popular radicalism to conservative right representing middle and affluent social strata, profiting widely from capitalist relations already common in the Russian empire, and especially its Western fringes. Although national democratic ideology used to have a strong populist content, and for a long time the nation was virtually identical with the people (*lud*),¹¹³ the turn of the nineteenth century was marked with a pivotal transformation of National Democracy from a progressive national-populist party to the new Polish right, substituting the old aristocratic formation on this side of the political spectrum.¹¹⁴ Certain reference to long deployed patterns of Polishness based on noble class ethos was necessary to avoid having to build a national identity from scratch. Thus, an initial and severe critique of the malfunctions of the Polish nobility gave way to the general pride of past Polish (noble class) glory. Consequently, the new nationalist program had to sublimate class differences and antagonisms for the sake of a new national unity, which was by no means obvious experience those days. However, nationalist programs and their relevant political mobilizations tend to be most effective when successfully integrated with some social

¹¹³ Brian Porter, “Who Is a Pole and Where Is Poland? Territory and Nation in the Rhetoric of Polish National Democracy before 1905,” *Slavic Review* 51, no. 4 (1992): 639–53; Janina Żurawicka, “Lud w ideologii ‘Głosu’ 1886–1894,” *Kwartalnik Historyczny* LXIII, no. 4–5 (1956): 316–40; Tadeusz Wolsza, *Narodowa Demokracja wobec chłopów w latach 1887–1914: programy, polityka, działalność* (Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1992); Teresa Kulak, *Jan Ludwik Popławski: biografia polityczna* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1994); Agnieszka Puszkow-Bańka, *Polska i Polacy w myśli narodowej demokracji na przełomie XIX i XX wieku (Jan Ludwik Popławski, Zygmunt Balicki, Roman Dmowski)* (Kraków: Akademia Ignatianum; Wydawnictwo WAM, 2013).

¹¹⁴ *Endeks* took the baton from the declining, incapable of facing modern challenges and appealing to broader audiences, old type, elitist conservatists (see Bogumił Grott, *Zygmunt Balicki: ideolog Narodowej Demokracji*, Wyd. 1 (Kraków: Arcana, 1995), 30; Jaszczuk, *Spór pozytywistów z konserwatystami o przyszłość Polski 1870–1903*, 286. This shift did not remain vain. Social milieus previously hostile, or at least indifferent, to National Democracy began to actively support and enter the party – during the revolution for instance, the involvement of Polish landed gentry in the party institutions grew, see Roman Wapiński, *Roman Dmowski* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1989), 157. This also opened the door for an alliance with the Polish Catholic Church, equally interested in preserving existing social order, and equally not so opposed to antisemitism, see Robert Blobaum, “The Revolution of 1905–1907 and the Crisis of Polish Catholicism,” *Slavic Review* 47, no. 4 (1988): 667–86; Ilona Zaleska, *Kościół a Narodowa Demokracja w Królestwie Polskim do wybuchu I wojny światowej* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo “DiG,” 2014).

claims.¹¹⁵ Thus, only if the nationally defined group is relatively homogenous in class terms and deprived of significant privileges or possibilities in the ruling state, can powerful social energies be created in the name of national revival. This was conspicuously not the case.

In such unfavorable circumstances an additional factor ensuring coherence of national mobilization was needed, and the “othering” dynamic not without a scapegoating supplement came to the fore. The national democratic conception of “political realism” left much space to move within the “national cause”, which might have been supported in many other ways than simple insurrection. However, in order to simultaneously retain its credentials as a nationalist movement while securing the preservation of existing social order whose chief guarantor was the tsarist state, National Democracy had to find “anti-Polish” forces other than the Russian Tsar. Undoubtedly, National Democrats could not and did not want to resign from the opposition against tsarist autocracy entirely. Nevertheless, the cohesion of the national identity had to be organized in an alternative way.

In order to establish this problematic, national unity, National Democracy did not hesitate to clearly exclude Jews, who in their discourse were previously designated the role of the Other.¹¹⁶ Earlier intellectual predilections of National Democrats were combined with a particular conjunctural situation and residue of pre-modern popular anti-Judaism to create a powerful interpretation of current predicaments and antagonisms. Ceaseless attempts were undertaken to persuade Polish workers that indeed the Jewish proletariat initiated disturbances, which negatively influenced the condition of the Polish economy and Polish workers. Moreover, National Democracy discouraged Polish workers from acting in solidarity with Jewish workers or just incited hostility against Jewish colleagues.

In the course of the revolution, the nationalists were increasingly critical of the revolutionary

¹¹⁵ Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008).

¹¹⁶ Roman Wapiński, *Narodowa Demokracja 1893-1939. Ze studiów nad dziejami myśli nacjonalistycznej* (Warszawa [u.a.]: Ossolineum, 1980), 101. See Grzegorz Krzywiec, *Szowinizm po polsku. Przypadek Romana Dmowskiego (1886-1905)* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton, Instytut Historii PAN, 2009). For an early socialist response against maturing radicals/future Endeks antisemitic predilections, see *Pobudka*, No 5, May 1889, 26; Moshe Mishinsky, “A Turning Point in the History of Polish Socialism and Its Attitude towards the Jewish Question,” *Polin*, no. 1 (1986).

surge, and the general revolutionary disorder went further – a scapegoating effect was put into operation. “The Jews” were branded as a foreign element inducing disorder in the name of its own profits and gains. Thus, revolution was allegedly made in the name of Jews: “A reason [for a strike] could always be found: (...) unfulfilled Jewish demands or the like”, unambiguously suggested one of the leaflets.¹¹⁷ This kind of Jewish interest was a hidden agenda of socialism, as the NZR leaflets and articles insinuated, thus constituting a bedrock for a “racialization” of the political difference, utilized in countless occasions later:

It is high time every worker understood that listening to any orders, without even asking in whose name and in what aim are they given, is an affront for him. Who is ordering us? Who is pretending to be our rulers? Hobbledehoyes and noisy Jewish snotnoses [*chłystki i żydziaki krzykliwe*].¹¹⁸

Not only can “the Jews” harvest the gains of the revolution but also allegedly profit from its failure. That is why they mislead the Christian workers in false unity: “Revolution (...) would be profitable for the Jews, who after our weakness and harassment could even more spread all over the country”,¹¹⁹ clarified one of the leaflets.

This line of argument was complicated by the fact that it was actually the Poles who gained some freedoms (also in the realms of language and schooling, i.e. realms very precious to the national democrats). In addition, National Democracy simultaneously looked for a language to describe the discontents of modernity, which were intensified by the revolution. It was not possible for the progressive, explicitly modern National Democrats, fighting for cultural autonomy of the nation, to unambiguously condemn neither modernity nor the cultural gains of the revolution. (Un)luckily “the Jews” fitted perfectly as a referent invested with all the amorphous negativity. Thus, they were accused of bringing modern discontents, capitalist speculation and socialist destabilization alike.

¹¹⁷ Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom I, cz. 2*, 351.

¹¹⁸ Leaflet of the Central Committee of the NZR, 1st of June 1905, APŁ KGP, 390, p. 382-383.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Simultaneously associating the Jews with socialism delegitimized a competitive language making sense of the modern world. Last but not least “the Jews” were condemned for bringing revolutionary disorder, a move that merged the dangers of a victorious socialism and a defeat of the Poles. Thus, “the Jews” could be held responsible for any disadvantage for the Poles, seen both as an imagined nation dreamed of by the nationalists, and a common people in the here and now, whom national democrats tried to convince to identify with this nation. This complex position combined contradictory elements with no obvious connection.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, it appeared to be a powerful political machine.

The success of antisemitism and the corresponding construction of viable identities may be explained through examination of the specific route of political differentiation. Certain identities and political agendas were reinforced in a process of dynamic interaction between each other and a feedback loop between political discourse and popular response, while other messages could not be spread so widely. Seeing the problem through the lens of the logic of discourse helps to explain the rapid rise of political antisemitism without referring to simple political propaganda or inherent capacities of the (Polish?) masses in revolt. Simultaneously, this approach helps to explain why it was the nationalist right who was able to capitalize on the downfall of the revolutionary enthusiasm. Not only were the nationalists able to give meaning to the perceived anarchy and collapse among the higher echelons of society, but also they could address the grievances of at least part of the dissatisfied and disappointed workers. National democratic politics of the ballot offered some perceived significance to the working class voters. Their labor unions offered perspectives of legal action, which was desired among people who were maybe at one time excited by underground militancy but nevertheless unwilling to maintain such a risky life forever – even more so in the days of harsh tsarist repression. Regardless, the initial puzzle of forging a viable identity and redefining the friend-foe

¹²⁰ On fantasmatic logic gripping the subjects, see Glynos and Howarth, *Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory*; Jason Glynos, “Ideological Fantasy at Work,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13, no. 3 (October 2008): 275–96. Concerning the phantasmatic structure of racism and antisemitism see Thomas Elsaesser, *Fassbinder’s Germany History, Identity, Subject* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), chap. 7; Philipp Sarasin, ed., *Fremdkörper* (Innsbruck [u.a.]: Studien-Verl., 2005).

distinction was only positively resolved by the intensifying leaning toward antisemitism. It culminated with outright and vitriolic anti-Semitic campaigns during the third and fourth Duma elections crowned by the boycott of Jewish enterprises in 1912.¹²¹ This was not the only paramount change within the national democratic discourse, however.

The underlying story was also a complex change in respect to the relationship between the workers and the political within nationalist thought. In the 1880s, when National Democracy was in its infancy, it was a populist radical party not only aiming for national revival but also postulating paramount social transformation in favor of the popular classes and their much more prominent place in politics. National Democracy was not capable of integrating the growing democratic tendency into its discourse and relevant practice. The result of this shortage was a turn toward discipline and an organic political imaginary, and subsequently to a xenophobic, authoritarian and socially conservative nationalistic project. Even if early proponents of the movement urged “the people” to become involved in politics and nation building, as soon as “the masses” actually went out to the streets it appeared that they would not follow the directives of their self-proclaimed nationalist leaders.¹²² This reversed the attitudes of these leaders and funneled their evolution into almost antipodean positions in comparison to their previous ideals.

As this milieu transformed itself out of a popular, democratic radicalism into an elitist, exclusionary integral nationalism, it easily became the leading force setting the tone for the reaction condemning the revolution and suppressing popular participation in politics. The nationalists limited it to a circumscribed activity under the party leadership and relegated the rest to a murky realm of

¹²¹ On the speeding up of political antisemitism, see Blobaum, “The Politics of Antisemitism in Fin-de-Siècle Warsaw”; Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism*; Ury, *Barricades and Banners*.

¹²² This transformation was analyzed by Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*. More about the early populist writings of the national democrats, see Kulak, *Jan Ludwik Popławski*; Nikodem Bończa-Tomaszewski, *Demokratyczna geneza nacjonalizmu: intelektualne korzenie ruchu narodowo-demokratycznego* (Warszawa: S.K. Fronda, 2001). A representative collection of press articles from the populist and progressive period may be found in Zygmunt Balicki, *Parlamentaryzm: wybór pism* (Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej; Księgarnia Akademicka, 2008); Jan Ludwik Popławski, *Naród i polityka: wybór pism* (Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej; Wydział Studiów Międzynarodowych i Politycznych UJ, 2012). I investigated this transformation and confrontation with the revolution as a reason for growing authoritarian tendency of the National Democracy in Marzec, “Modernizacja mas. Moment polityczny i dyskurs endecji w okresie rewolucji 1905-1907.”

irrational outbursts of mob-rule or animal instincts. This secured the long-lasting consequences and defined the overall nationalist project. National Democracy underwent an authoritarian turn, simultaneously ‘closing’ and essentializing the concept of the nation in Polish political thinking for years, and largely reversing the shift towards the subjectification of the workers within the political realm. This move resonated easily with fears of non-proletarian social strata. It simultaneously boosted growth of support for the nationalists among them, and blocked further development of proletarian constituencies.¹²³ The accompanying change in the bourgeois visions of politics and working class participation, which posed as a backdrop for this convergence and resonance is investigated in the next chapter.

Discourse in action – conclusion

In this chapter I investigated the evolving presence of speech which constituted the important change in the political. In particular, I scrutinized political leaflets as a material infrastructure of this transformation. Political publications were the main carriers of ideas and often the artifacts around which political communication revolved, since they were read aloud, debated and contested. Their functions and the agency of language were multiple and I have reconstructed several of them. As the first embodiments of political ideologies approached by many, they played an important role in disseminating new ideas. They intervened in the legitimization of the existing order by destroying the respect felt toward the ruling power and, above all, the tsar. Simultaneously, they brought in new concepts which assisted in expressing grievances and gave meaning to the performed practices. This contributed to the new cognitive mapping of the social space – the language of the leaflets allowed for the connection of personal experiences with the broader analysis of the social and political

¹²³ On the change of social basis of National Democracy see Kozicki, *Historia Ligi Narodowej: (Okres 1887-1907)*, 284–85; Wapiński, *Roman Dmowski*, 157. The supportive contemporaries also registered the change, see for instance S. Skarżyński, *W obronie Narodowej Demokracji*, “Słowo” 1907, 291, quoted in: Agnieszka Kidzińska, *Stronnicstwo Polityki Realnej: 1905-1923* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2007), 118.

situation, thus re-articulating this very experience as well.

The leaflets and proclamations consistently constructed the community of concepts and shared reference points. The repeatedly deployed and explained concepts and phrases saturated the workers' vocabulary and thinking, building the (fractured) language of modern mass politics. This included concepts related to the proletarian selves (comrades – also in the female – proletariat and proletarians, brothers in one nation), a diagnosis of the situation (capitalism, exploitation, revolutionary anarchy), political tools of change (strike, revolution), practices of public participation (debate, agitation, speech, rally, voting), political institutions (protests, manifestations, strikes, elections, parliament) and an envisioned final goal (national independence, freedom of the people, rule of the people, democracy, socialism, democratic republic). The same applies for ways of identification – envisioned communities and the imaginary institution of society (nation, the people [*lud*], society, class, proletariat). The impact of the leaflets was not limited to such knowledge dissemination, however.

The language of the leaflets had an important pragmatic dimension. As performative statements, political texts were crucial in delimiting the domain of the speakable and the doable. In the descriptions of events and calls to action, various modes of agency were encrypted. While the issuance of a leaflet with a given political content (locutionary act in writing) had certain goals such as mobilizing for action or constructing given political identity (intended illocutionary impact), the profound change it brought about happened on the side. It concerned what really happened with the receiver, and it might affect the sender or their mutual relationship as well (perlocutionary effect). Such utterances, according to a philosopher of language, John L. Austin, “produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons”,¹²⁴ and reshape a relational configuration of places, actions and appearances. Occasionally the perlocutionary dimension slips into illocutionary, as in explicit formulas indicating the empowerment of workers.¹²⁵ However, usually the performative device cannot be expressed (as

¹²⁴ Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 101.

¹²⁵ Towarzysze Robotnicy! "Gorze Wam, bracia, iżeście słuchali socjalistów", krzyczy rozwydrzona reakcją rządu...,

would be the case in a hypothetical slogan “I hereby make you a political subject who is no longer the same as before” or something similar and equally absurd). This dimension is neither explicitly intended by the senders nor immediately realized by the receivers. Nevertheless, it constitutes the change. Workers entered into the political through discourse and discourse modified its new users in a variety of ways depending on political and social imagination perpetuating respective writers and the development of the revolutionary process. I have analyzed modes of agency prescribed for the receivers in the leaflets of different parties, showing how tacit assumptions of the place of workers in society shaped political languages, becoming stable reservoirs for uttering political speech.

These political languages disseminated among proletarian readers helped to construct a community of participants taking part in the revolutionary events. This common conceptual horizon enabled hitherto passive workers to feel incorporated into a broader whole of politically active individuals whom they obviously could not know in person. Thus, to borrow Benedict Anderson's term, the language of the leaflets and political culture accompanying them were the means of building the new “imagined community” at both the general level – unified as individuals participating in politics – and as fractured members of (differently envisioned) classes or nations.¹²⁶ The proclamations had a lion's share in the intellectual and cultural transformation of workers and the creation of a new political culture of a revolutionary public.

However, the level of conflict between parties, ideologies and ethnicities, grew, with flames of hostility fanned by new contenders eager to forcefully rebuild the emerging identities. That is why in the final section I present extensive analysis of the transformation of the political field. This field was marked with a growing presence of nationalist counter-mobilization, and National Democratic antisemitism was neither an automatic activation of already-present and popular anti-Jewish sentiments due to the rise of mass politics nor a sheer creation of nationalist ideologues. It was the

Okręgowy Komitet Robotniczy Zagłębia Dąbrowskiego PPS; Okręgowy Komitet Robotniczy Zagłębia Dąbrowskiego PPS, BN DŹS IB Cim.

¹²⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

logic of discourse which ushered in a need for a negatively evaluated outsider. The Jews fitted this role due to a particular social and demographic situation and older judeophobic tendencies. Above all, this demonstrates the new power of language within the political field.

The aforementioned aspects of language action within the political could also be sequenced as dominating tendencies in subsequent phases of the revolution. This allows for comprehension of the revolutionary process in an alternative way – as a transformation of the language use within the political sphere. While none of the distinctions or described “stages” can be circumscribed neatly, it nevertheless demonstrates the changing role of language. Initially, political speech carried forms of “epiphany” and cognitive “enlightenment”; later, it brought subjectification and created new places of political utterance for the workers.¹²⁷ Parallely, the growing antagonism ushered in polemical inter-discourse and fostered additional abilities, described in the previous chapters as the democratic surplus.

The rapid change of conflicted identities and a profound reconfiguration of the political field testify to the power of language within the political. The scrutiny of functions of language sheds light on the multilevel change. It is a useful perspective to assist our understanding of modern politics “in a new key” and allow the analysis to be gauged so as to detect the empirical traces of the transforming political. The revolutionary dynamic seen in this way may also be informative in respect to the generic characteristics of the political process, as an unfolding mobilization and conflict performed in, and through, language. This conflict, however, not only affected the conflicting workers' factions; it was even more acute between the workers and those opposed to their political subjectification. The fierce negotiation concerning this issue is the subject of the next chapter.

¹²⁷ A process which one theorist calls polemicization, see Ardit, *Polemicization. The Contingency of the Commonplace*.

GONIEC ŁÓDZKI

Dziennik polityczny, społeczny i literacki

pod kierunkiem St. Książka.

WYDANIE WIECZOROWE

Sobota dziś (18 Czerwca) 1 Lipca 1905 r.

REDAKCJA: mieszka się przy ul. Zachodniej № 37
przyjmuje interesantów między godzinami 11 i 1.
nad 4 i 5 wieczorem.

ADMINISTRACJA: mieszka się w sklepie przy ulicy
Piotrkowskiej № 42. Otwiera się od godz. 9 — 2
popoł. i od 4 — 9 wieczorem. W niedzielę i święta
otwarta jest od godz. 9 — 2 popoł.

Numer pojedynczy poranny kop. 3,
wieczorowy kop. 2.

Telefon 253.

Ogłoszenia przyjmuje również Biuro Dzienników, Piotrkowska. N 103.

Prenumerata w Łodzi wynosi: Rocznie rb. 6, półrocz-
nie rb. 3, kwartalnie rb. 1 kop. 50, miesięcznie kopu-
jek 50. Za odnośnienie do domu kop. 15 miesięcznie. Na
provincyi i w Cesarstwie rocznie rb. 8. Za granicą
rocznie rb. 12.

Cena ogłoszeń: Pierwsza strona 50 k. za wiersz lub jego miejsce. Na-
stępnie 50 kop. Niekładki i reklamy 15 k. Odbiera się wycenę 7 kop.
Drobne ogłoszenia 15 kop. za wiersz.

Dla poszukujących pracy znaczne oszczędności.

Agentury: w Warszawie: Biuro ogłoszeń
G. Ungera i L. i E. Metzla i S. Kalla.
w Pabianicach, Księgarnia Ed. Kalla.
Reklamiści nadesłanych redakcyi nie
zwraca. Za artykuły nie oznaczone z go-
ry ceną, honoraryów administracyi wypła-
cać nie będzie.

Adres telegraficzny „Łódź Goniec”.

POPIERAJCIE

BIURO WYSZUKIWANIA PRACY

ul. Przejazd 16,

otwarte od godz. 9 — 12 i od godz. 2 — 6 wiecz.

Umieszcza wszelkiego rodzaju robotników
i rzemieślników, praczy, pensowaczy, sawaczki
i służbę domową.

Dla poszukujących pracy pośrednictwo bez-
płatne — pp. pracodawców zas. uprasza się
o ofiary dla biednych. 7057—0-0

Od Administracyi.

Administracya pisma naszego, pragnąc
ułatwić pośrednictwo w wyszukiwaniu
korepetytorów i w wyszukiwaniu lekcyj
w dziale ogłoszeń wprowadziła dwie ru-
bryki: „Nauka i wychowanie”

- a) potrzebni korepetytorowie,
 - b) poszukujący lekcyj.
- Ze względu na ciężkie czasy admini-
stracyi „Gonia” liczyć będzie za trzy-
krotne takte ogłoszenie tylko 20 kop., za-
równo od poszukujących lekcyj, jak i po-
szukujących korepetytorów.

7042 Administracya „Gonia Łódzkiego”

Ks. Wyrzykowski i ks. Miłkowsi
na wojnie rosyjsko-japońskiej

z ilustracyami. 7049—0-0

Listy — serya II. Cena 10 kop.

Dla prenumerat „Gonia”
tylko 7 kop.

Wagony sypialne.

Bilety okólne. 1094-r-163

W. Trepka, Warsz. Tow. Ubezpieczeń od Ognia

Zamieszkał syntaktów sprzedawanych za wyroby zagraniczne
używające wyrobu krajowego.

WIELOMA MEDALAMI
NAGRODZONA

„Botalina”

Najlepszy środek do czyszczenia obu-
wia bez szkodliwych. Nadaje najpiękniejszy
połysk, konserwuje skórę i czyni ją nie-
przemakalną. Sprzedaje się w składach
aptecznych, sklepach obuwniczych i kolonialnych.

GLÓWNA SPRZEDAŻ u

A. Osuchowskiego

w Łodzi, ulica Główna № 42.

używająca wyrobu krajowego 1208—52-24

Rozkład pociągów.

Od 1 Maja

Kolej Fabryczno-Łódzka

Odechodzą z Łodzi o godzinie 12.30, 7.10*

12.05, 1.35, 3.15, 6.35*, 8.50.

Przychodzą do Łodzi o godz. 4.35, 7.45

9.00, 10.15*, 3.40, 5.22, 8.20, 11.00.

Pociągi pocztowe przychodzą do Łodzi fab-
rycznej: 9.30, 5.22 i 8.20. Odechodzą 7.10, 1.39

i 6.10.

Pociągi oznaczone *, służą dla bezpośredn.
komunikacji „Łódź — Warszawa” (bez przesi-
dania)

Kolej Warszawsko-Kaliska.

Odechodzą do Kalisza o godz. 8.35, 11.49 4.40,

do Warszawy o godz. 9.32, 3.10. Przychodzą

z Kalisza o godz. 9.17, 2.58, 8.35.

Kolej obwodowa.

Odechodzą ze stacji Łódź-kal. a do Słot-
win o godz. 6.45, ze Słotwin do Łódź-kalis-
kiej 10.10. Odechodzą ze st. Łódź-kaliszka do Koj-
łuszek 7.10, przychodzą z Kojłuszek do st. Łódź-
kaliszka o godz. 6.20.

Uwaga. Godziny wydrukowane grubym dru-
kiem oznaczają czas: od 6 wieczór do 6 rano.

Pamiętnik

Sobota, 1 Lipca 1905 roku.

Kalendarzyk. Dnia: Teodoryka kapi.

Astronomiczny: Wschód s. 3.41, zachód 8.24

długość dnia godz. 16.45.

KRONIKA.

OGÓLNA.

○ Ze spraw fabrycznych.

W papierach ministerium skarbu — pi-
szą „Now” — zachowała się ciekawa notatka
statystyczna, dowodząca, do jakiego stopnia
nieodpowiada ustawom zasadniczym prawa
cywilnego obecne prawodawstwo fabryczne.

Ze sprawozdań inspektorów fabrycznych
za lata 1901—1902 widać, że zastosowanie do
robotników artykułu 51 o karach, karzącego
za samowolne porzucenie roboty więzieniem
do miesiąca, — otwierało możliwość szerokiej
samowoli przedsiębiorcom, będąc jawną nie-
sprawiedliwością w stosunku do robotni-
ków.

Z danych, zebranych przez ministerium
wynioskować można, że przedsiębiorcy (któ-
rym prawo to nieczem nie groziło) 8 razy
częściej wykroczyli przeciwko niemu niż ro-
botnicy, podczas bowiem gdy pracodawcy
skarżyli się na robotników za samowolne
opuszczenie przez nich roboty 1200 razy,
skarżąc robotników na samowolne usuwanie
ich z fabryk było w tym samym okresie
sprawozdawczym aż 10,000.

○ Reforma gimnazjów żeńskich.

Przy ministerium oświaty utworzono —
pod przewodnictwem członka komitetu nau-
kowego J. G. Mora — komisję dla opracowania
reformy gimnazjów żeńskich, w których bez
względnie na zmienione warunki, działają u-
stawy i programy opracowane 30 lat temu.

Komisja opracowała już nowy projekt,
który obecnie znajduje się w Komitecie nau-
kowym ministerium.

Ogólne zasady, z których wychodziła ko-
misja przy swych pracach, były następu-
jące:

- 1) Obecne gimnazja żeńskie nie dają
wyszkolenia dostatecznego;
- 2) Nie dają swym wychowankom odpo-
wiedniego przygotowania do wstąpienia do
wyższych zakładów naukowych;
- 3) Specjalna klasa 8 gimnazjów żeń-
skich, mająca za zadanie przygotowanie wy-
chowanki do działalności pedagogicznej, wo-
bec krótkiego kursu, nie odpowiada swemu
celowi.

Komisja uznała za konieczne zrównać,
o ile to okaże się możliwym, kurs gimnazjów
żeńskich, z kursem gimnazjów męskich.

Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na naukę
języków, które mają być przedmiotami obowiązkowymi, podczas gdy obecnie są zrówna-
ne z ławnicami i przesileniem — przedmiotami
nieobowiązkowymi.

Figure 5. Front page of "Goniec" from 1905. Łódź University Library

CHAPTER 4

WORKERS, POLITICS AND THE BOURGEOIS PRESS

*And after all, I say, the black, painful night full of longing will come to an end. It allegedly refuses to end, only it can't end, because in my jaw there is an ill, poisoned and carious tooth which has to be removed.*¹

In early spring of 1905, the liberal daily “Goniec Łódzki” [The Łódź Messenger] published a somewhat mysterious meditation on dreaming and awakening. The front-page article consisted of lengthy paragraphs regarding healthy dreaming, nightmares, sleepwalking and the final return to consciousness, as is quoted above. There were also short intermediary sections, pointing at the intended meaning of the entire article. These additions explained that such never-ending dreams awaiting an end, as when a troubled nightly sleep transforms itself into a hardly bearable dawn, “often happen in a life of entire generations, classes, states, nay, even nations”. Without doubt it was the Polish society that was in the painful process of awakening.

To make things easier, society could not rise out of its bedding of passivity by itself, but it had to be accompanied by a qualified dentist-physician, who “would strengthen the entire [patient's] constitution, and not some witch doctor”. The linchpin of the argument was who was supposed to be this doctor. “There is no doubt that the physician is already on duty, has taken care of the patient, and – the most important – a diagnosis has been made.” This doctor-leader was to be the Polish intelligentsia, and not the self-proclaimed fugleman – allegedly the socialists. It is indeed a time-worn allegory of the rightful political leadership embodied in a qualified physician replacing the impostor demagogues, which is known already from Plato's *Gorgias*. Its new recirculation in the above quoted article from “Goniec Łódzki” is one of the many attempts to make sense of the new situation, which had challenged all expectations about politics among the Polish intelligentsia. How the working-class

¹ *Sen i przebudzenie*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 67. All unmarked quotes below and the opening quote are from the same article. See also an analysis of this article in Śmiechowski, *Łódzka wizja postępu*, 124–25.

population should be admitted into the public sphere to raise their claims was a hotly debated topic, even if under esoteric code words to bypass the censorship.

Correspondingly, the aim of this chapter is to examine how the place of workers within the changing public sphere and assumed (usually national) polity was disputed among non-working class observers. The rapid entrance of workers into the public sphere through protest made old recipes obsolete and forced all voices to adapt. The revolution posed a challenge to the hitherto established ways of comprehending workers, work, their relationship to society and the political sphere. This comprehension had never been delimited by a rigid set of ideas. It was rather a panoply of positions in motion, mutually contested ideological worldviews. All of them circumscribed workers' participation in the public sphere and the right to raise claims regarding their situation. For every contender in the political field, this space for workers might have been different; nevertheless, the actual state of discussion set the limits of what could be legitimately said and done. This equilibrium definitely changed as a result of the revolution.

In order to grasp this change, I investigate the discursive resources used to tackle the “workers issue” in the press. I scrutinize particular forms of making the workers an object of discourse, or to put it another way, various *topoi* used to comprehend issues concerning workers.² I trace the evolution within these *topoi* during the revolution. Correspondingly, after a brief history of the “social question” in Poland, at the beginning of each subsequent part I reconstruct the pre-revolutionary situation against the broader background of Polish debates. Later, I follow the attempts of journalists to face the revolutionary challenge, and finally look at the aftermath of change in the long-term. The following sections are organized according to these *topoi*, as they were the main means of facing the new political contenders in the press.

The press, which found readership mostly among non-militant burgher strata, offers me insights into the complementary yet important dimension of the political. For social groups other than workers, the revolution was not an insignificant change. In this context, it is worth noting that the regime of

² An attempt loosely inspired by the path taken in Palonen, *The Struggle with Time*.

the political sits within modes of mutual political visibility of various social groupings. This regime is also maintained in language by the particular distribution of places assigned to all those groups. After all, these were still the spiritual elites who set the tone for the dominant public debate. They played an important role in actually circumscribing the limits of the legitimate political practice and, consequently, assigning those places to different actors. Understandably, in order to register the renegotiation of the political, it is not enough to examine the working class public. In the previous chapters I did this by investigating the workers' public sphere, biographical memory of the revolution, and interaction with the party agitators performed within the medium of language. These worker-centered insights now have to be supplemented by the other side, by the intelligentsia's perceptions and emotions. Only then can the picture of the political and its transformation be better seen.

The intelligentsia's perceptions of “the people” had had a long and obdurate history. The intelligentsia, a sociological particularity of Eastern Europe, introduced already in Chapter 1, played a unique role, mediating between the weak commercial bourgeoisie and popular classes, and between elite or professional worldviews and the radical ethos of a social mission. Usually the journalists might be classified as members of the intelligentsia, but this was not necessarily the case for their readers, who also stemmed from the commercial urban society or free professionals. The participation of popular classes in national public life had been imagined by the writers from intelligentsia milieus before, and these imaginations weighed heavily on the present situation. This intransigence notwithstanding, it was clear for everyone that circumstances did change. For better or worse, modern mass politics had begun, and the intelligentsia intensified its efforts to retain the self-proclaimed social leadership. How the old attitudes were confronted by the new situation, and how the place of workers within the political sphere was negotiated in the local press of the biggest industrial center in the country, Łódź, is investigated below.

Although Warsaw was the leading hub of intellectual debates, political activity, writing and publishing practices, the center of the debate on working-class citizenship and the right to make political claims was undoubtedly Łódź. Because of the much sharper contours of the social structure,

the debate on the social question assumed the clearest form there. Moreover, the provincial press was an important vehicle for the local intelligentsia's self-assertion. This concerned their local standing vis-à-vis commercial elites but also the country-wide position of the city and its intellectual elites, widely considered foreign, weak or nonexistent.³ This spurred writers to take stances in respect to the raging social problems and assume the mantle of local public opinion. Last but not least, the revolution had the most dramatic course there, and the workers were its greatest driving force. Thus, Łódź is a suitable context to investigate the changing relationship between the workers and the political.

For years, the rapid growth of the city hardly allowed the commercial press system to keep pace. Initially, the German-speaking population was more outspoken in forming local opinion, and the first newspapers were printed in German.⁴ The first Polish newspaper, “Dziennik Łódzki” [“The Łódź Daily”], was published for a relatively short time and the project was abandoned in 1892, after six years of turbulent existence.⁵ For a few more years the city had no Polish daily press. After another six years, around 1898, two competitors suddenly appeared, initially not very divergent in their intellectual profile. Both titles were equally dedicated to catering to the local enlightened public and Polish business spheres. Out of the two, “Rozwój” [“Development”] was slightly more bourgeois (both in terms of adhering to burgher values and supporting the interests of industrial moguls) and oriented toward the nationalist agenda. Soon afterward, a more progressive competitor was launched; “Goniec Łódzki” [“The Łódź Messenger”] was more liberal, and was characterized by a stronger presence of the ethos of the intelligentsia. There is little point in analyzing here the complicated histories of both, including the subsequent renaming of the latter to “Kurier Łódzki” and later, “Nowy

³ Kamil Śmiechowski, *Z perspektywy stolicy: Łódź okiem warszawskich tygodników społeczno-kulturalnych (1881-1905)* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Naukowe “Ibidem,” 2012); Wiktor Marzec and Agata Zysiak, “‘Journalists Discovered Łódź like Columbus.’ Orientalizing Capitalism in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Polish Modernization Debates,” *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 50 (2016): 235–65, doi:10.1163/22102396-05002007.

⁴ Janina Jaworska, “Prasa,” in *Łódź: dzieje miasta do 1918 r.*, ed. Jan Fijałek et al. (Warszawa: PWN, 1988); Monika Kucner, “Prasa niemiecka w Łodzi 1863-1939,” in *Niemcy w dziejach Łodzi do 1945 roku*, ed. Krzysztof Kuczyński and Barbara Ratecka (Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2001).

⁵ Zygmunt Gostkowski, *Dziennik Łódzki w latach 1884-1892: studium nad powstawaniem polskiej opinii publicznej w wielonarodowym mieście fabrycznym* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Finansów i Informatyki, 2008).

Kurier Łódzki” [“The Łódź Courier”, and “The New Łódź Courier”].⁶ Instead, I focus on the particular role the language used within this plural press system played in the reconstruction of the political.

What determined the rendition of the political were tacit rules of speech enacted and maintained by every single utterance.⁷ Such an approach is informed by a general assumption that language not only reflects social reality but actively constitutes it. It is in language where relations of power, modes of agency, and access to public representation are not only described, but also created. This assertion was most outspokenly expressed within the tradition of critical discourse analysis.⁸ Thus, I see press accounts as speech acts (utterances carrying a performative capacity) – the more solid the more repetitive it is.⁹ Henceforth, particular expressions, when repeated, form relatively stable ways of writing about particular objects. Newspaper language can be seen very much as a “social semiotic”, which, in its generic range, draws particular social groups into particular styles of presentation.¹⁰ Such coagulated forms of discourse have the capacity to reproduce social relationships with considerable power. Analogously, they are capable of changing these social relationships. Social and political situations might be modified by a particular set of utterances or a patterned presentation of a given discursive object.

Having said that, I assert that the role of newspapers is not limited to creating the “imagined

⁶ See, respectively, Jan Chańko, *Gazeta “Rozwój” (1897-1915): studium źródłoznawcze*, Acta Universitatis Lodziensis: Folia historica (Łódź: Uniwersytet Łódzki, 1982); Śmiechowski, *Łódzka wizja postępu*. For an overview see Kamil Śmiechowski, “Początki prasy łódzkiej. Dziennikarze i wydawcy,” *Kronika miasta Łodzi*, no. 3 (2016): 7–16.

⁷ While analyzing those papers, I deal with a delimited corpus of sources with traceable origin and often known authorship. Nevertheless, I focus on impersonal rules according to which particular discursive object is made present. Thus, I usually omit authors' personal details and the internal politics of writing within a particular publishing house and the like.

⁸ From abundant literature within this heterogeneous field, see for instance *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Introducing Qualitative Methods (London ; Thousand Oaks [Calif.]: SAGE, 2001); Teun A. van Dijk, *Discourse and Power* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). In detail on media coverage and the press see Teun A. van Dijk, *News As Discourse*, Routledge Communication Series (Taylor & Francis, 2013).

⁹ Therefore I try to push the methodological sensitivity entrenched by the so-called Cambridge school in the history of ideas to the direction of more abstract analysis – while I maintain interest in the performative aspect of discourse, I am not very focused on particular entanglements of current polemics. Methodological declarations of this approach may be found in Skinner, *Visions of Politics*; Quentin Skinner, “Rhetoric and Conceptual Change,” *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought* 3 (1999): 34–63.

¹⁰ Michael A. K Halliday, *Language as a Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning* (Baltimore: University Park Press, 1977); See also Allan Bell, *The Language of News Media*, Language in Society (Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991).

communities” of assumed readers. There is widely-shared consensus among scholars of the social role of the press that “newspapers have always created readers, not news, as their primary function”.¹¹ As seen in the pioneering contribution by Benedict Anderson, in the realities of Russian Poland the nation remained an important category of polity being forged in the press in real. Newspapers constituted a part and parcel of the local “print capitalism”, and they delivered a crucial pillar of the nation-building project, even more profound within the state-less imperial context. Whereas this social embedding remains important, what is even more significant is the reproduction of an entire social imaginary, or an overall vision of polity and groups constituting it.¹² In other words, the imagination of polity created and maintained by the language of the press is not only about the community of readers but also about divisions separating the readers from the other social groups, and the tracing of the boundaries of presence (or imagining the place) for those groups. I examine such interventions performed during the revolution, which effectively changed the regime of the speakable and the doable within the political.

Making space for workers – the social question

European societies of the 19th century were battlegrounds of large urban populations striving for a better life. The growth of cities, swelling social problems and political militancy created conditions different than the pre-modern realities. The problem of mass poverty was an old issue; large quantities of medieval and early modern populations were constantly on the verge of being destitute. Old communal and patronage networks did not necessarily provide a satisfactory safety net. However, this problem did not affect the populations at the core of social productivity. Moreover, this situation was perceived as stable and it was believed that “it had been always like this”.¹³ Therefore, claims for better living standards had remained isolated and easily suppressed.

¹¹ Martin Conboy, *The Language of Newspapers: Socio-Historical Perspectives*, Advances in Sociolinguistics (London: Continuum, 2010), 8. On imagined communities, see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

¹² See Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*.

¹³ Castel, *From Manual Workers to Wage Laborers*, 140–49. An interesting analysis of premodern, failed riot is presented in Suter, “Kulturgeschichte des Politischen - Chancen und Grenzen.”

The situation changed with the rise of industrial production. In the beginning, recruiting a labor force from the motley crew of disaffiliated populations was a real challenge. Disciplining them to become factory laborers with pay that barely satisfied the most basic needs was hardly an easy task and unleashed repression.¹⁴ Later, however, with all the varieties of national contexts, it was not the scarcity of labor but the overabundance of people which became a problem. The urban population was no longer perpetually decimated by epidemics, and the actual living conditions in overpopulated industrial slums deteriorated.¹⁵ The situation could not last long because of the rising social tensions and a “biopolitical” challenge: the supply of a labor force not only in sufficient quantity but also quality.¹⁶ The conundrum of poverty in the heart of industrial production was soon dubbed “the social question”.¹⁷ The rising class struggle threatened severe social turmoil if not a more profound overthrow of the capitalist mode of production. In addition, the recognition of work as a source of wealth and the emerging assumption of the basic equality of all people helped to justify action.¹⁸ In this situation, various solutions for reconstruction of the social bond were debated.

It is worth asking how the question of the political presence of the working class (and, more generally, popular classes) corresponded with the economic aspect of the social question. Disenfranchisement of workers in all European political systems was a bone of contention for years. Many believed that if political rights had been acquired, it would have also been possible to solve economic grievances through reforms introduced by parliament. On the other hand, though, the elites

¹⁴ On the Polish part of this story, see Assorodobraj-Kula, *Początki klasy robotniczej. Problem rak roboczych w przemyśle polskim epoki Stanisławowskiej*.

¹⁵ Castel, *From Manual Workers to Wage Laborers*.

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, *Security, territory, population: lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana (New York: Picador/Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

¹⁷ Holly Case, “The ‘Social Question,’ 1820–1920,” *Modern Intellectual History*, 2015, 1–29, doi:10.1017/S1479244315000037.

¹⁸ The core of this argument was presented in Moore, *Injustice*. On the early debate surrounding wealth and social questions and the reconfiguration of meaning of labor, see Gareth Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty?: A Historical Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005). The long-term debate on moral economy of labor is investigated by Richard Biernacki, *The Fabrication of Labor: Germany and Britain, 1640-1914*, Studies on the History of Society and Culture 22 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). The story told by the change of concepts see Werner Conze, “Arbeit,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972), 49–109. Investigations on the beginnings of the welfare paradigm were presented, among others, in Castel, *From Manual Workers to Wage Laborers*; E. P. Hennock, *The Origin of the Welfare State in England and Germany, 1850-1914: Social Policies Compared* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); A. de Swaan, *In Care of the State: Health Care, Education, and Welfare in Europe and the USA in the Modern Era*, Europe and the International Order (Cambridge; Oxford: Polity Press; In association with B. Blackwell, 1988).

feared that masses of paupers with voting rights could fairly destabilize any political system.¹⁹ Often, not only the general primary education but also the general alleviation of economic hardship were stated as conditions *sin qua non* for broadening the political citizenship. Correspondingly, the trajectories of electoral reforms varied. The workers' right to vote was opposed by all types of conservatives, elitist liberals and sheer reactionaries. Despite this, 19th-century Europe was indeed a scene of encroaching democratization, with significant input from initially radical organizations such as the labor movement.²⁰ The change was further stimulated by external impacts and learning from examples: governments sought adaptation, but also workers were more aware of the entanglement of the fight for shop floor issues with their political citizenship. While not necessarily immediately embodied in reformed political systems, the change nevertheless affected social imagination and patterns of recognition regarding different social groups.

All those debates did have their counterparts in Polish intellectual life and journalistic accounts. In the beginning, they were rather abstract because the vagaries of industrialization were brought into debates between conservatives and proponents of potential modernization as distant examples from abroad, usually England.²¹ Conservatives fiercely opposed industrialism because they were frightened by the dismantling of the traditional social bond. They dreamed about the development of an agrarian economy instead. The debate gained momentum with the arrival of the first serious industrial establishments. There were finally more tangible references available on the spot, and the industrial hotbeds seemed to be harbingers of the immediate capitalist future. Grounded in the agrarian heritage and the noble class rural ethos, critiques of industrialization and urbanism mushroomed. Issues of industrial capitalism were a bone of contention between conservatives and positivists for years in the Polish debate.²² Gradually the social question diffused and found its re-

¹⁹ The most prominent example being English Chartism. See Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Dorothy Thompson, *The Chartists: Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984). On liberal fear stopping the political enfranchisement in order to prevent development of collective rights of labor, see Mulholland, *Bourgeois Liberty and the Politics of Fear*.

²⁰ Eley, *Forging Democracy. The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000*.

²¹ Tomasz Kizwalter, "Nowatorstwo i rutyny": społeczeństwo Królestwa Polskiego wobec procesów modernizacji, 1840-1863 (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1991), 27.

²² Tomasz Kizwalter, "Nowatorstwo i rutyny": społeczeństwo Królestwa Polskiego wobec procesów modernizacji,

articulation in local circumstances.

However, it could not unfold for long because of the harsh censorship which blocked profound political topics. The higher echelons of Polish society hoped that problems of the urban working class would miraculously bypass Polish lands.²³ Nevertheless, the awareness of the new social class growing in numbers was slowly coming to the fore. As one commentator noted, it was high time to pay attention to those people:

whom we take into consideration so little, but they are decent, thrifty, full of solidarity and working so hard that they deserve more general attention. This is unrecognized material full of new energies, which as soon as possible should be brought to light and simultaneously enlightened.²⁴

As urban centers grew, they appeared to be quite different from the imagined benign rural industries run by the modernized landed noblemen. In sharp contrast to earlier visions, they were perpetuated by the inflow of foreign capital and not the ingenuity of the local agricultural business tycoons. The foreign origin of urban development was an object of public scorn, but at least the problem rose to prominence. It was clear that what was at stake – as one of the fearful writers warned – was “securing the future generations against the worker question, which in Western Europe swelled to the size of social ulcer which makes abominable japes”.²⁵ Thus, at first the intention was to avoid the issue, instead of addressing it. No wonder workers were seen as not holding any sway.

Simultaneously, a lot was said in order to discredit any attempts to organize workers politically. Not only were tsarist powers ruthless in suppressing early socialism, but the public elite bent over backwards to show it in an unfavorable light.²⁶ Social conflict was perceived as an aberration which

1840-1863 (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1991), 28–29. On later debates see Jaszczyk, *Spór pozytywistów z konserwatystami o przyszłość Polski 1870-1903*. About anti-modern and anti-urban sentiments, see Jerzy Jedlicki, *A Suburb of Europe: Nineteenth-Century Polish Approaches to Western Civilization*, English ed (Budapest, Hungary ; New York: Central European University Press, 1999); Jerzy Jedlicki, *Świat zwyrodniały: lęki i wyroki krytyków nowoczesności* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sic!, 2000).

²³ Bożena Krzywobłocka, “Stosunek burżuazji do klasy robotniczej w latach 1864-1879 w świetle prasy,” *Studia z dziejów myśli społecznej i kwestii robotniczej w XIX wieku* 1 (1964): 132–58.

²⁴ “Opiekun domowy” 1872, no 46, quoted in Ibid.

²⁵ “Niwa” 1877, t. XII, 953, quoted in Ibid., 147.

²⁶ Alina Golsztyńska, “Początki ruchu robotniczego i myśli socjalistycznej w publicystyce warszawskiej w latach 1876-

had to be policed and avoided at any cost. If only the dark forces of agitation had not instigated narrow-minded workers, then a natural social harmony and cooperation between workers and their “bread-givers” would have been possible. A particular form of liberalism, Polish positivism, was put together to answer the ideological void after the collapse of the insurrectionist tradition. Polish liberals understood society as an organic whole, which enabled them to easily justify the existing social stratification and economic and legal differences between the higher and lower classes.²⁷ In an organic social body there was no place for conflict between the organs.

These exercises in political imagination initially had a spectral character. As was typical for a peripheral region with European ambitions, modernity was often disputed before any serious modernization began.²⁸ Correspondingly, the individual and collective rights of workers were debated too early because of the limited presence of the working class, and too late in respect to the “Western” developments.²⁹ Addressing this asynchronicity, more militant modern ideologies replaced the positivist-liberal consensus, also sidelining the old aristocratic conservatism. A plethora of new issues rose to prominence. The soaring yet still insular industrialization led the urban, the social and the worker “questions” to be intensely debated.³⁰ There were already places in Russian Poland where capitalist modernization and the working class presence could not be questioned. One of those was Łódź, where the social question was already a hotly, if timidly, disputed topic.

1886,” *Studia z dziejów myśli społecznej i kwestii robotniczej w XIX wieku* 1 (1964): 159–88.

²⁷ It was far from accepting sheer Laissez-faireism, however it still maintained many convictions from various syntheses of liberalism and organicism. On relationship between positivism and liberalism, see Janowski, *Polish Liberal Thought before 1918*; Porter, “The Social Nation and Its Futures: English Liberalism and Polish Nationalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Warsaw.” On the discourse of nation suppressing this of class, see Modzelewski, *Naród i postęp: problematyka narodowa w ideologii i myśli społecznej pozytywistów warszawskich*.

²⁸ An interesting analysis of such a cultural situation of the emerging national press on the borderlands of the Russian Empire, with a constant oscillation of European ambitions, peripheral realities and ambiguous presence of the empire, is presented in Paul Manning, *Strangers in a Strange Land: Occidental Publics and Orientalist Geographies in Nineteenth-Century Georgian Imaginaries* (Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2012).

²⁹ See for instance “Kurier Warszawski” 1843, No. 140, 670; “Kurier Warszawski” 1850, No. 149, 800; “Korespondent Handlowy, Przemysłowy i Rolniczy” 1849, No. 86; No 87; No. 89; 93, quoted in Kizwalter, “Nowatorstwo i rutyny”: społeczeństwo Królestwa Polskiego wobec procesów modernizacji, 1840-1863, 30–31.

³⁰ On the emerging rhetoric of “questions” see Case, “The ‘Social Question,’ 1820–1920.”

Object of welfare

The issue of working class life in Łódź was addressed as part of a broader discourse on the unequal development of the city and raging social and infrastructural problems. Before 1905, the “worker question” in a narrow sense was only occasionally present in the local press. Under censorship it would have been difficult to cover such a topic more extensively. On the other hand, though, it was also impossible to entirely ignore the vast domain of urban life in the industrial city. While workers’ living conditions were occasionally present on the pages of earlier editions of “Dziennik Łódzki”,³¹ it was in the two titles examined here where workers received fully fledged consideration. Already in the opening year 1898, “Goniec” noted that “the inhabitants of Łódź from other spheres were hardly paying attention to this class and the people of the workers’ status were considered on the same terms as machines”.³² Later, in 1907, “Rozwój” reflected self-critically upon its earlier negligence: “The workers issue comes to the fore already because of the character of the city. Despite this, in our paper it might not be treated appropriately because of the exceptionally harsh censorship in that matter.”³³ Meanwhile, the working class existence was a part and parcel of the debate about urban life among external observers astonished or shocked by the Łódź realities, where people “live like scum and dregs of society”.³⁴ The country-wide and local press criticized unfair social relationships, albeit not questioning the basic tenets regulating them. Journalists were eager to expose the general ignorance, greed and lack of civility in the wild, “Germanized” tumor on the Polish land, the vices that allegedly marked the urban polity and individual capitalists alike.³⁵ Occasionally,

³¹ Some earlier researchers argued that it was not so much the case and the “social question probably did not exist” for the founding editor of the paper (Gostkowski, *Dziennik Łódzki w latach 1884-1892*, 204). Contrary opinion backed up with abundant empirical evidence is presented in Śmiechowski, Sikorska-Kowalska, and Fukumoto, *Robotnicy Łodzi drugiej połowy XIX wieku. Nowe perspektywy badawcze*, 16.

³² *Robotnicy łódzcy*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1898, No. 40.

³³ *Robotnicy*, “Rozwój” 1907, No. 245.

³⁴ Adolf Starkman, *Łódź i łodzianie. Szkic społeczno-obyczajowy* (Warszawa, 1895), 40. A representative collection of contemporary articles is: Piotr Boczkowski, *Łódź, która przeminęła w publicystyce i prozie: (antologia)* (Łódź: eConn, 2008). On broader context, see Marzec and Zysiak, “‘Journalists Discovered Łódź like Columbus.’ Orientalizing Capitalism in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Polish Modernization Debates.” On internal debates, see Agata Zysiak, “The Desire for Fullness. The Fantasmatic Logic of Modernization Discourses at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Century in Łódź,” *Praktyka Teoretyczna*, no. 3(13) (2014), doi:10.14746/pt.2014.3.3; Śmiechowski, *Łódzka wizja postępu*; Śmiechowski, “Searching for a Better City: An Urban Discourse during the Revolution of 1905 in the Kingdom of Poland.”

³⁵ On the problem of “Germandom” of Łódź in Warsaw press, see Śmiechowski, *Z perspektywy stolicy*. On the particular image of local capitalists and petty business people stemming from their inter-ethnic background, see Frank

working class life was a matter of scrutiny, and moderate solutions to be undertaken were presented.

In the meantime, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Łódź was no longer a city of workers and industrialists only. It started to attract professional intelligentsia and local multi-ethnic and multi-language intellectual elites were slowly forged.³⁶ All these people considered Łódź to be somehow their “own” city; the Polish part ardently strove to make it acceptable in front of a harsh tribunal of Polish nationalism and general humanitarian sentiments.³⁷ A number of individuals overcame many hurdles to social activism. They – as one journalist expressed it – “wished to believe that regarding aspirations, one can find a lot of them”, which could make up for “cultural traditions desperately lacking due to the city's short existence as an urban center”.³⁸ They aimed at improvement of workers’ living conditions and “fulfillment of the basic requirements for a decent, healthy and harmonious personal and public life”.³⁹ While the mainstream press still harbored the positivist paradigm, it irreversibly declined in intellectual disputes heralding the changing direction of the 1890s.⁴⁰ Positivism's fratricidal offspring, new modern social and political movements spearheaded by socialism and nationalism, tended to perceive this “alien” and “bad” city as rather a challenge. This stimulated new insight and invigorated the local debate as well. Łódź’s public intellectuals ardently participated in the debate on welfare by re-articulating previously known diagnoses of the crisis. The local debate epitomized the general modern conundrum of how to organize societies facing industrial capitalism⁴¹ and defined the future trajectories of the local social-welfare regimes.

Schuster, “Die Stadt Der Vielen Kulturen – Die Stadt Der ‚Lodzermenschen‘: Komplexe Lokale Identitäten Bei Den Bewohnern Der Industriestadt Lodz 1820-1939/1945,” in *Intercultural Europe: Arenas of Difference, Communication and Mediation* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2010); Winson Chu, “The ‘Lodzermensch’: From Cultural Contamination to Marketable Multiculturalism,” in *Germany, Poland, and Postmemorial Relations in Search of a Livable Past*, ed. Kristin Leigh Kopp and Joanna Niżyńska (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

³⁶ Jürgen Hensel, ed., *Polen, Deutsche Und Juden in Lodz 1820 - 1939: Eine Schwierige Nachbarschaft* (Osnabrück: Fibre, 1999).

³⁷ Intelligentsia living in Łódź was, from the beginning, much more socially active than Warsaw's, which is considered as more aspiring to upper-class. Iwańska, “Garść refleksji i postulatów badawczych w związku ze stanem badań nad inteligencją łódzką w dobie zaborów.”

³⁸ *Z dnia na dzień*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1900, No. 78.

³⁹ *Z dnia na dzień*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1900, No. 78. An apt example of such endeavors was the debate on housing and deteriorating living conditions, as examined in Kamil Śmiechowski, “Warunki mieszkaniowe robotników na łamach „Gońca Łódzkiego” (1898–1906),” *Studia z Historii Społeczno-Gospodarczej X* (2012): 105–20.

⁴⁰ Tomasz Weiss, *Przełom antypozytywistyczny w Polsce w latach 1880-1890: przemiany postaw światopoglądowych i teorii artystycznych* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1966).

⁴¹ For comparison, see cases of Manchester or Bristol: Martin Gorsky, *Patterns of Philanthropy: Charity and Society in Nineteenth-Century Bristol* (Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 1999); Peter Shapely, *Charity and Power in Victorian Manchester*

As has been widely documented by historians of the welfare state, a profound change in the assumed social order was indispensable for the introduction of general social provisions.⁴² As Peter Wagner comments, in particular:

post-linguistic-turn historical sociology tries to deal with these issues by again linking the major political transformations that the introduction of early social policies obviously entailed to an intellectual transformation, in this case to a rethinking of the social bond, or of 'society'.⁴³

Hence, how society was conceptualized and imagined as a whole, and what relationships between its groups, between individuals and impersonal mechanisms such as the market were envisioned and reproduced in practice, all became subjected to powerful transformations.⁴⁴

First of all, the lamented vagaries of capitalism were earlier seen as transitory, and in the Polish case also as stemming from the distorted, foreign nature of capitalism. Consequently, it was argued that they would go away as the early stage had been passed and the proper, virtuous people had taken the reigns of the market and production.⁴⁵ However, the much-lamented problems refused to go away. Commentators realized that they were intransigent products of industrial capitalism as such, and had become rather entrenched within it. Thus, they were ready to debate the possibilities of reform and intervention. Secondly, the growing awareness of these predicaments led to a certain generalization of responsibility. Individual misfortunes in capitalist production and harms experienced in the new form of life were to be re-framed as general consequences of a process one cannot individually control.

Correspondingly, it was felt that individuals should not be held entirely responsible for possible failures and harms experienced, as for instance in workplace accidents. It was then possible to argue

(Smith Settle, 2000).

⁴² On the turbulent and variegated origins of welfare state paradigm, with the important role of a discursive framing of the problem, see, among others, Hennock, *The Origin of the Welfare State in England and Germany, 1850-1914*; Swaan, *In Care of the State*; Michael Stolleis, *Origins of the German Welfare State: Social Policy in Germany to 1945* (Heidelberg ; New York: Springer, 2013).

⁴³ Peter Wagner, "As Intellectual History Meets Historical Sociology," in *Handbook of Historical Sociology* (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 2003).

⁴⁴ William M. Reddy, *Money and Liberty in Modern Europe: A Critique of Historical Understanding* (Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁴⁵ On the Polish case and debate on national capitalism of the benign nobles being able to turn even Łódź into the island of moralized order, see Zysia, "The Desire for Fullness. The Fantasmatic Logic of Modernization Discourses at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Century in Łódź."

that industrialization had transformed the workplace reality into an essentially collective one in which it was industrial life itself, not the action(s) of any individual that ushered in new risks.⁴⁶ The urban poor's dwellings in shanty-towns were no longer just temporary offshoots of urbanization or misfortunes haunting intellectually deficient and morally corrupt masses, deserving only of pity and some charity. They were seen as a problem that had to be somehow systemically overcome.⁴⁷ The situation was now perceived as structurally embedded in the existing form of life.

In a similar vein, the discontents of early industrial capitalism stimulated local journalists in Łódź to expose the traps contained in the limited responsibility of private owners. The sum of individual, profit-driven pursuits did not add up to a properly managed city. While in early Russian Poland capitalism was undoubtedly backed by the state, in the late 19th century it was a peculiar form of tsarist *laissez-faire*. As a consequence, it was much different from the capitalism germinating in states with strong traditions of absolutist welfare. There, flamboyant municipal buildings functioning for the purposes of the imperial states were growing and state-controlled population policies took care of the biological stability of the urban population. In Russian Poland, however, the functions of local government and its actual powers were mostly limited to military-style policing. It was neither willing nor able to supplement the urban social life with serious municipal management and protective institutions. And, unsurprisingly, capitalist owners were not eager to build common infrastructure such as a sewerage system, roads, and schools, on their own.

In response, the local elites were called upon to take a more active stance in the “city with tens of thousands of Polish workers, and alongside them an entirely dispersed and idle intelligentsia, feeling completely alien in Łódź”.⁴⁸ Articles in the local press executed an implicit critique of private property without control. The selfish ethos of the owners was an equally common topic. Filthy,

⁴⁶ Anson Rabinbach, “Social Knowledge, Social Risk, and the Politics of Industrial Accidents in Germany and France,” in *States, Social Knowledge, and the Origins of Modern Social Policies*, ed. Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1996).

⁴⁷ Similar transformation among local elites, press authors and reformers was described in George Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social: The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993); Andrew Lees, *Cities, Sin, and Social Reform in Imperial Germany*, *Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany* (Ann Arbor, Mich: The University of Michigan Press, 2002).

⁴⁸ *Łódź przed dwudziestu laty*, “Rozwój” 1905, No. 11.

densely- and carelessly-built houses, posing an epidemiological threat, were singled out by the proponents of the hygienist ideals. “There is the power of millions, but there are no hospitals, there are many proudly protruding palaces but there are no hygienic flats for the hard-working masses, there are trimmed gardens but no public parks”, reported one alarmed writer.⁴⁹ As the journalists looked for reasons behind such misery, they soon realized that these buildings were constructed in this way for a reason: a speculative rent-extraction focused on short-term profits drawn from the poor and downtrodden inhabitants. Some tried to renegotiate the sense of private property, arguing, for instance, that “a building in a large city is not only a property of this or that citizen, often a parvenue, who aims to draw the highest profits possible, but it is also partially a common property”.⁵⁰ It started to be a problem that “in Łódź, there are businesses worth millions gaining good profit, but there are no schools”.⁵¹ Journalists were also acutely aware of the undesired consequences of the spatial layout of the city. The aggregate of private plots and buildings did not help to solve the problems of communal life, and all public spaces or facilities, from street lanterns and pavement to non-existent urban greenery and a sewerage system, were neglected.⁵² Thus, calls were issued to take seriously one “of the long list of responsibilities of the city management” and regulate the spatial growth of the city, to “allow the growing population to settle properly”.⁵³ In constant attempts to find agencies capable of solving the problem, private investment was also re-evaluated and attempts were made to appeal to certain moral commitments of the capitalists.⁵⁴ If the industrialists had become more integrated with the local society, the common argument went, they would have undoubtedly been more eager to finance various benevolent establishments.

Philanthropic efforts were praised in the days of desperate need, when no other solutions seemed viable to improve pitiful conditions in the city. Various forms of “private biopolitics”⁵⁵ were

⁴⁹ *W sprawie kąpieli*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1898, No. 90. For comparative context and general remarks see also Pedro L. Moreno Martínez, “The Hygienist Movement and the Modernization of Education in Spain,” *Paedagogica Historica* 42, no. 6 (December 2006): 794, doi:10.1080/00309230600929542.

⁵⁰ *Budownictwo łódzkie*, “Rozwój” 1899, No. 50.

⁵¹ *Szkoły fabryczne*, “Rozwój” 1898, No. 194.

⁵² *Zygzałki*, “Rozwój” 1898, No. 215; *Drzewostan w Łodzi*. “Rozwój” 1900, No. 41.

⁵³ *W sprawie przyłączonych przedmieść*, “Kurier Łódzki” 1908, No. 535.

⁵⁴ *W sprawie kąpieli*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1898, No. 90.

⁵⁵ Marzec and Zysiak, “Days of Labour.”

seen in a favorable light, as a benign effort to somehow improve the living conditions of the working class. For example, in 1898, *Goniec Łódzki* reported as follows on a factory district built by textile tycoon Karol Scheibler for the upper echelons of his factory crew:

This is a district which in itself creates a small town. This is also the healthiest district, with many green areas, within easy reach of facilities and the rest of the city. Houses for workers in Księży Młyn, as well as the factory buildings, are decorated perfectly, both in terms of hygiene and practical use.⁵⁶

Apt as it was, this description exemplifies the endorsement of any positive change without a broader critique targeting the existing institutional order. While more systematic infrastructural projects, such as hospitals or the aforementioned district, still generated good publicity, as a result of the revolutionary turmoil the intellectuals questioned the effectiveness of such efforts.

The scale of tension in 1905 made clear that the meek measures of local civil society were not able to address the social question to a sufficient degree. The outspoken political protest of the workers and explicit claims regarding the conditions of life and work transformed the way the social question was conceptualized. The revolution encouraged new modes of critique to be expressed and more bold solutions to be debated. For instance, it was explicitly voiced that the voluntary measures better served the representation of local elites than actual social problems. They became increasingly regarded as a “capricious philanthropy”, an almost useless hobby for factory-owners' wives “who play in their own clique”, which was nothing more than the publicly-promoted “mountain which brought forth a mouse”.⁵⁷ Initially the intended answer was the intensification of similar efforts, though still grounded in principles of mercy, if not alms. Gradually, however, critics began to posit that philanthropy was more a symptom of pathological social relationships than a solution to the local

⁵⁶ *Kronika Łódzka. Księży Młyn*, “*Goniec Łódzki*” 1898, No. 114. It is worth noting that earlier the first Polish-language magazine *Dziennik Łódzki* (not of direct interest here), sponsored by Scheibler, the owner of this district, used these improved living conditions in order to discredit all other workers’ claims as inappropriate: “when we see thousands of workers walking to work and getting back every day with a bright face, we cannot complain about their miserable fate”, see Andrzej Małagowski, *Łódź–Księży Młyn: historia ludzi, miejsca i kultury* (Łódź: Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, Rezydencja “Księży Młyn,” 1998), 26.

⁵⁷ *Nasza filantropia*, “*Kurier Łódzki*” 1906, No. 6; see also *Echa tygodnia*, “*Kurier Łódzki*” 1907, No. 370; *Filantropia a potrzeby ludności*, “*Kurier Łódzki*” 1907, No. 27.

predicaments, as in the article from 1905:

Philanthropy has become such a fancy thing that [it seems that] philanthropists dress themselves and eat only to give people the possibility to earn money. But philanthropy exists only there, where poverty exists. A rich and well-organized country does not need philanthropy.⁵⁸

Similar diagnoses led commentators to postulate the creation of stable, impersonal institutions for taking care of the public good. Such a proposal encompassed the reconstruction of the alleged social bond. Not only were the poor not to blame for their hardships, but they deserved gestures of solidarity on the grounds that it was the broader economic system which drove them into their present situation. Regrettably, as one of the contributors voiced in 1907, society “was not able to create appropriate institutions”. As a result, the most “vital needs of the population are entirely neglected or they are taken care of by private institutions”.⁵⁹ Even if such a plea was not considered as a demand for universal public welfare, some assistance was deemed necessary for the greater good.

After all, some perils bred in the urban slums would without doubt also harm the affluent social strata. A contagious disease could easily spread all over the city, germinating from the dilapidated workers' housing, where “sewage-filled gutters flow across backyards with long ditches filled with swill and other filthy wastes”.⁶⁰ Such a hygienist line of argumentation about the necessity to take care of the public good was metonymically transferred onto the economic-political nexus which was staked out during the revolution. Analogously, the miserable working class district might be a source of uncontrollable social protest. Radiating from there, it would infect other social strata and finally endanger even the most detached urban elites. In the press coverage during the revolution, the pitiful living conditions were directly connected with moral degeneration and, later, political danger. The filthiness of a gutter was associated with moral decay, and contagious epidemics combined with moral illnesses: “starvation and plague will spread, poverty will grow, common despondence will increase,

⁵⁸ *Zachloroformowani*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 117.

⁵⁹ *Filantropia a potrzeby ludności*, *Kurier Łódzki*, 1907, No. 27.

⁶⁰ *Budownictwo łódzkie*, “Rozwój” 1899, No. 50

and against the backdrop of hunger and despair – immorality and felony will blossom with the most exuberant flowers again”.⁶¹ If seen in this light, both groups of social problems demanded coordinated efforts to be solved. For the first time a systemic proposal for reform emerged; one grounded in state-backed social institutions. The solution for “stupidity and greed of the powerful, the only medicine”, was a tax imposed by a more democratic state structure.⁶²

The revolution made clear that the rising problems would not go away. A growing number of commentators noticed that the previous measures were not sufficient. Thus, ideas for institutional reform mushroomed and the social bond was consciously reconstructed. The social question was not an individual tragedy writ large, and had to be addressed accordingly – but certainly not by waiting for aggregated individual efforts of the rich, which were made out of mercy or personal interest. The revolution spurred on the conceptualization of the social question as a political problem.

Object of pedagogy

Once workers descended from the heights of the abstract “social question” and “industrial squalor” to become a more tangible topic of reflection, they also became objects of moral supervision. Their general mores, drunkenness, and immodest living were scrutinized in the broader framework of moral indignation targeted against vices of industrial cities. Such a city fostered materialist attitude which among workers “eliminates personal and national dignity, deforms characters and develops brutish instincts”.⁶³ Above all, however, sexual misconduct of working women was the subject of control. The young, working-class women were allegedly “spending their time on love affairs and mindless loitering”⁶⁴, which made them susceptible to immoral living. Such women were in the urban environment, and above all in the workplace, “exposed to temptations” in “the morally unhealthy atmosphere”; especially when “left without custody, they often massively derail” their lives.⁶⁵ Such

⁶¹ *Zarys sytuacji w Łodzi*, “Kurier Łódzki” 1907, No. 7.

⁶² *Filantropia a potrzeby ludności*, *Kurier Łódzki*, 1907, No. 27.

⁶³ *Potrzeby filantropijne Łodzi*, “Rozwój” 1898, No. 268.

⁶⁴ *Robotnicy łódzcy*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1898, No. 40

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

presentation reinforced the widely-held conviction that associated the urban employment of women with prostitution.⁶⁶ Admittedly, in cases of obvious abuse, the foremen were openly accused as those who:

throw handfuls of seeds of debauchery among the female workers, whispering ambiguous yet obscene words, cynical jokes or allowing themselves for dirty jokes, which make their [the females'] faces flush.⁶⁷

Indeed sexual harassment, such as coerced sexual services in exchange for factory employment, was a common practice and a hotly debated topic in public discourse.⁶⁸ While particular interventions were often targeted at individual villains such as seditious foremen, the main culprit of social critique generally remained the working class with its declining moral standards.

Before the revolution, a way out of moral degeneration was sought in a male bread-winner model and a tidy working class household with a wife taking care of the children. This was usually a desired, yet by no means attainable, ideal. Hardly any working class family could aspire to such a comfort.⁶⁹ Thus, additional assistance from those with more significant property was encouraged. Correspondingly, the new social contract which might have stabilized the situation was often modeled on restoring elements of pre-capitalist moral economy. Oddly enough, it was often proselytized by local liberals. In the Polish context, they were more hesitant to endorse the marketization of the social bond than elsewhere. By this gesture they resisted foreign social models undermining Polish traditions, as in this statement from 1899:

In the society of today it could not be other way, for everything has to have a value calculated with clanging coins (...). Such an arrangement is very comfortable for one of

⁶⁶ Katarzyna Sierakowska, "Rodzina robotnicza w Królestwie Polskim w drugiej połowie XIX i pierwszej XX wieku. Ujęcie kulturowe," in *Rodzina, gospodarstwo domowe i pokrewieństwo na ziemiach polskich w perspektywie historycznej, ciągłość czy zmiana?*, ed. Cezary Kukło (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2013), 327.

⁶⁷ *Untitled*, "Rozwój" 1899, No. 108.

⁶⁸ On the debate of the conditions of women in the factories, see Marta Sikorska-Kowalska, *Wizerunek kobiety łódzkiej przełomu XIX i XX wieku* (Łódź: Ibidem, 2001); Żarnowska, *Workers, Women, and Social Change in Poland, 1870-1939*. The importance of the problem is confirmed by petitions sent by indignant workers to factory inspectors, see for instance documents presented in Korzec, *Źródła do dziejów rewolucji 1905-1907 w okręgu łódzkim, tom 1, cz. 1*.

⁶⁹ See for instance articles in "Goniec Łódzki": *Robotnice i gospodynie*, 1899, no. 24, *Jedna z wielu*, 1902, no. 2.

the sides [of the labor contract], but does not go well with the obligations, which every employer must take into consideration as a member of society. An employee [that is worker in this context – WM] is paid scandalously little. Apart from fulfillment of his material needs, the employee should feel that his work gains recognition, he should have signals that what he is doing brings some benefit, he desires to be a part of the enterprise not only materially, but also integrated with ties of human feelings.⁷⁰

This paternalist vision of moral economy was supplemented with ideas of social amelioration. For a long time “alleviating the lot of the poor” was mostly conceptualized as a philanthropic activity, supporting those unable to keep up with modern life. Providing appropriate housing or pedagogical assistance were seen as preventive measures against moral degeneration. A dreadful threat of riots, bred in those locales, rose to prominence when the situation became serious along with the massive political upheaval on the streets of Łódź in 1905. Then, paternalistic projects were revived in the name of political control of the recalcitrant population.

In the opening months of the revolution, the press was very moderate in reporting the events and investigating their broader social contexts because of the still-present preventive censorship. Journalists, however, attempted various esoteric strategies to work in references to the ongoing events; it was essential for maintaining any credibility of their publications at a time of emerging mass protest which was shaking the foundations of the existing order. References to the working class protests were made by the extensive coverage of the parallel events abroad, such as during the January general strike.⁷¹ A few days later an extensive analysis of the state-backed insurance system for workers was presented, covering government enunciations but also clearly analyzing broader social implications of the new policies which would stimulate “cultural and ethical development and enhance consciousness among workers”.⁷² Moreover, writers were occasionally quite explicit in explaining what could and what could not be said. It was, for instance, openly explained that only direct

⁷⁰ *Chiński mur*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1899, No. 54.

⁷¹ *Bezrobocie*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 25. The article covers strikes in Rheinland and rebuts suggestions that these were Polish migrant workers who destabilized wages there. The extensive presentation of the development of strike, its reasons and strategies of the involved parties, printed just two days after the general strike in Łódź had broken out (25th of January), leaves little doubt that it was intended largely as an implicit reference helping to understand above all the local events.

⁷² *Państwowe ubezpieczenie robotników*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 27.

quotations from the Russian press, already approved by the censor, were an available source of information, before such a “readers' digest” could be presented.⁷³

Apparently, the intellectual elites were already perfectly aware of the acuteness of the situation and sought desperately to comprehend the new reality in their thoughts and writings. Timidly, they started to problematize their own attitude towards workers, becoming aware how much they neglected the social strata allegedly requiring moral leadership. The now successful socialist mobilization funneled emotions in a radical direction, not favorable for the intelligentsia. Facing such a situation, the liberal and nationalist intelligentsia was frightened by the independent activity of the people.

This independence was probably the biggest scandal. Whenever workers got the upper hand in their revolutionary activity, external commentators immediately bent over backwards to demonstrate some form of external leadership imposed on them. Clearly, the assumed hidden command and painstakingly revealed secret forms of control was a safe haven for the intelligentsia's mindset. While saving their general mode of social analysis, this thought pattern compromised any accurate insight into the situation. In a striking contrast to these allegations, in fact socialist parties tried hard, but they were not able to control the movement to a sufficient degree. Writers from the intelligentsia were simply fantasizing about the inconspicuous leadership that barely existed. Any action not compliant with the intelligentsia's imaginations was immediately associated with the intellectual, cultural and above all political, immaturity of a working class, susceptible to the foreign tutelage. The immediate answer, as in the story about the dream quoted above, was to call upon a right leadership, personified by the intelligentsia itself. In the middle of 1905, one journalist stipulated:

There could be only one answer – to get closer to the people and knock out of the hands of different social ferments the rudder over those unenlightened, hence little resistant, minds. Just as ears of grain are easily bent to the ground by a blow of wind, the poor masses (*rzesze*) follow the whispers of people foreign to the national good (*dobru krajowemu*), harming themselves and their [relatives] and their country, harming the

⁷³ *Prasa rosyjska o bezrobociu*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 31. This time there is also an editorial commentary, arguing (contrary to the common mood and usual presentation) that the background of strike is not anti-Russian but purely social. One may wonder to what extent it was a deliberate misconception intended to lower the level of state repression or an early real puzzlement of the writer – indeed both components were intermingled and in those days it was far from clear who was fighting for what.

country which they doubtlessly warmly love. (...) The situation is serious. One has to save the country against the approaching dangers. We must, as the country intelligentsia, get close to the people, who today do not trust us, one has to try to take the leadership to those broad strata.⁷⁴

It seems that “foreign” tutelage of the Polish people, i.e. the workers driven by Jewish or foreign socialist agitators, was easier to admit than a redistribution of social leadership. Thus, it was a stock explanation at hand, helping to comprehend the new, “unbelievable” political agency. This general structure of explanation blazed the path for various Jewish conspiracy theories that gradually came to the fore. They addressed the same need to explain what was unexplainable from the elitist point of view, rendering the masses as unavoidably passive and reactive,⁷⁵ and they built upon the same scaffolding the more benign ethos of the social mission and tutelage. No doubt, however, there was an internal differentiation within this broader discourse.

The intelligentsia's paternalism had many faces. It was more oriented towards direct control, although sometimes it was less condescending in “Rozwój”. This journal was not willing to undermine the solid base of property structure. Instead, it favored a rock-solid nation as a foothold for solidarity and cohesion. This funneled its move in the direction of “sober” work with workers, while at the same time keeping them in their inferior positions. Gestures intended to recognize workers’ dignity at the same time verified their submission, solidifying their place in the social and national hierarchy. For instance, while calling for dignified workers’ dress as a symbol of sober decency, the journal retained the workers' submissive role as the gray mass of producers, with dignity assuming just the right social mantle.⁷⁶ Moreover, “Rozwój” was not reluctant to claim that the basic predicament was that “the worker walked alone and uncared for (*samopas*)”, just like a child.⁷⁷ Journalists were at least aware how far their fantasies could be from the real social problems they

⁷⁴ *Co czynić*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 170a.

⁷⁵ How this figure, similar in Russia, was later driven to its absurd form, to be finally brutally reversed, was documented in Igal Halfin, “The Rape of the Intelligentsia: A Proletarian Foundational Myth,” *Russian Review* 56, no. 1 (1997): 90–109.

⁷⁶ *Kronika tygodniowa*, “Rozwój” 1907, No. 195, quoted in: Marta Sikorska-Kowalska, “*Wolność, czy zbrodnia?*”: rewolucja 1905-1907 roku w Łodzi na łamach gazety “Rozwój” (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2012), 284.

⁷⁷ *Robotnicy*, “Rozwój” 1907, No. 245.

attempted to address. In order to challenge this isolation, “Rozwój” launched a campaign aimed at revealing the “real being of the worker”, for instance announcing a contest for a letter describing life and grievances of the worker.⁷⁸ This will to knowledge, however, did not seem to lessen the will to gain power over the workers.

In turn, the more liberal “Goniec Łódzki” and its subsequent replacements were slightly more supportive of workers' claims. This enthusiasm notwithstanding, contempt toward the uneducated masses was present as an undercurrent. The more open the vision of society was, and the more prominent the place the popular classes occupied, the more liberal public opinion failed to conceal its disappointment with their actual political performance. The “leading broad popular masses” from 1905 were easily transformed into “abysmally dark broader masses” of 1907, within the same broadly liberal discourse on educating the people.⁷⁹ The masses in the streets made it clear that if the urban bourgeoisie and the Polish intelligentsia did not manage the social issue better, the revolution would pose a danger to their decent lives. Various political milieus called for action to either discipline, or at least educate, “the masses”.

Even illiteracy was coded as a factor directly posing a peril of anarchy and disintegration. In a manifesto of sorts, directed to the local intellectuals, “Goniec” announced: “Renewed social life – after winning over the plaguing anarchy – will pour into new forms and will be organized anew.”⁸⁰ This striking passage is calling for universal mobilization for fighting illiteracy. The manifesto was to become one of the founding texts for the renewed ethos of social mission among the Polish provincial intelligentsia. The numerous local elites who signed it, however, did not want to wait till it would finally happen – they “consider(ed) as [their] holy obligation now to declare war against illiteracy”. The main point of reference was anarchy and disorder. The social life had to be rethought

⁷⁸ *Nasz Konkurs*, “Rozwój” 1905, No. 119, quoted in: Sikorska-Kowalska, *Wolność, czy zbrodnia?*, 288. The paper also published letters from workers explaining their situation and desperate will to receive an education. Their style and content, however, suggest extensive editing by the journal, if not just falsification. See *Kronika tygodniowa*, “Rozwój” 1905, No. 94.

⁷⁹ Compare *Odezwa do inteligencji naszego miasta*, “Goniec Łódzki”, 1905, 298a and *Echa tygodniowe*, 2, “Kurier Łódzki” 1907, No. 307.

⁸⁰ *Odezwa do inteligencji naszego miasta*, “Goniec Łódzki”, 1905, 298a. All quotes in the paragraph are from the same source.

anew because “new foundations for social and state life were emerging”. When the “wheel of history rotated exceptionally fast”, there were “the broad, people's masses” who were to “retake the scepter of social leadership” – at least the intelligentsia thought so, not without fear about the future, when “the frightening power of illiterates” may take this scepter. Therefore, now for “everybody who was able to read and write” a “magnificent and holy obligation” was to “become a teacher of the people.” Disorder had to be avoided.⁸¹ This caused a highly intensified feeling of obligation to line up and face the approaching challenge.

In the eyes of local journalists facing this crisis, moral and cultural rules were melting into the air. The solution could be found only in the renewed sense of good and evil clearly provided by universal humanitarian values. They could be re-established only – in the still positivist spirit shared among most of the local journalists from both dailies – by education:

This difficult and arduous task can be achieved by constant, well-organized and intentionally peaceful work aimed at raising the level of ethical culture in our city, at making customs more gentle, citizens more civilized, getting rid of illiteracy, making notions and terms rational, building wealth, developing a school system – in a word, propagating the ideals of work, justice and love for higher virtues.⁸²

Rhetoric like the above came back with a new intensity in the later phases of the revolution. The intelligentsia's belief in social vocation shaped their attitude toward the popular classes. Their educational mission helped to maintain the conviction about immature, passive workers, as an object of pedagogy and not an active counterpart in the political process. This in turn supported the perception of workers as always being either guided or manipulated, and dependent on the intelligentsia's leadership but never genuinely active themselves. If the leadership were conspicuously non-existent, it was just invented by the critics as a secret steering from behind the scenes. This helped to fill in the existing grid of social imagination of the intelligentsia. Although the will to educate was

⁸¹ Marzec, “Beyond Group Antagonism in Asymmetrical Counter-Concepts. Conceptual Pair Order and Chaos and Ideological Struggles in Late 19th – Early 20th Century Poland.”

⁸² *Dom ludowy*, “Rozwój” 1907, No. 221.

maintained, its object, however, evolved. It was no longer the unenlightened yet benign Polish people being shown the light, but the dark masses which had to be forcefully returned from the road to crime. All in all, the treatment imagined by the intelligentsia was rejected by the resisting patients. Nonetheless, there were also other voices paying lip service to the “workers' cause”.

Political agent and claimant

The revolution made the workers political actors that had to be accounted for even by the social strata who were most hostile to their political agency. The public opinion was divided in how it evaluated the performance of those new claimants. The new regime of the political characterized by mass participation was, by many, perceived with hope. Even if they were not happy with workers asserting their power, they still believed this was the working class protest which might push the Tsar to introduce some political reforms or broaden the level of autonomy for the Kingdom. Others, however, were soon more frightened by the unleashed dynamics of mass politics, which clearly – in a vicious, inductive loop with the tsarist repression – destabilized the country, also directly putting decent burghers and their property under threat. The Łódź press tried to mediate between these positions and acknowledged some form of political citizenship for workers, while simultaneously carefully circumscribing its limits. Initially, the journalists were not able to do it openly, but from month to month, and especially after the change of law on censorship in fall 1905, the possibilities for a vivid debate increased.

For instance, the coverage of the “Łódź uprising” and barricade fights in June 1905 in “Goniec Łódzki” was still scarce and rough; it reported only the censorship-approved facts without much commentary. Even within these narrow margins of freedom, one contributor managed to unambiguously suggest that it was the Jews who were mostly involved. While giving an account of trans-religious solidarity of working class contenders, he simultaneously once again denied the possibility of genuine working class political action, pointing to forceful agitators, which he held

responsible for the unrest (and hence its victims).⁸³ It is noticeable that even under censorship a careful selection of words or connections between objects and actors suggested by syntax might be indicative for the readers. Moreover, the limits of the speakable were slowly broadened.

At roughly the same time in the very same paper, there was already space to acknowledge the legitimacy of strike demands – above all an 8-hour working day, basic social insurance and the right to strike as a guarantee for the legal negotiation of the labor contract.⁸⁴ An important step toward recognizing a strike as legitimate was to question the usual conviction about strikes ruining “the country”, its factories, and the workers themselves. It was a chief argument of the factory owners and many conservatives used against protest activities. By referring to this debate and using economic reports and statistical data, it was argued that “it is not that bad” after all. Allegedly the factory owners were quoting data selectively to create the impression of misery. “Not only did the Łódź industry not collapse, (...) but it intensified” announced the paper, clearly siding with the workers, who were often accused of bringing forth the universal misery and ruination.⁸⁵ This paved the way for the recognition of the working-class protest as legitimate.

With hands still tied by censors, this legitimacy was carefully negotiated, for instance, by reprints of articles published already elsewhere in Russia where censorship was less sensitive to the worker question.⁸⁶ Sometimes it was the bourgeoisie who were held accountable for making a progressive proposal, framed as actually saving social peace and Russian statehood. It was the workers, however, who were to gain broader agency:

The industrialists do not believe in the efficacy of the police assurances and that they may lead to calming down the minds. According to their opinion, the only means capable to stop the workers' movement in the whole state and urge workers to the proper work, is legal equality between workers and other populations, giving them an opportunity to have their own representatives in parliament. (...) This means may calm down the workers and

⁸³ *Zaburzenia w Łodzi*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 178.

⁸⁴ *Sprawy fabryczne*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 167-a.

⁸⁵ *Nie jest tak źle!*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 185.

⁸⁶ For instance in some provincial areas they just did not care, as the industrial issues were considered more exotic and not referable easily to the local situation. When such an article was already accepted by a censors' office, it was possible to reprint it elsewhere. Even if it was a verbatim copy, in a new setting it gained entirely new, more contentious, meaning.

counteract the revolutionary agitation.⁸⁷

The liberals and nationalists alike understood that the success of their political competitors did not come without reason. Socialists actually addressed serious social grievances. The old explanation about lacking social bonds lost any credibility, and journalists were ready to admit that some legal regulations in favor of workers' demands would be needed.

These were the employers who sinned, with single exceptions they treated their workers only as a labor force, did not penetrate their mental needs, they did not attempt to get closer to them and did not recognize an individual with equal social rights. (...) One may stem socialist agitation only in one way: by taking into consideration the righteous demands of workers.⁸⁸

It was no longer a vague obligation to grant some concessions because of humanitarian sensitivity. Now it was the demands the workers were making which mattered. Such a shift made space for an explicit endorsement of certain economic demands made by protesters. For instance, striking female textile workers were explicitly supported when – as one journalist commented – “they understood the reason for their existential failures and unstable legal position and wished to improve their situation by ceasing exploitation”. Their demands were explicitly considered as “moderate and righteous”, and therefore it was deemed “surprising why they were not fulfilled so far”.⁸⁹ One of the reasons was an increased awareness of the general working class contribution to social life; just as how for workers the experience of strikes had changed their sense of who they were, for the external observers it was clear that the contribution of workers to the general social edifice had to be recognized. This led authors to draw effective conclusions to be drawn from the initially liberal idea of social productivity based on labor.⁹⁰ While discussing the poor conditions of the working class

⁸⁷ *Uspokojenie robotników*, reprinted from the journal “Ruś”, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 254.

⁸⁸ *Z minionych chwil*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 260.

⁸⁹ *Strajk szwaczek*, “Kurier Łódzki” 1906, No. 65–a, in: Marta Sikorska-Kowalska, ed., *Czego chce współczesna kobieta? Problematyka kobieca na łamach polskiej prasy w Łodzi przełomu XIX i XX wieku* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2013), 102.

⁹⁰ Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty?*

housing, “Goniec” stated without hesitation: “Łódź owes its present growth, all its significance and might exclusively to the working mass, directly or indirectly”.⁹¹ This recognition of productive powers was accompanied by a more favorable attitude to the workers' political practices. Now, the space of the doable had clearly broadened as well.

Correspondingly, there were even authors ready to acknowledge the political competence of the strikers and protesters. This argument was made not just in favor of the workers' case but also against those critics who dragged socialists through the mud as irresponsible rabble-rousers. Additionally, it also contrasted the “Polish workers” with the alleged “Russian disorder”, thus criticizing the Russian autocracy while assuming the mantle of the real supporters of order.

Thanks to the consciousness of our people, thanks to their political competence, by us anarchy is not ruling. In moments of the greatest weakness of the old government, there was an exemplary order here. We have seen demonstrations of thousands kept in order not with a bayonet and a whip but due to signs orchestrated by parties organizing the rallies.⁹²

Speaking about the political competence of the marching workers was a pivotal reversal of the previous paternalism. Some members of the intelligentsia decided to side with the rising working class political constituencies. Amid the usual condescending pedagogy, examples of assigning to workers a sense of political responsibility expressed in their actions were significant. Similarly, during the Duma elections, it was commented that “the workers gave yet more evidence of their political maturity and had convinced their elder brothers, that they were not afraid of scarecrows at all” by not following the “reactionary” agitation.⁹³ All in all, the strike activity and political action around the ballot allowed working-class protesters to gain some recognition within the broader public. While striking, their actual role in general social productivity was tangibly demonstrated by downing their tools. This helped them to be considered as important – it was not only capitalists who moved the

⁹¹ *Tanie mieszkania dla robotników*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 269b.

⁹² *Ratujmy przyszłość*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 295.

⁹³ *Listy z ulicy Św. Andrzeja*, “Kurier Łódzki” 1906, No. 33.

wheels of progress. Many times, strikers were actually able to build new constituencies and show evidence of a systematic pursuit of social and political goals. As a result, workers were admitted among the category of active citizens by more progressive commentators.

Participants of struggle

While they admitted the workers into the political realm, the journalists did not, however, easily abandon the vision of gradual social transformation. While not endorsing the revolution straight away, they did reverse the usual course of argumentation. Promises of modernity were, in their view, put into practice by none other than the workers. This time the capitalists were held responsible for preventing the organic social transformation from coming to fruition. The notion of the “righteous” and stable political regime was maintained, but in its new articulation it was the workers who facilitated its rise:

A new political regime is only then righteous and long-lasting, if it rises by natural means, i.e. the general work of creation. Thus, the elements which in this mixture do not interact, i.e. classes which during chaos and turmoil are not influencing each other, are simply to be considered as superfluous. And among such redundant elements there is our capitalist class. Today, when turmoil and chaos had taken over classic relationships, the capitalist class did not take any steps, so as to create new, more appropriate forms of life and normalize the relationships between classes according to the requirements of life.⁹⁴

This dubious social imaginary, not-so-deftly combining evolutionism and chemistry, was accompanied with quite open criticism of the existing state of affairs:

this blood-sucking hydra, this constrictor of any uninhibited life and development of the population, this executioner of the working class (...) [is] the old and rotten regime, whose one head is bureaucracy, and the other – capitalism.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ *Zachłomowani*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 117.

⁹⁵ *Kilka uwag refleksyjnych*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1906, No. 5. quoted in: Śmiechowski, *Łódzka wizja postępu*, 125. See also *Fabrykanci a robotnicy*, cz. II, “Kurier Łódzki” 1906, No. 259a.

“Goniec” was from 1906 onwards usually ready to admit divergent interests of conflicted social groupings. Because of the revolution, which clearly pitted social groups against each other, it principally abandoned the imperative of social harmony and accepted the class-based description of society instead. Some journalists suggested the class nature of conflict straight away and did not hesitate to use language that was borderline Marxist. According to one journalist, “every social-political revolution, and without a doubt the current revolution is like this, is a time of an intensified class struggle. The further the struggle of the destitute class grasps, the bigger are gains of this class after the revolution”.⁹⁶ This wording hardly concealed an antagonistic vision of society and admitted the agency held by the “destitute class”. It was already a critique explicitly addressing the features of the entire social and political system; from here it was only a small step to accepting the Marxist interpretation of the social and economic reality. This did not, however, lead “Goniec” publicists to adopt the Marxist concept of exploitation, as Kamil Śmiechowski aptly demonstrated.⁹⁷ Whenever the notion of exploitation appeared on their pages, it was in a commonsense meaning of abuse. Exploitation was an unfair relationship which put one of the sides under economic pressure and the mode of critique remained rather personal.

Nevertheless, in the press coverage it started to be a truism that the main conflicted parties were now workers and factory owners. Initially, in the first months of the revolution, broad social strata were supportive of (or at least not hostile to) the workers' struggle. Liberal writers hoped for a loosening of the grip of the tsarist autocracy, and generally sympathized with the workers' claims for a more dignified existence. This support, however, did not change the condescending pedagogical attitude toward “the masses”. The journalists hoped for the development of working class politics directed against autocracy, under the leadership of the intelligentsia but with the tacit support of the capitalists. They were expected to make some minor concessions, just to keep class conflict at bay. These hopes appeared to be in vain, however, and the industrialists were soon blamed for the disorder:

⁹⁶ *Walki bratobójcze*, “Kurier Łódzki” 1906, 63-a.

⁹⁷ Śmiechowski, *Łódzka wizja postępu*, 120–28.

Today, when disorder and chaos entered into classical relationships, the capitalist class has not taken any steps in order to create new, more appropriate forms of life, and form relationships between classes adequately.⁹⁸

Instead of the “new forms of life” replacing the “disorder and chaos”, the tension grew after months of strikes. The owners decided to wage a deliberate and organized class struggle from above. Postponing the competition between factories, they cooperated to suppress the workers' unrest. The goal was to leave no doubt as to who ruled in the factories. Using some minor pretext, in late 1906 they instigated a lockout in the major Łódź factories.⁹⁹ Thus, mutual assistance – earlier a pillar of prolonged protest – was no longer possible, as everybody was unemployed. The owners stated rather explicitly that their aim was to bring back the relationships between employers and employees in the form known from the period before the revolution. The bone of contention was no longer the length of the working day or a daily wage. Trampling on the heads of the workers, who dared to claim any agency while collectively bargaining about working conditions, was the agenda of the day. A harsh conflict began, ultimately won by the entrepreneurs.

During the great lockout, press opinion bifurcated. Initially, “Rozwój” clearly called for agreement. However, facing the firm attitude of the capitalists, it called on workers to give up and accept the offered conditions.¹⁰⁰ This in many cases would mean the return of pre-revolutionary shop floor reality. Not only would longer hours be back, but the hard won right to take part in decisions about factory life would be lost. Some liberal commentators, however, clearly sided with the workers. This triggered a heated debate in the papers about industrial relations, human dignity, and justice. In the beginning, the line of contention concerned responsibility for the misery raging in the city. Later, however, more systematic approaches to the conflict were also proposed.

Just after the factories were closed, “Kurier” indirectly put the responsibility of the dramatic situation on party factionalism and revolutionary action sliding into quarrels, internal fights and

⁹⁸ *Zachloroformowani*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 117.

⁹⁹ Lewis, “Labor-Management Conflict in Russian Poland: The Lodz Lockout of 1906-1907.”

¹⁰⁰ Detailed reconstruction of the journal's position was presented in Jan Chańko, “Gazeta ‘Rozwój’ wobec wielkiego lokautu łódzkiego,” *Rocznik Łódzki XX (XXIII)* (1975): 143–71.

banditry.

And – in the name of victory of narrow-minded party programs – we are ready to wreck the humanity, fatherland and freedom in us. Woe to the vanquished! So here the nationalist parties blame the progressive ones and spit on them, the latter in turn give as good as they get, baptize the former the local hooligans (*chuliganeria rodzima*)... And on the background of this party struggle a most frightening abscess grows, signifying moral depravity and social anarchy – the banditry. (...) No, it's not a struggle, it's lethal insanity, sick madness, rising in revolutionary times among degenerated individuals, desiring and willing blood and murder, regardless why and to whom.”¹⁰¹

Despite these initial accusations, the journalists were also critical of the owners. The attack on the industrialists was an implicit inter-discourse, targeting the national democratic offensive which had blamed the socialist activists for all the misfortunes. Progressive liberals asserted that it was not workers' political activity but capitalist practices that were the true anarchy. One of the commentators stated:

I am one of the most ardent enemies of social anarchy, I am a supporter of a possibly high level of social order and therefore I will always demonstrate that present social relations are grounded precisely on a deep anarchy – even worse, because in the present situation, a tiny minority is able to enact brutal physical violence over the overwhelming majority.¹⁰²

Such analysis of the situation had an immediate effect. The journalists were now able to recognize the structural constraints which limited the possibilities. Simultaneously, writers recognized in the conflict a final clash between two antagonistic forces. One of them, although stronger, could not deprive the other from finally acquired agency:

The brutal resistance, iron durability and ruthless consistency of stronger and mightier is not able to disarm the no less stubborn workers, on the contrary, it stimulates them to struggle, to contest, to try their powers out. Workers believe today unbreakably in the power of Work to be bigger than the power of Capital, they believe today in the might of their righteousness and justice – and this faith is their undeniable feature, which nobody

¹⁰¹ *Echa tygodniowe*, “Kurier Łódzki” 1907, No. 9.

¹⁰² *Lokaut w świetle prądów demokratycznych*, “Kurier Łódzki” 1907, No. 13.

is able to take out of them. This feature and other healthy convictions, the feeling of solidarity above all, will substitute entirely for the lack of strong and unified organization (...).¹⁰³

What is clearly visible in this argumentation is a new mode of social analysis. It was no longer a critique targeting the individual vices and the cultural mismatch of foreign capitalists not maintaining proper ties with the country hosting them. Instead, the left-liberal press clearly started to envision the social dynamic as a clash of antagonistic forces: classes with clear yet contradictory interests. The solution proposed could no longer be grounded in the reestablished social harmony. Now it was rather a matter of institutional transformation; the introduction of the state as a mediating agent was indispensable for working out any *modus vivendi*. Personal features of “capitalists” were somehow related to their place in the organization of production, and their property created an insolvable disparity of power. This disparity effectively closed any possibility for renegotiation or collective bargaining. A third party had to be brought in:

And here lays not only the source of dissatisfaction. The source of real poverty of the proletariat. Without state intervention, the proletariat is helpless against the conduct of the factory owners. In the interest of the factory owners always lays the subtlest utilization of everything which enables exploitation. Here, also, humanity is exploited. The high “justice” and “humanitarian values” of capitalists are well-known to everybody, who took a closer look at the life of the proletariat, or attempted to know the actual position of the proletariat in the world and the history of its movements.¹⁰⁴

The critique went as far as to unambiguously equate capitalism with anarchy, which was previously expressed in this way only by the social democrats. An additional dimension was introducing the state to the analysis. More democratic relationships – as the assumption went – would allow for a more civilized articulation of interests and conflict resolution. Simultaneously, they would prevent the equally harmful disorders of class-state and popular rebellion.

¹⁰³ *Zwodniczy most*, “Kurier Łódzki” 1907, No. 27.

¹⁰⁴ *Lokaut w świetle prądów demokratycznych*, “Kurier Łódzki” 1907, No. 13.

Capitalist states were only protecting the justice of the owning classes and there was a disorder there, had they begun to democratize and slowly acknowledged the justice of workers, an order started to stabilize. (...) The removal of anarchy “from above” is a condition for the removal of the anarchy “from below”.¹⁰⁵

It is important to note that social imaginary did evolve and workers gained a certain right to act publicly and raise claims. Some changes could not have been reversed. Even conservative spheres acknowledged that collective mediation was needed to solve the problem. One of the industrial moguls leading the lockout, Maurycy Poznański, admitted in an interview that collective negotiations were indispensable because the tsarist police apparatus was no longer able to secure any level of order. He also indirectly confirmed that it was the workers' protest which caused “the authority of a whip to be irreversibly gone” and remarked that it had “to be replaced with the self-consciousness of the workers”.¹⁰⁶ In the nationalist bourgeois press tending toward National Democracy, such as Łódź's “Rozwój”, workers were also often presented as victims. Maybe they had violated the assumed codes of conduct, but only because of a lack of education and proper institutions.¹⁰⁷ The danger was seen as a general predicament demanding social reconstruction and not as an outcome of the admittance of improper actors to politics.

All in all, the dynamics of conflict reshuffled the social imaginary perpetuating press coverage. For many it was now clear that there was an unbridgeable antagonism between work and capital, represented by particular actors on the local scene. It was acknowledged as nonsense that industrialists would have acted benevolently toward their employees had they only recognized the principles of social harmony. As a result, the working class protest gained the right of existence. In progressive titles, a more class-conscious discourse emerged. Thus, the situation was analyzed in terms of conflict between class-based interests, which, due to the inequality of power, turned into exploitation. Admittedly, the writers did not go so far as to adapt the Marxist analysis of the social conflict. Some

¹⁰⁵ *Lokaut w świetle prądów demokratycznych*, “Kurier Łódzki” 1907, No. 13.

¹⁰⁶ *Wywiad u M. Poznańskiego*, “Rozwój” 1907, No. 6, reprinted in Sikorska-Kowalska, *Wolność, czy zbrodnia?*, 79.

¹⁰⁷ It could be traced in articles about the revolution in “Rozwój” conveniently available collected and published in one volume: Sikorska-Kowalska, *Wolność, czy zbrodnia?*

of them, however, clearly recognized the working class protest as a legitimate, and in fact hardly avoidable, means of negotiation between the irredeemably conflicted parties. Once social antagonism was brought to the fore, proposals for its mediation by some neutral, higher-level institutions were forged. Thus, the role of collective bargaining was for the first time seriously considered and the role of the state, even if in a hypothetical mode, was debated.

The fear factor

The public presence of new social groups was not, however, accepted with ease. Alternative public spheres and explicit claims undermining the existing order, as described in Chapter 1, were perceived ambivalently. The proliferation of street violence did not help the cause. Mass politics on the streets was orchestrated by a new type of organization – mass, often illegal, parties – if it was organized at all.¹⁰⁸ The politics of the ballot during subsequent Duma elections was not part and parcel of any fully-fledged parliamentary democracy; it nevertheless ushered in new phenomena and political tactics. The forceful electoral campaigning and bitter conflict about participation versus boycott of the election led to tumults and brawls, revealing the less pleasant face of mass democracy. All in all, as a revolution deserving its name, the events of 1905-1907 were far from the pastoral idealization of the people in politics. The ongoing events did not meet expectations of the intelligentsia, even of its radical part. Progressive elites were ready to accept a moderate redefinition of political visibility, but rejected a deeper renegotiation of social roles and distribution of wealth. Needless to say, frightened burghers and directly threatened factory owners were even more anxious and later hostile.¹⁰⁹ They were susceptible to the politics of fear.

Liberals also remained helpless. The revolution was simultaneously their biggest success and

¹⁰⁸ About transformation of politics in Russian Poland see Blobaum, *Rewolucja*, chap. 6; Ury, *Barricades and Banners*; Kaczyńska, “Partie polityczne a masowy ruch robotniczy.”

¹⁰⁹ There are several interesting works on Western Europe, delivering useful theoretical insights and comparative material. On the concept of “fear of the masses” see Etienne Balibar, Ted Stolze, and Emilia Giancotti, “Spinoza, the Anti-Orwell: The Fear of the Masses,” *Rethinking Marxism* 2, no. 3 (September 1989): 104–39, doi:10.1080/08935698908657878. See also Mike Hill and Warren Montag, eds., *Masses, Classes and the Public Sphere* (London ; New York, N.Y: Verso, 2000); Mulholland, *Bourgeois Liberty and the Politics of Fear*.

their greatest failure. They gained real opportunities when politics moved out of the underground, which was their dream since the 1870s. During the 1905-1907 period, former positivists and younger liberals, now called progressives, were able to organize active political organizations and corollary associations like the Polish Culture Association (*Towarzystwo Kultury Polskiej*). However, after this political coming out, the serious political weakness of the liberal intelligentsia and its alienation from the masses became apparent.¹¹⁰ As Maciej Janowski notes, liberals “gained an opportunity to take political action exactly at the same time as they lost real political influence through a sudden radicalization of society”.¹¹¹ The rise of the “politics in a new key”, as examined in Chapter 3, heralded the twilight of the old-style liberalism proselytizing an elite ideal of decent and detached reasoning and debate.¹¹² In the reality of the revolution, neither activism nor the retained social esteem were sufficient for an effective political bid.

The failure to grasp new circumstances characterized even noted intellectuals like Aleksander Świętochowski, the main figure of Polish liberalism introduced in Chapter 1.¹¹³ It also haunted the local leaders. The change in perception of the revolution can be traced through the memoirs of Aleksander Mogilnicki, a prominent liberal lawyer from Łódź. He initially collected contributions to the strike fund among local elites; later, however, he bitterly noted:

It is easier to initiate a storm than to control it. Every revolution evolves differently than it was planned by its initiators. Initial ideological reasons often perish when the masses reveal their worst instincts. [...] During the fight for freedom (which means just holding power) the biggest failure for socialist leaders is a worker in a wealthy condition. If workers were satisfied with their living conditions, socialist parties would become to a large extent obsolete and their leaders would have to undertake productive labor. Thus, many socialist leaders had an interest in maintaining discontent among workers. As a result, the strikes, which were initially politically-focused and directed against tsarist

¹¹⁰ Tadeusz Stegner, *Liberałowie Królestwa Polskiego 1904-1915* (Gdańsk: Nakładem autora, 1990), 135–85; Janowski, *Polish Liberal Thought before 1918*, 219–44; Stegner, “Rewolucja w opinii środowisk liberalnych Królestwa Polskiego 1905-1907”; Andrzej Jaszczuk, *Liberalna Atlantyda. Główne Nurty Liberalizmu Polskiego 1870-1939 R.* (Warszawa: Nakładem autora, 1999); Śmiechowski, *Łódzka wizja postępu*, 245–50.

¹¹¹ Janowski, *Polish Liberal Thought before 1918*, 220.

¹¹² See Carl E Schorske, *Fin-de-Siecle Vienna Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012). For interesting comparative context see Alice Freifeld, *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary, 1848-1914* (Washington: Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

¹¹³ On the evolution of his personal views on the revolutionary movement see Petrozolin-Skowrońska, “‘Liberum veto’ A. Świętochowskiego wobec rewolucji 1905-1907: część I”; Petrozolin-Skowrońska, “‘Liberum veto’ A. Świętochowskiego wobec rewolucji 1905-1907: część II.”

absolutism, which was so beneficial for the whole society, lost their political and national character. Political parties took control over them and the workers, who were for ideological reasons not working for a long time, became happy with this idleness and began to organize militias murdering each other in madness.¹¹⁴

Such analysis underpinned presumptions about “the people” wide-spread in the liberal circles. Not only did it express the disappointment with the economic claims behind strikes but also offered a practical sociology of leadership explaining the activity of “the masses” without questioning the assumption about their apolitical passivity. The liberal diagnosis was clear: the workers were immature and too irresponsible for active participation in politics. The intelligentsia began to believe that the revolution was not a serious social movement, just a blind act of violence inspired by “aliens”, including Jews and various socialist instigators who were either pursuing their own private interests or the wicked and bloody visions of political ideologists.

It would be an exaggeration to claim that the revolution triggered a direct oligarchic, counter-democratic reaction of the Polish elites.¹¹⁵ The growing civic activity of the Polish popular classes was undoubtedly crushed by the tsarist repression. However, the revolution among the Polish intelligentsia was both broadly greeted with awe and severely criticized as the uncontrolled outburst of the untamed masses, similar to the well-known late 19th century pattern of conservative critique.¹¹⁶ In the Polish context the anxiety about tsarist reprisal might have also played a role, especially among older generations still harboring the shock of repressions after the 1863 uprising and intellectually brought up in the atmosphere of positivist rejection of any confrontational measures. Regardless of the particular reasons, the reaction of the Polish intelligentsia to the masses protesting in the streets and reading and debating in factories was ambivalent at best and openly hostile at worst.¹¹⁷ The intelligentsia's faith in a benign Polish people withered away, introducing an unbridgeable rift in the imagined body politic of the Polish nation.

¹¹⁴ Mogilnicki, *Wspomnienia: spisane w Łodzi w latach 1949-1955*, 96.

¹¹⁵ Jacques Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy*, trans. Steve Corcoran, 2014.

¹¹⁶ Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy*.

¹¹⁷ Szwarc, “Rewolucja 1905 roku na ziemiach polskich. Refleksje o historiografii i postawach inteligenckich elit”; Micińska, *Dzieje inteligencji polskiej do roku 1918*.

Adding insult to injury, this deepened the bifurcation of the public sphere into enlightened critique and popular protest, assuming a mantle even less acceptable to the non-proletarian social strata.¹¹⁸ A powerful, conservative, discursive offensive was launched to condemn the “sewage masses” and “furious mobs” called to battle by “foreign socialists” and other “degenerated individuals”, all in all “masons, Jews and socialists, perfectly matched trio, heading toward the overthrowing of Christian societies”¹¹⁹. Some not-so-marginal commentators were ready to issue opinions usually seen rather as a satirical creation designed to mock some dubious conspiracy theories: “the mob is today overtaken by socialists, who lead on a leash the factory folks, and blindly obey the commands of foreign masonic and Jewish conspiracies”¹²⁰. This discursive configuration fostered the long-living trope of Jude-communism nurturing Polish anti-Semitic discourses still used today, and in a less explicit way also penetrating more moderate forms of thought.¹²¹ During the revolution it also spread widely, not limiting itself to anti-Semitic sectarianism, and often supported the “racialized” hatred toward the masses.¹²² Antisemitism was part and parcel of anti-revolutionary reaction and actually helped to explain the new political reality with stock patterns of thought.

It was the nationalists who successfully addressed the growing unease and profited heavily from the general weariness with the revolutionary unrest. Their political imagination and party structure took a turn toward discipline and autocratic order which spurred on the fight against the revolutionary “anarchy”.¹²³ This offensive delivered the rhetorical ammunition for the successful management of

¹¹⁸ Similar bifurcations in different circumstances are described in: Lottes, *Politische Aufklärung und plebejisches Publikum*; Eley, “Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century”; Calhoun, *The Roots of Radicalism*.

¹¹⁹ Kościeszka [Antoni Skrzynecki], *Wrogowie wiary i ojczyzny. Kilka spostrzeżeń na czasie*, 10. Other examples, see Jeleński, *Sila przed prawem albo jak kto woli: wolność socjalistyczna*; Jeleński, *Robotniku polski! Ratuj siebie przed zgubą a kraj swój przed ruiną! (głos swojego do swoich)*.

¹²⁰ Jerzy Moszyński, List do redakcji, “Słowo” 1905, No 81, quoted in: Magdalena Micińska, „Wieść z dna polskiego piekła”. Problem oskarżeń o zdradę narodową w okresie rewolucji 1905-1907 roku, w: Przeniosło and Wiech, *Rewolucja 1905-1907 w Królestwie Polskim i w Rosji*.

¹²¹ Krzywiec, “Eliminationist Anti-Semitism at Home and Abroad: Polish Nationalism, the Jewish Question, and Eastern European Right-Wing Mass Politics.”

¹²² Theodore R. Weeks, “Polish ‘Progressive Antisemitism’, 1905–1914,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 25, no. 2 (December 1995): 49–68; Magdalena Micińska, “‘Wieść z dna polskiego piekła’. Problem oskarżeń o zdradę narodową w okresie rewolucji 1905-1907 roku,” in *Rewolucja 1905-1907 w Królestwie Polskim i w Rosji*, ed. Marek Przeniosło, Stanisław Wiech, and Barbara Szabat (Kielce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej, 2005); Grzegorz Krzywiec, “The Polish Intelligentsia in the Face of the ‘Jewish Question’ (1905-1914),” *Acta Poloniae Historica*, no. 100 (2009): 133–69.

¹²³ Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*; Krzywiec, “Z taką rewolucją musimy walczyć na noże: rewolucja 1905

the fears of a destabilized society. Anti-Jewish discourse introduced by the national democrats helped to find a culprit to blame for the disorder. Antisemitism also accompanied the politics of the ballot, spreading widely over many political discourses during the third, and especially the fourth, Duma elections in 1907 and 1912 respectively.¹²⁴ Indeed, it proved powerful enough to make National Democracy a hegemonic power in the Polish public sphere for a number of years (even if not holding formal power), thus infecting the political discourse and Polish national identity with the vicious germ of antisemitism.

Even Henryk Sienkiewicz, a leading Polish writer who had recently ascended the heights of fame, influence and authority by receiving a Nobel Prize in 1905, then chose to side with the National Democrats. He harshly criticized the revolution in his novel *Wiry* [Whirlpools]. In one of the few fragments with the opinion stated directly by the writer/narrator and not by one of the protagonists, he described revolutionary events as “abominable screams, exciting the mob (*czern*) more and more”, among which a “human animal” was unleashed, just to get in on an “orgy of destruction”, that is to plunder the property of decent citizens. The revolutionaries were described as “disheveled women, filthy juveniles with marks of crime on their degenerated facial lines and all sorts of ragamuffins with drunken faces”.¹²⁵ Such physiognomic depictions mobilized anthropological categories known from the positivist criminology of Cesare Lombroso,¹²⁶ and supported the “racialization” of the political difference described in Chapter 1.

Only against the backdrop of this reaction, raging among Polish public opinion, can the specificity of the provincial press be grasped. It reflected these general tendencies, but also tried to nuance voices and accommodate available conceptual grids to the actual situation in the working

roku z perspektywy polskiej prawicy.”

¹²⁴ For an overview of the said dynamics see Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism*; Weeks, “Fanning the Flames”; Blobaum, “The Politics of Antisemitism in Fin-de-Siècle Warsaw”; Ury, *Barricades and Banners*.

¹²⁵ Henryk Sienkiewicz, *Wiry*, vol. 2, Pisma, XXIX (Waszawa: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1932), rozdz. XXIII. Some information on the novel and the plot may be found in Garstka, “The Revolution of 1905 in Polish Literature: Henryk Sienkiewicz’s *Wiry* (Whirls) and Andrzej Strug’s *Dzieje Jednego Pocisku* (The Story of One Bomb).”

¹²⁶ Widely known and commented on in Poland thanks to a translation made by one of the leading national democrats, Cesare Lombroso, *Geniusz i obłąkanie w związku z medycyną sądową, krytyką i historią*, trans. Jan Ludwik Popławski (Skład główny w Księgarni Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1887).

class city. Undoubtedly, the power of the mass, anonymous crowd flocking to the streets and capable of virtually pushing tsarist troops out of the way was an exciting yet frightening avatar of modern politics. Writers dreaming for decades about building the Polish political nation could not help but realize that the only chance to do it was slipping out of their hands. They proved completely incapable of tuning in to the moods of street politics. While remaining excited by politicized crowds, they were nonetheless very fearful of their ultimate political choices. Against the backdrop of these fears, the interplay between the crowd and its leaders attracted special attention. It was believed to be a key to understand the new realities.

One such encounter was described in the following words:

A thin man, with pale, sunken cheeks, surrounded by a sparse, reddish growth of hair. Eyes small, running, shiny. On his face a smile scorning, scoffing. Hands in pockets of a worn-out overcoat. It seems that they [the people around] are moving, like looking for something. (...) Looks like a shiver shook people gathered around. The adored lyrics of the “Red banner” moved like a wind over an ear of grain, and in his eyes bad reflexes appeared. He straightened, raised his hand and his voice was almost a scream.¹²⁷

The fragment is stylized as a documentary sketch rather than a standard newspaper article. Even if it admits the power of words, it nevertheless unambiguously suggests the hidden agenda of this interaction. The anthropological and behavioral detail reveal the nature of the agitator between the lines. A handful of gentle measures suggests the foreign and inauthentic origins of the successful agitator. He might be triumphant in leading the crowd but by no means was he a natural leader. His position is undeserved and usurping.¹²⁸ The mass under his tutelage is not realizing its potential and “natural” destinies.

There was a particular feedback loop between the agitator and his followers, which constituted the local variant of politics in the new key. It clearly ruined the political ambitions of the more moderate and patronizing intelligentsia. Local intellectual elites had been dreaming for years about

¹²⁷ *Na tle rewolucji*, “Goniec Łódzki” 1905, No. 320.

¹²⁸ On other discourses theorizing the feedback loop between docile masses and impostor leader see Stefan Jonsson, *A Brief History of the Masses: (Three Revolutions)* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

the broadening of the limits for civic activity in the state of the Tsars and realizing the potentials of the people. The radical faction of the intelligentsia had often been involved in alternative education before, whereas the more liberally inclined one embarked on promoting philanthropy, municipal institutions and popular education. Now both groups were terrified by the recursive interaction between people on the streets and their new leaders. Even if the possibilities of political action were fairly limited, for a while socialist leaders became the heroes of the day.

However, when the revolution revealed its darker face and the bloodily persecuted workers grasped for terrorist tactics, the liberal press, seemingly with satisfaction, identified a mistake of those leaders:

In the last week we had a very significant fact: one of the extreme parties repented, and shouted loudly – we got lost! Indeed, PPS Revolutionary Faction [i.e. more militarized, right and nationalist splinter-group – WM] has made a huge mistake by giving out weapons to the mob and simultaneously giving to it an impulse for expropriation and re-appropriation. And in a relatively short time [the party] realized that it was not possible to differentiate between a bandit and non-bandit. It is one more piece of evidence, of course an irrefutable one, of how abysmally dark are our broader masses. It may seem that at least individuals with any aspirations in their souls, are somehow socialized, but it appeared that they willingly put a dishonor on themselves and with this stigma they daringly stared into the eyes of the honest people.¹²⁹

It seems that – perhaps contrary to the national democrats who condemned the anarchic, savage masses out of hand – the liberals constantly maintained the belief of an unenlightened people who just needed proper guidance. At the same time, however, they desperately attempted to deny the agency of those masses. Even if shooting and robbing in the streets were obviously individualized activities, it was still the party leaders who were allegedly in charge.

A similar mechanism of attribution regarded the most widely commented upon, singular act of economic terror. After several hours of fruitless negotiations with the workers, Mieczysław Silberstein, a factory owner resistant to any concessions, took out a weapon and threatened the

¹²⁹ *Echa tygodniowe*, 2, “Kurier Łódzki” 1907, No. 307.

workers. The gun was pulled out of his hand and after another harsh exchange, at some point one of the workers shot dead the stubborn industrialist. The press unanimously pointed to the collective deficiencies of the factory workers and the abusive nature of political agitation: “Yesterday's crime demonstrated the frightening degeneration of the workers in their entirety, caused by a lack of culture and education, and recently using the worker [allegedly by the parties] as a blind tool.”¹³⁰ In similar circumstances “Rozwój” was eager to point out only the harmful influence of agitation, but also at its foreign origin, usually allegedly Jewish but also Russian or “international”. One of the writers suggested that “alien, hostile forces made people into murders”.¹³¹ This killed two birds with one stone: it offered a scapegoat and saved the day for old convictions about benign, unenlightened people merely waiting to be awoken. All sides involved attempted to explain the turbulent situation. Narrative patterns helping to deal with the soaring crisis were varied. Those close to the political thinking of the National Democracy held sway.

In the beginning of the so-called “freedom movement” two currents emerged, national and social. The latter had a hotbed, in a neglected industrial city. It is redundant to repeat facts from that era: we remember vividly general strikes (*bezrobocia*), bloody June days, fratricidal struggles, terror, lockout. Perhaps it is too early to give a definite diagnosis of this time, especially since so many currents clashed: freedom struggle, economic struggle, struggle of the healthy part of the workers with the traces of the international. It could be stressed that national elements, acting in awful conditions, took the upper hand. The froth has fallen down and there is still some boiling but in the cauldron a firm whole coagulates, a germ of a better, national future.¹³²

This mildly nationalist view of the events was still capable of recognizing the heterogeneous struggle and pluralism of the political world. It also revealed the dominant themes of the national democratic parlance. The foreign, anti-Polish socialism, which above all sowed seeds of anarchy, banditry and disorder,¹³³ was fanned by some vague interests acting against the Polish national cause and the

¹³⁰ *Zabójstwo Mieczysława Silbersteina*, “Rozwój” 1907, No. 206, reprinted in Sikorska-Kowalska, *“Wolność, czy zbrodnia?”*, 154.

¹³¹ *Wolność czy zbrodnia*, “Rozwój” 1906, No. 249, reprinted in *Ibid.*, 117.

¹³² *Ruch polityczny w Łodzi*, “Rozwój” 1907, No. 245.

¹³³ *Czerwona sotnia*, “Rozwój” 1907, No. 79, reprinted in Sikorska-Kowalska, *“Wolność, czy zbrodnia?”*, 122.

“healthy” social body of the nation. The proper place for workers was to work harmoniously and docilely for the common national good. To attain this goal, a leading force capable of bringing discipline, getting rid of the “social scum” and showing foreigners their place was needed. The national democrats willingly offered their services in this matter, and they did as they said they would do: “took the upper hand”. However, it was still important to present it as a somehow natural emanation of the national spirit, where people found the essence of their Polishness despite superficial yet multiple obstacles. In this vein, “Rozwój” announced that “the Polish nation has, especially in Łódź, many enemies, but it is irrepressible, so vital with its moral power that it will prevail over different mercenaries, who would like to suppress the Polish spirit”.¹³⁴ This claim reveals much about the future of Polish politics.

In sum, the commercial elites and large chunks of the Polish intelligentsia were frightened by the new modes of political action and above all by the agency of the new contenders. Consequently, they partially withdrew their approval of the working class politics. It was no longer possible to deny or simply ignore it. Instead, sometimes subtle, sometimes crude ways of pushing new groups out of the realm of the legitimate political action appeared. Insinuations about foreign tutelage and the usurpatory character of leadership were multiplied in order to simultaneously delegitimize working class politics and convince the frightened intelligentsia that their dated image of the situation was still valid. At the general level, however, the agency of workers was not turned into nothing. After all, pure fear is a form of recognition. The factor inducing fear has to be at least considered as capable of action. It could be perceived, however, as a quasi-natural factor with little consciousness, a mere circumstance to be accounted for but not incorporated into the body politic. Against this backdrop, the rhetoric condemning the masses as a “natural”, undifferentiated, savage and dehumanized mob may be explained. Masses were not only actually existing groups but rather a product of a particular regime of political (mis)representation. As a result, even if initially championed by the liberal intelligentsia, the press discourse after all often fostered the solutions which were proposed by the

¹³⁴ Ibid., 121.

nationalists, with antisemitism, discipline of the nation, and rigid distribution of places within the body politic.

Aftereffects – conclusion

In all of the scrutinized dimensions, the 1905 Revolution was an important threshold in respect to the workers' presence in the press. The necessity to address the "worker question" was accepted. Old hopes for social harmony reigning just after the infantile vagaries of peripheral capitalism had gone away were shattered. After the revolution, the provincial intelligentsia retained the firm belief in education – propelled at the time, however, by horrific visions of the masses without proper resources to participate in public life: "The most necessary need of the masses is education, our masses should learn! For this goal there is never too much money or too many efforts!" called "Kurier Łódzki", just as the revolutionary wave calmed down.¹³⁵ Leaving vast arrays of society behind might have posed a threat to the most basic aspirations of other social spheres as well. There was no longer any doubt that some more serious measures needed to be taken.

The left-leaning part of the local intelligentsia was unambiguous about the necessity of a more profound social transformation and systemic reform of the state and its welfare provisions.¹³⁶ As a partial solution, workers gained some recognition as legitimate members of the imagined social totality with their own place and set of separate interests, for which they were entitled to struggle.¹³⁷ The respective political imagination registered the class division of society and acknowledged the possibility of conflict. The contributors of "Goniec Łódzki" and its heirs sometimes explicitly sided with the workers, envisioning more equal distribution of social wealth as a desired goal.

¹³⁵ *Echa tygodnia*, "Kurier Łódzki" 1907, No. 370. For a later example, see *Za dużo oświaty*, "Nowy Kurier Łódzki" 1912, No. 208.

¹³⁶ Some examples of the argumentation from the post-revolutionary period, see *Uspołecznienie robotników*, "Nowy Kurier Łódzki" 1912, No. 156.

¹³⁷ This conviction was inspired by the inflow of socialist ideas. At the same time, however, it sealed the basic principle of the "market culture" grounded in interest. Along with the ideal of organic harmony, also the non-market incentives of the working class protests were sidelined. The prize for political legitimacy was the necessity to argue on the grounds of market rationality. See William M. Reddy, *The Rise of Market Culture: The Textile Trade and French Society, 1750-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Correspondingly, strikes were considered a harmful but sometimes necessary means of negotiation. An established pattern of collective bargaining and legitimate representation of conflicted class-interests was seen as a viable solution when thinking about the state reform. The workers were recognized as political claimants.

At the same time, however, more conservative spheres still envisioned the working class as a passive object of intensified pedagogy and aimed to stop revolt and moral degeneration. While there was certainly an afterimage of paternalistic bond haunting such enunciations, the moderate conservative nationalists did rebuild their social imaginary as well. Their refurbished political imagination recognized a certain collective identity of “the workers’ status” but prescribed a particular place in the national body for the laboring people “acting reasonably and not passionately”. Within this corporatist idea proposed by “Rozwój”, the “workers who strive for education and do useful work” might take “a prominent place in the newly organized social life”.¹³⁸ However, such an independent place might have been attained for the price of resignation from the organized struggle for a better living. What the workers were supposed to do instead, was to build national institutions. “Above all we have to make order in our own house, we have to be reborn morally and materially” - “Rozwój” advised resolutely when outlining the project of the “house of the people”, which was intended to be one of such institutions.¹³⁹ These institutions, one should add, would be carefully policed and kept in tight limits by the more nationally educated spheres, securing the new national polity and its hierarchical order. More right-leaning, nationalist writers also had to admit that social reality did not unfold toward organic harmony. The conflicting groups (albeit not explicitly called classes) may have irrevocably contradictory concerns.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, a more active counter-action was to be taken and socialists were widely accused of revolutionary anarchy and demoralization.

In this way, political antagonisms were spurred on by the revolution. Not only did it pit the social contenders against each other, perpetuating class warfare and ideological polarization between

¹³⁸ *Robotnicy*, “Rozwój” 1907, No. 245.

¹³⁹ *Dom ludowy*, “Rozwój” 1907, No. 221.

¹⁴⁰ [Untitled], “Rozwój” 1909, No. 127.

parties, but it also catalyzed the differentiation of political programs supported by the provincial press. Before 1905, both “Rozwój” and “Goniec” were “decently bourgeois”, rather moderate and timid (also because of censorship), with slight shades of nationalism and progressivism, respectively. During the heated days of the revolution, their profiles bifurcated. The former title sided with National Democracy and embraced integral nationalism, supporting on its pages “Polish national interests” and the vision of a disciplined national community. The latter (renamed “Kurier Łódzki” and later “Nowy Kurier Łódzki”) assumed the mantle of a progressive tribune of urban professionals, supporting a centrist political agenda and being more open to ethnic diversity and working class claims which went beyond corporatist loyalty. Both titles were now orbiting closer to the party-led political camps and respective ideological languages, taking entrenched positions within the established political conflict. What accompanied this ideological polarization on both sides was fear of the masses, triggered by the working class protest on an unprecedented scale.

This ambivalence corresponded to the generally ambiguous role of the press in relation to the regime of power. The press played a major role in the reconstruction of political imaginations accompanying the revolution and the new political presence of workers. As it was revealed, however, this role was far from unidirectional. The situation in Russian Poland very well epitomizes the more general pitfalls of the relation of the press and the ruling order, be it the state or dominant social hierarchies of a less tangible kind. Newspapers were not actors pitted unanimously against autocratic rule that stimulated the critical debate, which sooner or later would herald liberalization. To claim so would be to subscribe to the “Whig account of journalism”,¹⁴¹ clearly stripped of its credibility even in the imperial borderlands, where the press was admittedly a national contender against the state autocracy. While the Polish press undoubtedly fostered the national project by the simple fact of supporting Polish language circulation and Andersonian imagined community of addressees, it was also a factor policing the established boundaries of political participation.

In this vein, the Łódź press was a voice of the urban elites, be it more progressive or

¹⁴¹ James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting in Britain* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1997).

conservative but nevertheless understandably reluctant to acknowledge new political contenders without restrictions. The articles published in “Rozwój” or “Goniec Łódzki”, just like the leaflets analyzed at length in Chapter 3, had to please their readers in order to stimulate a meaningful response and conversation. While the journalists might have been more open to the new political constituencies, they nevertheless had to gauge the critical elements to the sensitivity of the readers. The readers were often of the propertied strata of the industrial city, so on a very basic, economic level they were more than interested in reviving the *status quo ante* regarding the workers' rights to make claims on behalf of themselves. As Martin Conboy notes, regarding this problematic relationship of the press discourse to the existing social order:

at particular junctures in the history of the newspaper, there have been moments of discursive realignment (...) when there are changes in what newspapers as an institution can say and what they are prevented from saying, implicitly or explicitly, if they wish to maintain their authority and control over issues of knowledge and power.¹⁴²

The revolution was precisely this kind of juncture. The social reality and environment in which newspapers operated changed abruptly. The limits of the speakable broadened because of the abolition of preventive censorship and the powerful transformation of political imagination. The press discourse, nevertheless, remained embedded in a dense net of readers' presumptions, convictions of the editors, and available stock language used to describe the situation. This discourse underwent a significant change, sometimes assisting and sometimes resisting the general transformation of the political, which was an overarching topic of this study.

The limits of the doable established by discourse altered accordingly so as to accommodate new political reality and comprehend the insurgent democratization of social imaginary spearheaded by workers. The press delivered words, and hence mental images, explaining the new situation and allowing the readers to make it intelligible in respect to the boundaries of the polity and the regime

¹⁴² Conboy, *The Language of Newspapers*, 12.

of action assigned to its parts. Chiara Bottici notes, while investigating the entanglements of the political with the imaginal, as she termed it, that:

what a given subject sees gathered together in the public sphere (the *agora*) is a set of bodies, not (yet) a *polis*. In order to perceive *polis*, something that unifies all those scattered bodies, you need a pictorial (re)presentation that can include all of them. This can be given by the image of the *agora* itself or by the walls of the city, as was often the case in antiquity, or some other image of the common territory, but, in any case, it must be conveyed through a certain image that defines its boundaries.¹⁴³

While the *agora* is already a designated public space, the street becomes one only under special circumstances. In the days of social crisis, the polity had to be re-imagined anew, and images turning sets of bodies into *polis*, or conversely, denying this status to the scattered bodies, were eagerly sought. In the context of the 1905 Revolution, the borders and imaginations about the polity applied to the populations flocking into the squares and streets were established and changed with significant input from the press discourse.¹⁴⁴ Analogously, the press accounts were also able to exclude people and delegitimize their claims, relegating them beyond those boundaries.

While opinions were more conflicted than before, the spectrum of the possible constituted by political imagination, broadened. Broader possibilities of action, however, did not mean broader acceptance of these actions, and the press also gave space for voices expressing the active push back of the new contenders out of the public sphere through intensified policing of its limits.

¹⁴³ Bottici, *Imaginal Politics*, 90–91.

¹⁴⁴ A similar approach to the press as a constitutive factor in reconstructing social imaginary regarding working class, however in respect to different historical circumstances, was presented in Agata Zysiak, *Modernizacja, socjalizm, nauka. Edukacja dla mas i budowa socjalistycznego uniwersytetu w powojennej Polsce* (Kraków: Nomos, 2016).



Figure 6. Nationalist rally in Warsaw, 5th of November 1905. Polish National Digital Archive

CONCLUSION

The quotations opening this study told the story of the revolution – an insurgent democratization and reconfiguration of the political – from contrasting angles. The imaginative vignettes of memory depicted, on the one hand, a heroic bearded aging figure building a barricade and performing his self-assertion on the revolutionary street, and on the other, working-class and Jewish impostors destroying the comfort zone of liberal politicians with their radical ideas and practice. On the level of cultural impact and political history, both depictions are true in their apt representation of growingly antagonized sentiments. This bifurcation was present from the very beginning, in the revolutionary politics which triggered many contrasting emotions. It grew alongside the antagonization of a politicized public and a crystallization of ideological identities. The confrontation of popular classes fighting for a right to have rights, and fearful elites reluctant to accept these rights, or simply surprised by the scale of the unrest and the unavoidable disorders of popular uprising, interfered with the radicalized ideological programs of socialists and nationalists. This entanglement fostered inter-class and intra-class struggle. The polyvalent conflict and the ambiguity of contested democracy informed my thinking and writing through the pages of this study, aimed at an intelligible presentation of a powerful confrontation founding the modern political sphere in Poland.

The 1905 Revolution in Russian Poland does not yield any simple narrativization. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for its relative historiographical invisibility, despite its profound impact on Polish social, political and intellectual history. This difficulty to square it with any standardized story such as that of class struggle, national revival or political modernization has many reasons. What binds many previous studies is a binary political imagination of sorts. Even if the recent contributions are far from Polish-centered martyrology pitting the righteous challengers against the “foreign yoke”, they nevertheless often maintain the fundamental opposition between autocracy and modern civic developments, or the (Russian) state and (Polish) society. Reevaluation of such a framing does not

necessarily lead to – as Abraham Ascher puts it, subscribing oneself to this paradigm – “broadly liberal” revisionism reestablishing the prospects of unrealized Russian path to liberal democracy or seeking for pockets of civil society within, and besides, the Russian state-apparatus.¹ My aim was not to present an any less repressive face of the tsarist state, even if I am far from accusing its functionaries of any excess beyond policing embedded in incentives of autocratic state self-preservation. Instead I focus on conflicting and conflicted tendencies and divisions fracturing the second part of the aforementioned binary historical imagination – the Polish society.

While exploring the topic, I realized that more profound processes occurred between “the elites” and “the masses”. My initial goal was to present a bottom-up history of the revolution of sorts, taking on board newer approaches in social and cultural history with heightened sensitivity towards language, discourse and symbolic form of politics. My final intervention, however, explored the class friction within society in revolt. The backdrop for my source-based investigation was the broader historical narrative about waves of modern democratization and contraction. However, the particular case which I examined and delivered in a refreshing, new context was a dense imperial situation with the strong overdetermination of class, gender, ethnic and national tensions. Initially, multi-ethnic groups and vast social strata rose up to contest an autocratic regime and a state widely perceived as a foreign occupant. All the involved parties entered a complex field of tensions, and the situation became very dynamic after this initial opposition started to dissolve. Whereas the elites could not smoothly side with the locus of state power, the popular contenders were easily fractured along national lines and deemed a grave danger for national self-preservation. This multiplicity of conflicting identities notwithstanding, I decided to cast the following study as an investigation of the workers and the political, as crucial dimensions rendering this configuration intelligible. Thus, I aimed to examine the contentious renegotiation concerning the presence of workers within the political – a communicative

¹ Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, 1988; Ascher, “Interpreting 1905”; Bradley, “Subjects into Citizens: Societies, Civil Society, and Autocracy in Tsarist Russia”; Bradley, *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia*; Porter, “The Emergence of Civil Society in Late Imperial Russia. The Impact of the Russo-Japanese and First World Wars on Russia.”

space comprised of words and practices.

Circumscribing the political

Approaching the problem from several complementary angles delivered a satisfactory examination of the historically transforming political sphere in respect to the presence of the working class. Chapter 1 focused on historical lineages of class formation and emerging working class intellectual life. The examination of historical contexts demonstrated that the pattern of proletarianization in Russian Poland was a rapid but highly uneven one. Thus, mostly the rural population entered the newly developed industrial hubs and only rarely approached established patterns of proletarian culture and networks capable of creating a launchpad for political militancy. It was political activity, initially induced by radicalized members of the intelligentsia vehemently organizing illegal political and intellectual activities, which was the first entry into the world of letters and public participation for workers. During the revolution, however, the workers' "circle work" transformed into various forms of more independent political practice on the streets and in the factories, as strike, political rally, mass meeting or factory occupation. The revolutionary dynamics spurred a plebeian, working-class counter public, as an alternative to the dominant circulation. It was also a field of experimentation and learning made possible in social situations where habits were broken, class boundaries were crossed back and forth and questions were asked about fundamental issues.

Workers involved in such a proletarian public sphere, and from within it contesting the limitations of the dominant public, successfully reconstructed the political community. They performed politics on their own, embarking on its new forms and subsequently forced other social strata to consider the working-class social input and class-based arguments as important and legitimate. Workers harbored plebeian, democratic politics while simultaneously struggling for individual and collective rights. Their voice and vote (note the common root etymology) as

individuals and as a class had to now be partially recognized in the political realm. This was not, however, greeted with enthusiasm by the propertied strata and large proportion of the intelligentsia, who after initial patriotic ardor withdrew their support and tended to see the revolution as an uncontrolled outburst of disorder. Various forms of fear of the masses perpetuated this discourse. Anti-Semitic undertones helped many members of the intelligentsia to understand the new political situation by pointing at alleged foreign tutelage of the “mob”, widely perceived as incapable of independent action and agency.

In this antagonistic setting, the actual individuals participating in working-class political militancy underwent a profound transformation. To explain this, Chapter 2 dealt with biographical implications of the changing political. The revolution was often remembered as an axial event structuring the biography and rebuilding the relational interconnectedness of the self, politics, work and the life course of the writing subjects. It is around the revolution where the entire emplotment of the militant biography revolves. Political involvement not only gave sense to the individual life, which was now perceived within a broader historical scheme of social and/or national liberation, but it also offered alternative sociality and paths of upward mobility and recognition, as speakers, organizers or armed street militia members. Such a form of belonging was important for people deprived of it elsewhere, and kept them involved despite dangers. Workers became conscious participants of a highly polemical culture of debate and challengers to the exiting regime of power, capable of strategic action in favor of long term goals. The revolution was an important trigger of change, simultaneously modifying the subjectively defined place of workers within society, limits of the domain of what could be said and done within the political, and the entanglement of their lives with the political sphere.

This process made an imprint on working class militants from different political milieus, including those opposed to the revolution. It affected differently the already committed proletarian autodidacts and freshly politicized workers who had more recently got involved in the rising mass politics. The former played an active role and sealed their biographies as revolutionaries, the latter,

however, often entered politics in ephemeral ways and never ceased to be shop floor workers. Nonetheless, for both groups the event was the main element structuring the written biography. To a considerable extent, patterns of involvement and actual reenactment of the political in individual practice were similar across political milieus, but the promoted political self might have been quite different.

The plural commitments had their textual manifestation in the prolific print production of the revolutionary public, saddled between the radical intelligentsia and militant workers. These printed materials – most importantly, the leaflets – were the chief primary source for Chapter 3, which focused on transforming political communication and its impact on readers and writers. What was speakable and what was doable were severely broadened when politics came to include the popular classes, leaving behind old realities of bipolar competition between the aristocratic palace and liberal salon. This “politics in a new key” was marked by a high level of antagonism and direct agency of political language. Political languages in conflict were powerful forces leading people into the streets and pitting them against each other in an unprecedented manner. Concepts used in leaflets or party journals were a means of ushering political novices into the political realm. They brought a profound intervention to regimes of subjectification not only delegitimizing the autocratic regime but also delivering active means of comprehension and self-placement of the workers in the broader social order.

The “fighting words” uttered in the streets also had other effects. I scrutinized the role antisemitism played as a political device assisting the construction of new political identities. When “nationalism began to hate”, antisemitism appeared to be an extremely effective mobilizing device, and the Jews were cast as a negative, constitutive point of reference for the construction of national unity among the Poles. The new political reality modified the circuit between words and deeds, or language and action. The role of language changed when large constituencies were mobilized and pitted against each other and fighting words became a directly usable weapon.

Not only did workers perceive themselves differently with new available languages, but their

external political visibility also changed. I examined the construction of “workers” in the press in Chapter 4. This discursively casted place of workers delimited their perceived and actual agency within the broader public sphere. Before the revolution, the rise of the “worker question” (and more broadly the “social question”) in the press was slow, because of censorship and the long-maintained conviction that predicaments of modernity would bypass Polish society. The revolution was a pivotal moment regarding the “social question”, marking the modern renegotiation of social order all over Europe. Not only did censorship become milder, but revolutionized workers did not leave much doubt about their presence and importance. As a result, the necessity to address the “worker question” was more and more accepted. Hence, workers gained significant, albeit contested, recognition as legitimate members of an imagined social totality and political claimants. The revolution catalyzed the re-conceptualization of the social bond – more daring projects of reform appeared, which involved the state in welfare provisions and expressed critique of capitalism and aggregate individual interests.

Nevertheless, the proliferation of public presence of people previously forced to remain in the shade triggered fearful and hostile reactions. The press debate reflected these reservations and problematized new modes of political action and leadership. Many elements of this debate are common tropes: critique of illegitimate demagoguery, impostor leaders or immaturity of new contenders. Various groups, held illegitimate, were lumped together in elitist indignation fanned by nationalist sentiments. Thus, the elitist reaction resonated with popular nationalism in spurring antisemitism on as a means to exclude socialist workers as allegedly manipulated by the Jews.

All in all, the distinct form of human communicative activity conducive to establishing a specific sphere, the political sphere, underwent substantial transformation during the 1905 Revolution, leading to its modern form. This multi-dimensional transformation of the political was facilitated by the insurgent democratization, a bottom-up social struggle which approached sound resistance. The rise of the proletarian public sphere, public participation of workers claiming the right to have rights, individuals reshaping themselves through politics and performing political change, the new role of language within the massive politics in a new key and changing perception of workers as political

agents among external public opinion – all these dimensions constituted the contested change of the political sphere. The historical delimitation of this sphere and its actual enactment through discourses and practices touches upon the principle of integration of the body politic. Change of the political is a process or event whereby society is reordered and unified across its divisions in a contested manner. The transformation of “the long 1905” had many consequences, and might be examined as a foundational moment for the Polish modern politics and the public sphere.

Revolutionary aftermaths in post-imperial comparison

Comparing tsarist borderlands similarly at the fore of the revolutionary upheaval is especially revealing when the aftermath of the revolution is concerned in a broader perspective.² Intense political struggles after WWI reshaped Eastern Europe. The idea of social revolution sent shock-waves that interfered with the nationalist drive, aimed at creating nation states atop the debris of the empire. Thus, despite the high level of entanglement and influence of extramural forces, past legacies of political militancy, ideological landscape, and the balance of forces in respective areas were of a large significance. They often tipped the balance in favor of a particular option determining the existence and shape of emerging state polities. The power to hold sway of the situation or mobilize large groups of people for particular aims often resulted from the 1904-1907 clashes and their ambiguous aftermaths.

In 1905, Latvian workers led some of the most powerful strikes, combining political and economic incentives, and local peasants rebelled against the Russian administration and the German landed gentry.³ After failed Russification attempts, Finland secured a spectacular reform, not only reviving its traditional autonomy but also introducing universal suffrage for both men and women,

² Alfred J. Rieber, *The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: From the Rise of Early Modern Empires to the End of the First World War* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

³ James D. White, “The Revolution in the Baltic Provinces,” in *The Russian Revolution of 1905: Centenary Perspectives*, ed. Jon Smele and Anthony Heywood (London; New York: Routledge, 2005).

all within the borders of the tsarist empire.⁴ This victory enabled the Finnish social democrats to grow steadily and elect large numbers of MPs to the newly autonomous Parliament. For Finland's socialists, the ballot box was not a coffin but a cradle. The Baku oilfields, despite initial ethnic clashes, also witnessed late but significant triumphs by their working population, including the raising of wages and a reasonable level of self-government for the multi-ethnic city.⁵ In Georgia, the regional revolution was championed by local Mensheviks, who retained a stable support in later years.⁶

A decade later, most of these regions were haunted by warfare and intense class conflict, albeit of diversified types. In Latvia, support for social revolution was relatively big and was spearheaded by the famous Latvian Riflemen, leading to a bitter and complex conflict.⁷ Finland experienced a civil war very strictly divided along class lines; the social democrats defended previous electoral arrangements and were finally brutally defeated.⁸ The moderate Bolshevik Baku Commune was raided by Azeri nationalists, while Georgian Social Democrats were able to outmaneuver opponents and create an independent, albeit short lived state after 1918. All the nascent Transcaucasian states had to be militarily reconquered by the Red Army. Former borderlands witnessed various patterns of revolutionary activity.

Poland, however, only a decade later remained relatively calm despite a devastating war ("the midwife of revolution") and the earlier popular drive to social revolution. The urban working class had a tradition of militancy and a still-vivid memory of the 1905 strikes and victories. Some of the workers were up for another radical upsurge, and so were some socialist parties which had time to

⁴ Tuomo Polvinen, *Imperial Borderland: Bobrikov and the Attempted Russification of Finland, 1898-1904* (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 1995); Atti Kujala, "Finland in 1905: The Political and Social History of the Revolution," in *The Russian Revolution of 1905: Centenary Perspectives*, ed. Jon Smele and Anthony Heywood (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005).

⁵ Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Baku Commune, 1917-1918* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972); Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920: The Shaping of National Identity in a Muslim Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁶ Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, 2nd ed (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Stephen F. Jones, *Socialism in Georgian Colors: The European Road to Social Democracy, 1883-1917* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005).

⁷ Georg von Rauch, *The Baltic States: The Years of Independence Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania 1917 - 1940* (London: Hurst, 1995).

⁸ Anthony F. Upton, *The Finnish Revolution, 1917-1918* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980); Risto Alapuro, *State and Revolution in Finland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

develop much larger organizational capacities than twelve years before. Indeed, socialist milieus launched a vivid campaign pressuring the state-crafting elites. The initial proclamations of independence were made under socialist auspices and significant social demands were addressed in their tentative programs (Daszyński's Lublin government and later the Piłsudski-backed Moraczewski cabinet).⁹ With significant concessions made to the popular classes, the revolutionary surge in Poland was weakened and the internationalist left was unable to spur a larger movement. The pendulum had swung toward national unity and remained there even after the Polish state had already begun to fulfill the warnings of the far left that national unity would serve as a smoke screen for class domination. Polish workers refused to rise up against the Polish state when the Bolsheviks advanced and approached Warsaw to push the socialist revolution westwards. The revolution had been aborted in Poland; in other regions, however, the situation evolved differently.

The tentative explanation of this conundrum is that the events of 1904-1907 pushed these regions down distinct trajectories. The 1905 upheavals were characterized by a high level of militancy in most of the nationally diversified borderlands. They constituted an important threshold in forging modern political spheres in all of them. While the Revolution of 1905 was in all the cases a tipping point, the resulting reconfigurations played out differently. Although this pivotal event may be legitimately narrated as an important stepping-stone for the later overthrow of the unreformable tsarist autocracy in mainland Russia, its results in the borderland regions bifurcated. In order to understand the post-revolutionary dynamic and its significance for the general layering of the public sphere in Poland, I need to return to the Polish context, and, later, again tentatively, read it through the lenses of broader sociological terms, helping to get to grips with larger forces and tendencies.

⁹ Porter-Szűcs, *Poland in the Modern World*; Piotr J. Wróbel, "The Rise and Fall of Parliamentary Democracy in Interwar Poland," in *The Origins of Modern Polish Democracy*, ed. Mieczysław B. Biskupski, James S. Pula, and Piotr J. Wróbel (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009).

Outcomes of the failed revolution

The events of 1904-1907, however dramatic, did not bring about any direct changes in the political system or class structure. The revolution failed and was bloodily suppressed, leading to profound social disintegration and political repression. The political compromises offered by the Tsarist state, such as the “October manifesto,” which included moderate political liberties, a loosening of censorship and several rounds of Duma elections, were simply ignored or bypassed by the practice of the still-autocratic state. The “national question”, an additional dimension of struggle in Poland, also remained unresolved and the striving for autonomy was in vain. Emerging civic institutions, such as various associations or labor unions, were brutally suppressed during the “Stolypin reaction”,¹⁰ with extensive repressions and martial law sustained virtually till 1913 in the most heated regions.

Nevertheless, the revolution mobilized new groups of society, in particular urban workers, to actively participate in the public sphere. Languages and practices of the revolutions broadened the limits of the speakable and the doable. The events ushered the Polish Kingdom into modern politics. Once mobilized workers who participated in vivid civic culture or labor organizations, later, even if deprived of similar possibilities, were no longer the same passive imperial subjects as before. They became subjects in a completely different sense, that is, bearers of at least the potential capacity for conscious political action and self-aware participants of the social world, hence the title of this study. In this sense, the revolution was undoubtedly an important threshold in the modern democratization of the social imaginary and general sense of citizenship. It opened the possibility to obtain a right to have rights, that is – in Hanna Arendt’s wording – “to live in a framework where one is judged by one’s actions and opinions”, and not destitute of belonging to some form of polity.¹¹ The full

¹⁰ Piotr Stolypin was a Russian prime minister and home secretary between 1906 and 1911. He was the main tsarist politician responsible for suppression of the revolution and accompanying harsh repressions. On Stolypin reaction in Russian Poland, see the last chapter of Blobaum, *Rewolucja*. For a broader context of conservative reform, see Abraham Ascher, *P. A. Stolypin: The Search for Stability in Late Imperial Russia* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford Univ. Press, 2001); Peter Waldron, *Between Two Revolutions: Stolypin and the Politics of Renewal in Russia* (DeKalb, Ill: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998).

¹¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), 296–97. See also Margaret R. Somers, *Genealogies of Citizenship: Markets, Statelessness, and the Right to Have Rights*, Cambridge Cultural Social Studies (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

enfranchisement of universal suffrage was to be introduced in the Polish independent state only in 1918, clearly thanks to the powerful claim for citizenship uttered by the popular classes in 1905. Their successful political militancy might have fostered future radicalism and corresponding organizational capacities. The effect of the revolution could not be limited to political modernization, however.

Apart from this anticipatory democratization, the emerging modern political sphere was also preset ideologically. It was the point of ideological polarization and a tipping point for the creation of stable political encampments, mobilizing particular languages and emotions, which structured the political field for years. This opening situation of modern politics delimited the future possibilities for action.¹² The revolution was a stage of the “operationalization” of political ideologies. What had earlier been only imagined in the writings of party thinkers, was now turned into political practice. The assumed political community could no longer be postponed or deferred, but had to be mobilized and disciplined in the here and now, without envisioning future reconciliation of tensions inside it.

Consequently, the democratizing aspect of the revolution was supplemented by the disciplinary practice of political organizations. National Democracy took a turn toward discipline and autocratic order.¹³ This tension was also revealed in the socialist milieu; some military squads of the PPS-Revolutionary Faction had to be disbanded because of the low level of central control and the specter of banditry. The top echelons of the party clearly opted for military discipline in the ranks, envisioning a regular army rather than a mass movement. Their later organizational practice outside the party fully confirmed this shift. The circles around Józef Piłsudski endorsed a project of creating Polish military forces in Austrian Galicia from 1908 onwards. The ideological transformation of some of the party leaders drifting steadily in the national and socially conservative direction was also connected with

¹² At this point my argument gets closer to the Pierre Bourdieu’s analysis, on the one hand, of political field, and on the other, of language as carrier of power. However, in my overall reasoning I did not use Bourdieu’s terms, and the notion of political field is taken rather as a descriptive and generic label and not a technical term. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Das politische Feld: zur Kritik der politischen Vernunft*, trans. Roswitha Schmid (Konstanz: UVK-Verl.-Gesellschaft, 2001); Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003). On more general understanding of the field as theoretical category see Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam, *A Theory of Fields* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹³ Porter, “Democracy and Discipline in Late Nineteenth Century Poland.” Indeed, a more authoritative tone saturated with patronizing power executed over the reader is easily detectable in NZR materials directed at workers.

the experience of a molten mass of the revolutionary street, as the memoirs of Michał Sokolnicki examined in Chapter 1 demonstrate.

The far left, SDKPiL, in turn, was to a growing extent marginalized as a proxy of the cosmopolitan Jewry responsible for the revolutionary turmoil, an accusation holding in its grip even former revolutionary activists, now bitter and disappointed.¹⁴ The party itself got bogged down in sectarian quarrels and its “workerist” organizational culture became obsolete amidst anti-democratic practices of its leadership. It attempted to hold back the anti-Semitic wave but it only worsened its own situation when the vitriolic tide was already too high.¹⁵ Hoping in vain to stir a revolution during the Polish-Bolshevik war of 1919-1921, it secured its place on the obscure, and later illegal, margins as the Polish Communist Party, the fate it shared with the PPS-Left after their merger.

After the revolutionary surge, the progressive circles took a step backwards, to an increasing degree hegemonized by the language of the political right. The process went so far that instead of being a continuous, unambiguously liberal, secular and progressive agenda resisting the wave, Polish liberals were not hesitant to launch a very particular product of Polish politics, so-called “progressive antisemitism”.¹⁶ This aborted the development of the liberal “just milieu” as a significant political actor, even if some liberal ideas were recirculated elsewhere. When the liberals had the floor swept from under their feet, facing socialist contention and popular demands, the National Democrats (now transformed into modern nationalist conservatives) gained the upper hand.

On that account, in order to fully grasp the transformation during and after the 1905 Revolution

¹⁴ Apart from standard anti-Semitic and antisocialist literature, former socialists also accused Social Democracy of worse; the most spectacular example were writings of Julian Unszlicht (Sedecki) Unszlicht, *Socjal-litwactwo w Polsce: (z teorii i praktyki “Socjaldemokracji Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy”)* (Kraków: Nakładem autora. Wydawnictwo Życie, 1911); Julian Unszlicht, *O Pogromy ludu polskiego: rola socyal-litwactwa w niedawnej rewolucyi* (Kraków: Nakładem autora, 1912). On the intellectual biography of the author, a self-hating Jew turned fanatical catholic priest, see Grzegorz Krzywiec, “Nadwiślański Weininger? Przypadki Juliana Unszlichta (1883–1953),” *Holocaust. Studies and Materials (Zagłada Żydów. Studia i materiały)*, no. 5 (2009): 243–57.

¹⁵ On later faith of the SDKPiL and its attempts to stop antisemitism, see Strobel, *Die Partei Rosa Luxemburgs, Lenin und die SPD: der polnische*. The core statements of this debate were published by Rosa Luxemburg in the journal “Młot” (Hammer). Some of them were translated and published in Iring Fetscher, ed., *Marxisten Gegen Antisemitismus*. (Hamburg: Hoffman und Campe, 1974).

¹⁶ Weeks, “Polish ‘Progressive Antisemitism’, 1905–1914”; Krzywiec, “The Polish Intelligentsia in the Face of the ‘Jewish Question’ (1905-1914)”; Janowski, *Polish Liberal Thought before 1918*.

in the Polish case, our attention must be directed to the right side of the political spectrum, rather than to the ups and downs of the fractured socialist left. Initially fighting an uphill battle, it was the right-wing nationalist National Democracy which was able to give meaning to the new situation and trace the symbolic contours of the nascent modern public sphere after 1905. The National Democrats successfully channeled the “fear of the masses” and the burn-out of revolutionary zeal. They launched a powerful political discourse, which built their legitimacy on fighting “anarchy” and revolutionary disorder. Collective emotions were effectively redirected from recognition and economic demands into national unity, assisted by a growing hostility against various “others”: above all the Jewish population, as I demonstrated in Chapter 3. The anti-Jewish scaremongering proved powerful enough to make National Democracy a powerful player in the Polish public sphere for a number of years (even if not holding formal power), thus infecting the political discourse and Polish national identity – forged those days in its modern form – with the vicious germ of antisemitism.

What followed was a long-lasting nationalist hegemony which blocked the articulation of social claims, setting the tone for the mainstream political discourse. It was the National Democrats who orchestrated the public debate in subsequent rounds of Duma elections in 1907 and 1912. Not only did the ND’s influence significantly change the balance of forces but it also reconfigured the lines of political division. Political differences were racialized along anti-Semitic lines; political opponents were very often described as anti-Polish or accused of being Jewish proxies. This machinery, which in its early form I examined in Chapter 1, was later powerfully used to agitate against any left-wing constituencies, from the Bolshevik menace to the democratically elected Polish president.¹⁷ Hence, after WWI the ND peeled away enough of the working class to prevent a groundswell of revolutionary support that could have undermined the national project.

Nonetheless, the nationally-inclined socialists, the PPS, established a considerable degree of support after a sharp turn to the left after 1914. The PPS refused to enter into a bloc with the NDs;

¹⁷ Brykczynski, *Primed for Violence*.

instead, it successfully raised social demands and combined them with national goals in support of the Polish state project. Hence, the state project gained enough legitimacy among popular classes and even urban workers – in other tsarist borderlands the most radical group tending to support local communists – maintained support for it. This made it possible to survive a bitter military conflict with Russian Bolsheviks and sideline the social tensions which never vanished and after 1917 grew yet another time as a window of historical possibility opened again. This sequence of the 1905 rebellion, reaction and later aborted revolution for the sake of state crafting had its important consequences for the structural composition of the Polish public sphere. I will later propose some preliminary directions for further investigation of its long-term intransigencies stemming from the initial 1905 conjuncture. Before, however, it is useful to re-examine the results of this study against the backdrop of European labor history and historical approaches to the developing public spheres, making these two bodies of literature speak to each other.

Labor and the public sphere

The political place of workers was a core issue examined by labor history. Since E.P. Thompson's seminal contribution, it became almost a truism that class is not a positively delimited entity but a relation which sits between groups and identities, constituted by their interaction. Later studies in labor history added language to previous “materialist” explanations of class formation and working class militancy. The main task of a historian, as William Sewell states, became to reconstruct “the words, metaphors and rhetorical conventions that [workers] used to think about their experience”.¹⁸ The proletarian newspapers, writings, or petitions assumed the mantle of testimonies to symbolic universes, moral values, subjective class relations, or assumed polities. At the same time, the bond between politics and the life world of labor was tightened. “It was not consciousness (or ideology) that produced politics but politics that produced consciousness” as Garret Stademan Jones

¹⁸ Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France*, 11.

explains.¹⁹ This spurred further investigation of – as Patrick Joyce words it – “the visions of the people” concerning politics, work, and in general, imaginary constitution of the social order shared among “the common people”.²⁰ Particular political languages in conflict were summoned to tell the story of *in situ* negotiations of the capitalist work order.²¹ Fighting words were crucial in mutual, antagonistic reinforcement of class identities in constant struggle over the meaning of wage labor, industrial relations, or moral economies.²² Here lies the link between working class formation and the political.

In the “long” 19th century, it was the working class which made the most serious and contentious claims to enter into the political sphere.²³ The multiple social struggles of the working population, not without turbulence, brought about the manifold democratization of the political and social orders, and patterns of redistribution.²⁴ The encroaching democratization despite oligarchic reactions was an ongoing process, and the part of the story that was the subject of my study. Electoral successes of social democracy and a broadening of minimum liberal rights from generalizing the franchise to welfare provisions shifted trajectories of European politics on a continental scale.²⁵ Not only did the working class politics influence patterns of democratization, and thus recast the political, but also political trajectories shaped the class formation.

The 1905 Revolution was a pivotal moment determining the political choices and the self-awareness of class among workers in Russian Poland. Not only did workers perform their self-

¹⁹ Gareth Stedman Jones demonstrated how Chartism as a political movement was irreducible to structural conditions or economic predicament of the wage laborers. Its politics and language were crucial factors in articulating claims in particular manners. Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class*. Later critique deepening the role of language see William Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*, Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Joan W. Scott, “On Language, Gender, and Working-Class History,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 31 (December 16, 2008): 1, doi:10.1017/S0147547900004063. Summaries of the state of debate see Berlanstein, *Rethinking Labor History*; Dick Geary, “Labour History, the ‘Linguistic Turn’ and Postmodernism,” *Contemporary European History* 9, no. 3 (2000): 445–62.

²⁰ Class association is by no means primary for him and if it emerged in Britain at all it was much later than Thompson claimed, see Joyce, *Visions of the People*.

²¹ Reddy, *The Rise of Market Culture*.

²² Steinberg, *Fighting Words*.

²³ Leaving aside its actual specificities or coherence. For the debate on the nature of the working class, above all see Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle*; Calhoun, *The Roots of Radicalism*.

²⁴ Eley, *Forging Democracy. The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000*; Castel, *From Manual Workers to Wage Laborers*; Silver, *Forces of Labor*.

²⁵ Geoff Eley, “Cultural Socialism, the Public Sphere and the Mass Form,” in *Between Reform and Revolution: German Socialism and Communism from 1840 to 1990*, ed. David Barclay and Eric Weitz, 2009.

assertion, but also, for better or worse, their struggle was separated from the broader myriad of “progressive” or insurrectionary forces. This point in the history of Polish progressive radicalism was similar to 1848 in Western Europe, definitely separating the working class “masses” from the bourgeois claims formerly merged in the “third estate”.²⁶ Correspondingly, the memory of the revolution was later long harbored as a founding myth of class militancy in the inter-war period. It also integrated the workers into the narrative about the national revival as contributors to the history of national liberation who were no less important than the noble class participants of the earlier uprisings as I demonstrated in Chapter 2. The legacy of the revolution was also a bifurcation of working class identities, however.

While socialism of many varieties certainly gained massive support and spurred on large waves of strikes, urban workers in large numbers supported its more nationalist wing or the integral nationalist project. The former offered excitements of street militarism and fights against the hated Russian oppressor, and the latter led the workers to the ballot, offering an important sense of participation and the possibility to voice their preferences through voting (as presented in Chapter 3). Therefore, a high level of antagonism marked shop floor politics for years and particular factories maintained cultures of protest and political identities often forged amidst the revolutionary conflict and factory “cleansing” during the fratricidal struggles. This high level of antagonism prevented future common mobilizations in favor of simple economic claims, as they were easily discounted as factional, socialist demands, if not as anti-Polish conspiracies. At the same time, however, as I demonstrated in Chapter 2, the stock experiences of the revolution might be similar despite the ideological differentiation. This shared pool of experiences may help to explain the fluidity of the political field and the successful cooptation of the majority of the working class population to the Polish nation state after 1918.

These seemingly contradictory processes may be explained by a form of ecological fallacy (or

²⁶ Jonsson, *A Brief History of the Masses*, 75. See also Mulholland, *Bourgeois Liberty and the Politics of Fear*.

fallacy of division, more accurately speaking) in historical reasoning. The fact that nationalism gained adherents during the revolution does not necessarily mean that these were the same workers who earlier supported socialism. Aggregated data on party membership cannot answer this question. This ambiguity is erased when one speaks just about the “working class” or “workers” (which in many cases is unavoidable without applying cumbersome labels). In a similar vein, the fact that part of the working class supported anti-Semitic politics did not in itself cancel the democratic potential of the revolutionary public sphere. In both cases the historical analysis may concern completely different people. This clarification notwithstanding, workers’ writings admitted confusion and volatility of their political identities, especially in prerevolutionary conditions, as examined in Chapter 2. Considering the fact that it was the more committed group which decided to write, and perhaps *en masse* this might be a more widespread phenomenon, one should not reject personal political instability out of hand.

The same misleading unitary effect haunts analytical concepts which are embedded in teleologies of modernity present in historical sociology. This study, dedicated to demonstrating ambivalence, raises such doubts in respect to democratization or civil society. The oppositions such as state vs. society or liberalization vs autocracy do not necessarily have explanatory value. The conflicted Polish society formed many instances of civil society; not all of them, however, fostered democratization. Their creation, as an intermediary sphere between state and society, may have had unintended consequences, just as antagonistic pluralism supported some elements of democratic worldview. But the liberalization of the state may have created space for reactionary organizations, and elections may have fostered exclusionary identities.²⁷ Mass mobilization ushered in antisemitism and democracy scaremongering, as shown in Chapter 3. Seemingly, such a lamentation resonates with the conservative critique of political modernity and has been inconspicuously brought forward by

²⁷ On this contradiction and ambiguity of civil society in Russia, see Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia*; Susanne Hohler, “Radical Right Civil Society,” in *The Russian Revolution of 1905 in Transcultural Perspective: Identities, Peripheries, and the Flow of Ideas*, ed. Felicitas Fischer von Weikersthal (Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica Publishers, 2013), 93–104.

some of the recent historiographical accounts seeking to explore ambiguous outcomes of major historical events.²⁸ What they are blind to, however, and what, on the contrary, this study sought to demonstrate, is the fact that it is not mass politics but oligarchic reaction to it, which spurs on the authoritarian turn of political practice.

The same conservative critique has often fueled multiple exclusions, keeping workers, and even more so female ones, away from the public sphere. It is usually grounded in imposed separation of things deemed public and weeding out many “persons and groups, particularly women and racialized groups culturally identified with the body, wildness and irrationality” as not appropriate, because they are considered too bound to particular situations and domain of feeling.²⁹ What Habermas pointed out regarding the ideal of the bourgeois public sphere, was also a pattern visible in the material analyzed here, concerning the intelligentsia’s reluctance to admit workers, females and Jews to the public domain. Just as Western bourgeoisie and Habermas himself, the Polish intelligentsia featured in this study feared that the “laws which obviously have come about under the «pressure of the street» can scarcely still be understood as arising from the consensus of private individuals engaged in public discussion. They correspond in a more or less unconcealed manner to the compromise of conflicting private interests.”³⁰ Such a bourgeois (and as it appears, also intelligentsia) conception of the public sphere was premised on a clear separation of marketized society and state, thus neatly dissecting class-based claims from public reason, simultaneously funding its proclaimed universality on this very separation.³¹

Despite different historical lineages of the Polish case, the early modern noble class political nation was also premised on the commercial sphere. The separation of the manorial economy and the republic worked in a parallel manner. These divisions were transferred to the anti-state opposition

²⁸ The seminal example in political theory is Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. The example directly referring to the events covered in this study is Ury, *Barricades and Banners*. For interesting criticism of this argument, see Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy*. A balanced overview of European trajectories is presented in Müller, *Contesting Democracy*.

²⁹ Iris Marion Young, “Impartiality and the Civic Public,” in *Feminism as Critique: On the Politics of Gender*, ed. Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 73.

³⁰ Habermas, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article,” 118.

³¹ Montag, “The Pressure of the Street. Habermas’s Fear of the Masses.”

after the partitions, when the post-noble intelligentsia conspired against the foreign state. These conditions eventually eroded as non-bourgeois strata gained access to the public sphere. When “the social question” came to the fore, “society was polarized by class struggle, and the public fragmented into a mass of competing interest groups”, as Nancy Fraser comments on this epochal transformation regarding the Western configuration.³² In this respect, the Polish story parallels the rise and fall of the bourgeois public sphere sketched by normatively-oriented theorists extracting the Western historical experience. However, its more modern development was – surprisingly – divergent and it was not only because the resilience of older configuration. Thus, the “modern transformation”, despite epidermal convergence of European political edifices in the process of democratization, actually fostered a distinct path.

Pathogenetic conjuncture

The 1905 Revolution had many, not always explicit, results on the development of the Polish public sphere. The story of this development affecting structures of political action, the regime of class-based articulation and modes of political thinking which the actors employed, may be dubbed a pathogenesis. Reinhardt Koselleck originally applied the term to the patterns of thinking which emerged in opposition to the European absolutist state but appeared to be an intransigent residue lasting long after its initial genesis.³³ Despite the different historical circumstances, I also traced the long-lasting effects in political thinking and practice back to the initial conjuncture of major elements in the public sphere setting, namely the tsarist state, the intelligentsia-led civil society, and the proletarian revolt and claims for public recognition. As I argued in Chapter 1, the emerging proletarian public was not the one which had been imagined by the bourgeois elites. The reasons were its alternative genesis, different forms of participation and alternative governing principles, as well as

³² Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere.”

³³ Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*.

the divergence of class-based interests. The fact that it raised claims which were counter to the social stasis was only one side of the coin. The very fact that these claims were discounted stemmed also from the particular regime of representation of private and collective claims, which render the latter illegitimate.

The public sphere is not only a sphere “which mediates between society and state, in which the public organizes itself as the bearer of public opinion”³⁴; historically, it has been a more “structured setting where cultural and ideological contest or negotiation among the variety of publics takes place”.³⁵ In the Polish case, the forming of public opinion was not between the society and the state but the society *against* the state. It soon, however, approached an additional, alternative form of public articulation that could not possibly be integrated into the corrupted and judgmental mode of political reasoning forged in conditions of non-existent political sphere, properly speaking. According to Fraser, such an additional, subaltern public has had a dual character; it has functioned as “space of withdrawal and regroupment” and “base and training ground for agitational activities toward wider publics”.³⁶ The subject of this study was, among others, the subaltern regroupment, which fostered alternative practices and training towards effective articulation of interests in a broader public. Consequently, the workers simultaneously confronted the state and the public sphere of the dominant groups, facing political violence and class-based exclusion.

The public practices of the workers and modes of universalization of particular experiences and demands were difficult to integrate in a general public sphere that had been tainted by its (bourgeois, or in our case, intelligentsia) context of emergence. It was no other place than the proverbial “street” where the proletarian public sphere emerged and the popular demand was debated. Only from there could an impulse to integrate class-based demands into a legitimate pool of arguments arise.³⁷ Although there were moments when inter-class body politic emerged in the streets and squares with

³⁴ Habermas, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article,” 115.

³⁵ Eley, “Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century.”

³⁶ Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere.”

³⁷ Montag, “The Pressure of the Street. Habermas’s Fear of the Masses.”

its high political potentials and the workers were given certain rights to the city, they only became urban dwellers and not fully recognized citizens.³⁸ If such an integration is inhibited and an oligarchic reaction is triggered, the class-specific public spheres develop separately, causing further divergence, as Craig Calhoun concludes from the story of English plebeian radicals, and which my investigation confirms.³⁹ Consequently, the popular demand, when not included in the public sphere, degenerates, and political liberalism cannot be practiced, maintained or introduced without the basic needs of the claimants being met, as Hannah Arendt understood well.⁴⁰ Instead of co-opting the popular revolt as a factor facilitating and later solidifying political balance and civil institutions, the workers' claims were, as I argued, excluded from legitimate public activity and removed from the domain of rationality. This tendency led to suppression of the popular unrest and redirected it further into social disintegration and unrestrained revolt.

Nevertheless, this does not fully explain why the previously progressive and pro-democratic intelligentsia also rejected general cooperation and identification with the proletarian surge. Following the rapid entrance of the popular classes into politics, the enlightened Polish elites remained almost helpless, as I briefly demonstrated in Chapter 1. The “fear of the masses”⁴¹ intensified in a way that prevented the liberal Polish intelligentsia from acknowledging and recognizing the proletarian public and its claims as a legitimate counterpart of the rising public sphere. While the foreign tsarist regime inhibited any practical political action and modes of reasoning, the quasi-utopian way of thinking by the liberal salon detached it from the political way of thinking proper, much more than when forged in opposition to the Western absolutist state⁴² or in the context of

³⁸ Bodnar, “Reclaiming Public Space”; Henri Lefebvre, “The Right to the City,” in *Writings on Cities*, ed. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Cambridge, Mass, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996); On the local context of the right to the city, see Kamil Śmiechowski, “Hierarchia czy demokracja? Wizja stosunków społecznych w miastach Królestwa Polskiego (na podstawie dyskusji o samorządzie miejskim w trakcie rewolucji 1905 roku),” *Studia z Historii Społeczno-Gospodarczej XIX i XX Wieku* 14 (2015): 103–20, doi:10.18778/2080-8313.14.08; Śmiechowski, Sikorska-Kowalska, and Fukumoto, *Robotnicy Łodzi drugiej połowy XIX wieku. Nowe perspektywy badawcze*.

³⁹ Calhoun, *The Roots of Radicalism*.

⁴⁰ Hannah. Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014).

⁴¹ Balibar, Stolze, and Giancotti, “Spinoza, the Anti-Orwell.”

⁴² See respectively Freedman, *The Political Theory of Political Thinking*; Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*.

mainland Russia under the Tsar.⁴³ The bourgeois press criticized the underdevelopment of public institutions and civic communities and envisioned their emergence as a way of securing the modernization of the Poles under imperial rule. Such a rendition of public activity was apolitical, if not anti-political, and opposed to the (hostile) state. The visions of the moral order of public activity harbored among the intelligentsia prevented them from including non-prescribed phenomena, both from above (state politics) and below (a popular contentious public and alternative public sphere). In these circumstances the liberal intelligentsia (if not, strictly speaking, the elites) aimed to spread knowledge among the people until they reached the “entry conditions” of rational public participation. Knowledge, however, is indivisible. Defining social status and political position by reference to knowledge, as Eastern European intelligentsias did, impedes possibilities for negotiating conflict with other social groups that are allegedly destitute of it.⁴⁴ In this realm, the prospective, utopian dimension of Polish liberalism unveils itself. This approach could simply not have worked during the rapid rise of mass politics.

In contrast, the long path of popular classes in England or France was marked by gradual polemics, with proletarian contenders raising claims and renegotiating with a still not ossified capitalist order.⁴⁵ In such circumstances, it was possible for emerging elites to at least partially recognize their claim for political visibility. The oligarchic elites of the *ancien regime* and *nouveau riche* bourgeois alike were eagerly trying to define the situation in their own way; however, it was not possible to fully preclude and dismiss the proletarian claims and the plebeian public as the mere inarticulate calls of an uneducated mob. In Russian Poland, in turn, it was much easier to make this distinction, as the working class radicalism was not based on an informed debate and did not face the

⁴³ Bradley, “Subjects into Citizens: Societies, Civil Society, and Autocracy in Tsarist Russia.”

⁴⁴ In respect to Russia, a similar argument was made by McDaniel, *Autocracy, Capitalism, and Revolution in Russia*, chap. 9.

⁴⁵ Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*; Steinberg, *Fighting Words*; Günther Lottes, *Politische Aufklärung Und Plebejisches Publikum: Zur Theorie U. Praxis D. Engl. Radikalismus Im Späten 18. Jh*, *Ancien Régime, Aufklärung Und Revolution*, Bd. 1 (München-Wien: Oldenbourg, 1979); Ronald Aminzade, *Ballots and Barricades: Class Formation and Republican Politics in France, 1830-1871* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993); Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France*.

educated public on equal ground – as had been the case among some earlier Western European plebeian radicals.⁴⁶ The Polish progressive milieus, not to mention sheer conservatives, were able to neglect the proletarian public at ease, excluding the democratic tendency brought about by popular struggle.⁴⁷ This exclusion happened even though the intelligentsia tradition had seemingly predisposed the public sphere to be much more receptive of emergent, contentious claimants. Their earlier endeavors to foster participation backfired; once triggered, popular participation was still perceived with paternalism and condescension. The revolution practically erased the old composition of the intelligentsia ethos, sharply revealing its paradoxes, but boosted some of its elements.

Above all, the revolution brought to an end the ideal of national unity. The reconciliation between various social groups and dreams about common struggle in the name of national goals – usually imagined as the struggle for national liberation and independence – was long harbored among various kinds of Polish elites. But if factory owners were easily reaching out to tsarist troops in order to suppress labor unrest, workers were shooting dead their fellows from different parties, and priests were calling for an ultimate confrontation with the satanic socialists sometimes leading to actual murders of rural agitators, then there was hardly any hope left for a reconciliation in the name of national revival. The very idea of this revival was contested and its political nature conspicuously revealed. Within the homogeneous politics of nation, the class-specific interests could hardly be expressed, but the rise of the labor movement and mass socialist parties temporarily brought them into light. Such an antagonism, if mediated through mechanisms of political representation, is after all a widely present feature of modern democracy. In this respect, therefore, revolution pushed the Polish public sphere into modernity. However, the lines of division, which constituted antagonism in this particular case, were not favorable for the long-term legitimacy of labor.

Regardless of the fact that the class-oriented left surfaced as a powerful movement, it was still

⁴⁶ Lottes, *Politische Aufklärung und plebejisches Publikum*; Eley, “Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century”; Calhoun, *The Roots of Radicalism*.

⁴⁷ Eley, “Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century”; Montag, “The Pressure of the Street. Habermas’s Fear of the Masses.”

constrained by the conditions of a stateless nation under imperial autocracy. The left was fractured chiefly because of the controversies on the “national question”, a condition which appeared elsewhere in Europe only after WWI. PPS pioneered combining social struggle with national liberation, a pattern present in many anti-colonial revolutions of the 20th century.⁴⁸ However, facing the existing national elites entrenched in the positions of status, there was little possibility to express class-based claims as national-universal. At the same time, these claims were easily delegitimized as fracturing the national unity, if not directly accused of acting against the national interest. These interests might have been the well-being of “Polish industry” or land holdings of the Polish gentry endangered by parcellation. Such a framing successfully prevented debate on more profound redistribution. The irredentist drive channeled social unrest into integral nationalism and effectively impeded any consensus in that matter. Adding insult to injury, the cultural heterogeneity of local populations impeded unidirectional political mobilization. As larger comparative research demonstrates, the basic level of established (usually national) polity is an indispensable condition for the successful long-term mobilization of the left, even in internationalist terms.⁴⁹ In the Polish case, however, emotions might not only be funneled into inter-ethnic conflict but also invested in the inter-class state-building project.

For that reason, major social demands (as for instance land reform) were also left unaddressed in the Polish Second Republic after the reconstruction of the Polish nation state. They were brought back on the table only after the disastrous WWII catastrophe and later realized from above by the Stalinist state which detached local populations from the empowering experience of successful social and political struggle. This, in turn, casted the idea of redistribution as a foreign and hostile imposition. The resulting general contempt towards ultimate democratic demands and the impossibility of

⁴⁸ Eric Blanc, “National Liberation and Bolshevism Reexamined: A View from the Borderlands,” *John Riddell Marxist Essays and Commentary*, May 20, 2014, <http://johnriddell.wordpress.com/2014/05/20/national-liberation-and-bolshevism-reexamined-a-view-from-the-borderlands/>; Eric Blanc, “Anti-Imperial Marxism Borderland Socialists and the Evolution of Bolshevism on National Liberation,” *International Socialist Review*, no. 100 (2016); Marcin Kula, *Narodowe i rewolucyjne*, Biblioteka “Więzi” (Warszawa: Aneks, 1991).

⁴⁹ Stefano Bartolini, *The Political Mobilization of the European Left, 1860-1980: The Class Cleavage* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), chap. 4.

collective bargaining over the popular economic interest had an even longer afterlife. The intelligentsia mindset was preserved along with the social strata itself, which appeared surprisingly resilient with its cultural capital through subsequent historical turnovers.⁵⁰ After the fall of state socialism, it was again easier to delegitimize claims for redistribution; it resonated soundly with new neoliberal premises.⁵¹ A bottom-up insurgent democratization, 1905 just as the “first” working class solidarity of the 1980, was suppressed by the state structure. The postponed aftermaths, 1918 and 1989, respectively, were championed not by the initial authors of the upsurge but by their self-proclaimed leaders, the intelligentsia.⁵² Thus, going one step further one may also float a hypothesis about a long-lasting moralized vision of politics of the Polish intelligentsia and corresponding suppression of class-based interests of labor.⁵³ The events described were a prelude to a complex conceptual-political lamination lasting for years and haunting the Polish public sphere even today. Seen in this way, the 1905 Revolution, with its preludes and aftermaths, was a pivotal moment for placing the workers within the political and forging the particular conceptual-political form of the Polish public sphere. Correspondingly, this case study informs the more general investigation of the lineages of public spheres and democratizations.

⁵⁰ Zarycki, “Cultural Capital and the Political Role of the Intelligentsia in Poland”; Zarycki, “Class Analysis in Conditions of a Dual-Stratification Order.”

⁵¹ On the working class place within social imaginary and political sphere, see Elizabeth C. Dunn, *Privatizing Poland: Baby Food, Big Business, and the Remaking of Labor*, Culture and Society after Socialism (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); David Ost, *The Defeat of Solidarity: Anger and Politics in Postcommunist Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005). These authors do not necessarily stress the long-term intransigencies of political thinking which might have supported the marginalization of workers. For intellectual history that helps to explain this, see the next footnote.

⁵² From too abundant literature on tormented interaction between workers and the intelligentsia in the first Solidarity movement and after, regarding this issue, see above all Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity: A Political Sociology of Poland's Working Class Democratization*; Michael D. Kennedy, *Professionals, Power, and Solidarity in Poland: A Critical Sociology of Soviet-Type Society*, Soviet and East European Studies 79 (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); David Ost, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics: Opposition and Reform in Poland since 1968*, Labor and Social Change (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1990).

⁵³ On later intellectual history of Polish dissidents, self-aware continuators of the intelligentsia's ethos, see Arndt, *Intellektuelle in der Opposition: Diskurse zur Zivilgesellschaft in der Volksrepublik Polen*; Gawin, *Wielki zwrot*; Siermiński, *Dekada przełomu. Polska lewica opozycyjna 1968-1980*.

APPENDIX 1

Methodology and sources

This study tackles research problems of historical sociology of the political. One may also call this research practice an enlarged intellectual history, systematically broadened to encompass also popular classes – in this case the workers. The general approach is a problem-driven one, designed to tackle a particular general issue with appropriate means and not with a stable methodological framework. As I zoom in, however, it is also a source-driven study. I apply research strategies to particular, delimited sets of sources in a more selective way, and it is the archive which delimits the realm of the possible in the respective chapters. Thus, this study is composed of several prismatic insights of the core problem with different *foci* and substantially varying corpora of empirical material. It is designed to tackle the main issue from different yet supplementary angles.

The overarching “social ontology” is critically realist and language-sensitive. Thus, I considered language a crucial element constituting social reality, however not coextensive with it. Moreover, language is an unavoidable mediator in the research practice dealing with historical written sources. My approach to primary sources, of necessarily textual nature, is informed by post-linguistic turn labor studies on the one hand, and historically-oriented discourse analysis and conceptual history on the other. Whenever appropriate, relevant footnotes are placed in the text, as listing abundant literature again here would be too cumbersome. Research strategies regarding different groups of sources were varied, and analogously, I included necessarily information in respective chapters, also adding elements of source criticism appropriate for the given group of materials. Therefore, I will only briefly recollect practical procedures here, focusing more on the technical side of the process related to the characteristics of the sources.

Biographical testimonies

During the archival research, 111 biographies were selected for further processing as structurally developed enough to allow meaningful analysis. The built corpus consists of autobiographical testimonies of different size and character. This variety spans from three-page-long resumes gathered in party or factory archives to thick-as-a-brick autobiographies.

Pre-coded chunks of autobiographies relevant for this study were turned into computer-readable text and open-coded using Weft-QDA software. Later, axial coding was used to build connections between literary forms and life cycle stages.¹ The material was later additionally selectively coded in order to structure the insights better and produce topic-oriented, sequenced pictures of the life course of political militants.

Such autobiographies, apart from being gathered in archival collections, were published in dedicated journals, edited volumes and as separate book publications, both during the inter war period and after WWII. When quoted, footnotes contain a full bibliographical reference. Additionally, journals (but not separate biographies published in them) and self-standing books are listed in due bibliographies.

Political leaflets

My investigation concerns a complete corpus of preserved political texts (ca. 800 items) published in Polish by party organizations in three major industrial centers of Russian Poland (Łódź, Warsaw and Dąbrowa basin) and by the central committees of the parties. The analysis covered worker-directed political discourse in the leaflets issued by the major political parties, which included SDKPiL, PPS, later split into PPS-Revolutionary Faction and PPS-Left, and National Democracy with the National Workers Association – NZR. It is worth remembering that socialist parties also

¹ Uta Gerhardt, “‘Ideal Type’ and the Construction of the Life Course. A New Look at the Micro-Makro Link,” in *Society and Biography: Interrelationships between Social Structure, Institutions and the Life Course*, ed. Ansgar Weymann, Walter R. Heinz, and Peter Alheit (Weinheim: Dt. Studien-Verlag, 1996); Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet M. Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 2nd ed (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1998).

addressed German- and Jewish (Yiddish)-speaking workers, and Jewish socialist parties created another pillar of vivid political life during those days. Leaflets in Russian were directed chiefly to soldiers. However, non-Polish material was not systematically analyzed.

Digitalized leaflets were researched with computer-assisted qualitative data mining software (QDA Miner + WordStat) in order to shed light on discursive patterns emerging in the dense communicative setting of the revolution and the development of political languages in time. Every leaflet in the database was assigned variables such as party, place of publication, date and topic. The material was open coded and in certain aspects closed coding was later performed. The codes concerned themes, *topoi* used to express core issues, syntax applied to particular actors, passive and active structures, normative expectations toward readers, and assumed community coded via grammatical persons. Additionally, I performed basic lexicometrical analysis examining key concepts and collocations. The presence of all these features could be easily correlated with assigned variables, so, for instance, it was clearly visible how rhetorical strategies of a given party evolved over time. The data set, however, was manageable enough to read every text in a traditional way with full hermeneutic sensitivity. Data organization allowed me to easily return to the chosen themes and interpretatively re-read relevant fragments or choose illustrative examples.

The presented insights are informed by the analysis of the entire corpus, but when exemplary items are quoted, then particular bibliographical address is given (incipit and archival location). Leaflets were gathered from archives, libraries and collections of primary sources with the help of a published bibliography.² Archival institutions gathering the leaflets and published collections are listed separately in due bibliographies.

The press

The press was used as a source in two modes. The arguments presented in Chapter 4 are grounded in systematic analysis of Polish-speaking dailies in Łódź. The background was a complete

² Kiepuska, *Bibliografia pism ulotnych rewolucji 1905-7 w Królestwie Polskim*.

query of all issues of two major dailies from 1899 to the outbreak of WWI performed within a framework of another research project.³ For the purposes of this study, I used the articles from the broader corpus which concern social and political topics and, above all, workers. In addition, I reexamined all issues published during the revolution. Core articles were as well digitalized and analyzed in QDA miner software (see above).

Of great assistance were republished collections of articles⁴ and preparatory research undertaken by the author of a monograph on one of the press titles (personal communication).⁵ When quoting newspaper articles, I list the title of the article, year of publication and the concurrent issue (roughly corresponding to the working days of the year), which allows for unambiguous identification, unlike the daily date given on a vignette parallelly according to two calendars.

In addition, I also made an extensive, albeit less systematic query of other titles, used all over this study. This included Warsaw dailies, some influential weeklies dealing with political topics, and, above all, illegal political press published by the parties. Titles are listed in the relevant bibliography.

Other materials

Apart from the abovementioned coherent corpora, I used a panoply of other, more scattered materials. The published collections of primary sources were of great assistance, and only occasionally I drew directly from sources produced by the tsarist administration. As a contextual background I used larger socialist brochures, party programs (usually republished as collected volumes), some theoretical enunciations of party leaders, collections of letters, and political pamphlets.

³ Cztery dyskursy o nowoczesności – modernizm peryferii na przykładzie Łodzi (XIX-XX wiek), projekt realizowany w Katedrze Socjologii Kultury UŁ, finansowany w ramach programu NCN Opus 2, UMO-2011/03/B/HS6/01874.

⁴ Sikorska-Kowalska, *Wizerunek kobiety łódzkiej przełomu XIX i XX wieku*; Sikorska-Kowalska, *"Wolność, czy zbrodnia?"*

⁵ Śmiechowski, *Łódzka wizja postępu*.

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E. Newspapers and periodicals

Łódź dailies analyzed systematically in Chapter 4

- “Goniec Łódzki” 1898-1906
- “Kurier Łódzki” 1906-1911
- “Nowy Kurier Łódzki” 1911-1914
- “Rozwój” 1897-1914

Contemporary underground political press

- “Czerwony Sztandar” (SDKPiL)
- “Łodzianin” (PPS)
- “Pochodnia” (NZR)
- “Przegląd Wszechpolski” (ND, published openly in Austrian Galicia)
- “Przedświt” (PPS)
- “Robotnik” (PPS)
- “Z Pola Walki”

Other titles used occasionally

- “Dzwon Polski”
- “Głos”
- “Liberum veto”
- “Prawda”

Journals publishing political biographies of workers in later years

- “Archiwum Ruchu Robotniczego”, Feliks Tych (ed.), 1973-1978
- “Kiliński”, Stanisław Nowicki (ed.), 1936-1937
- “Kronika Ruchu Rewolucyjnego w Polsce”, Adam Próchnik, Jan Krzesławski (eds.), 1935-1939
- “Niepodległość”, Leon Wasilewski (ed.) 1929-1939
- “Z Pola Walki”, Moskwa 1927-1931,
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