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"The Goal and the Way" – the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) in Exile

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the activity of the Polish Socialist Party (Polish abbreviation: PPS) in exile in the years 1945–1989. The political goals of the Polish emigration and the activities of the Polish Socialists are presented in this context. The differences in the strategy of the various political centers, as well as the possibilities of using the Socialist International (SI), including the Socialist Union of Central-Eastern Europe (SUCEE) for the "Polish cause" are also outlined. The point was to ensure that the problem of the countries behind the Iron Curtain did not disappear from the international agenda. The article presents the differing approaches of the main ideologues of the Polish socialist movement (Zygmunt Zaremba and Adam Ciołkosz) to the changes in Poland after 1956. The essence of the dispute at the time was the answer to the question of whether the Polish political system was subject to evolutionary transformation towards democracy, or whether the communist system was inherently undemocratic and therefore any changes were merely cosmetic. Both activists personified the argument – which gained most notoriety in the 1960s in the West – assuming a gradual convergence between capitalist and communist societies. Ultimately, history conceded the point to Ciołkosz, who said that "liberalisation of the communist dictatorship is impossible" and that the goal of socialists in exile is "its liquidation."

Keywords: Polish Socialist Party, Socialist Union of Central-Eastern Europe, émigré socialists, Polish Political Emigration after WWII, The Socialist International.

PPS in the Country

In Polish history, the Polish Socialist Party played an important role in the quest for, and subsequent development of, an independent Polish state. The PPS was founded in exile in Paris in 1892, when Poland did not exist on the map of Europe. The emigrant circles associated with socialist thought were divided into a national and an internationalist current. The PPS definitely belonged to the camp that placed the main emphasis on the struggle to regain Poland's independence. The programme stressed that the political system of the future Republic of Poland should be built on democratic principles.

The Party's programme guaranteed direct universal suffrage, equal rights for all peoples living in Poland, equal rights for all citizens regardless of race, nationality, religion and gender, freedom of the press, speech and assembly, progressive taxation, an eight-hour working day, a minimum wage, equal pay for men and women, a ban on child labor (up to the age of 14), free education and social assistance in the event of injury at work.[1] The foundation of the party's identity was to combine the idea of independence with that of socialism.

In the 1930s, when the Great Depression caused a huge pauperization of society, an apparent radicalization occurred especially among the younger generation. Many of the young were willing to seek a common front with the communists, especially in the face of the growing influence of fascism. Older socialist activists were strongly opposed to this. The outbreak of war in 1939 and the occupation did not eliminate the divisions over attitudes to the Communists and had a decomposing effect on the socialist movement. The problem intensified as the Soviet Union took the initiative on the Eastern Front and the Red Army began to approach the Polish borders. The geopolitical interests of the United States and Soviet Russia in particular were on a collision course with those of Poland.

Structures of an underground state were established in the country, with the Polish Socialist Party[2] playing the leading role. The formation of the Provisional Government of National Unity on 28 June 1945, and especially the withdrawal of recognition of the government in exile by the Western powers in July of that year, strengthened the conviction of the PPS-WRN (Polish Socialist Party – Freedom, Equality, Independence) leadership that it was at home that the direction of political and political change would be decided. It should be recalled that Kazimierz Pużak was General Secretary of the PPS-WRN and Chairman of the underground parliament, the Council of National Unity. Arrested on March 27, 1945 by the NKVD, he was later tried in June 1945 in the Trial of the Sixteen. His place in the leadership of the underground PPS-WRN was taken by Zygmunt Zaremba. In the rapidly changing conditions, the party leadership decided on a formula for legalizing the activities of the underground PPS.

Gathered at an underground meeting, the members of the pre-war PPS Supreme Council on July 5, 1945 recognized the Provisional Government of National Unity in Warsaw and expected it to create the conditions for any "democratic group" to begin activity. They hoped for the possibility of overt activity not only by members but also by the

1 Michał Śliwa, "Polscy socjaliści – ruch niespełnionych nadziei?," in *Niepodległość i socjalizm. Studia i szkice z dziejów Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej*, eds. Maciej Żuczkowski and Kamil Piskała (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2020), 14–34 (literature there too).

2 Maciej Żuczkowski, *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna Wolność-Równość-Niepodległość w Polskim Państwie Podziemnym X 1939–VII 1945*, doctoral thesis written under the supervision of Professor Andrzej Friszke (Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 2023).

leadership of the underground PPS-WRN. These assumptions turned out to be wrong. Moscow was setting its sights on other socialists.

In the areas occupied by the Red Army's counter-offensive, the XXV Congress of the so-called reborn PPS was held in Lublin in September 1944. The retention of the numbering of the pre-war party's congresses was intended to suggest a continuation of its traditions. The participants were dominated by people who during the occupation had been in opposition to the Polish underground state, the PPS-WRN leadership and its political line. "The new," also referred to by some as the "concessionary," PPS was rapidly expanding its ranks, fed also by members of the underground PPS-WRN who were not fully aware of the situation.

Held from June 29 to July 1, 1945, the XXVI Congress of the "reborn" PPS stressed the correctness of the current policy of close cooperation with the communists and the USSR and condemned the "anti-communist and anti-Soviet concepts of the WRN socialist right." Despite this, part of the PPS-WRN leadership believed that if members of the underground PPS WRN joined the "reborn" PPS, they would manage to control the party leadership and thus influence a change in the party's political line. These calculations turned out to be misguided. The mechanism for eliminating political opponents worked very effectively. In the newly elected, 100-strong Supreme Council, the leadership was given to Stanisław Szwalbe, an advocate of "a united front of the working class and cooperation with the PPR," the head of the Central Executive Committee was again Edward Osóbka-Morawski, and Józef Cyrankiewicz was elected General Secretary.[3] The PPS found itself on a downward spiral and was finally absorbed by the communists in December 1948.

The situation in the country was gradually deteriorating. The communists did not yet have a full monopoly of power, but using the "salami" method, they were steadily removing their competitors from political life.

In January 1946, a secret meeting of the top leadership of the PPS-WRN from the period of the occupation took place in one of the premises in Warsaw: Kazimierz Pużak, Józef Dzięgielewski, Feliks Misiorowski, Tadeusz Szturm de Sztrem, Zygmunt Zaremba and Franciszek Białas decided that, in view of the growing threat, the only chance to preserve the socialist identity was to develop the party in exile[4]. As Zaremba wrote: "given

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3 Kazimierz Ćwik, *Problemy współdziałania PPR i PPS w województwie krakowskim 1945–1948* (Kraków: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1974), 53.

4 Zygmunt Żuławski, *Od sanacji do PRL* (Chicago: "Polonia" Book Store and Publishers, 1983), 78; Zbigniew Zygmunt Kaleniecki, *Konspiracja WRN-owska w Polsce Ludowej* (Warsaw: Wyższa Szkoła Oficerska MSW im. F. Dzierżyńskiego, 1986), 138 et seq.; Zygmunt Woźniczka, "Podziemna PPS-WRN w latach 1945–1948," *Zeszyty Historyczne* 112 (1995): 123 et seq.; Marek Łatyński, *Nie paść na kolana. Szkice o opozycji lat czterdziestych* (London: Polonia Book, 1985), 241.

the political shape of the post-war world, the party must be at the forefront of efforts in exile to regain independence."[5] It was also deemed necessary for Zygmunt Zaremba and Franciszek Białas to take advantage of the still-functioning opportunities for crossing the border illegally and leaving Poland. The two PPS envoys were given powers to set up a PPS Foreign Delegation. In addition to Białas and Zaremba, it was to include representatives of the Foreign Committee. A certain period in the history of the PPS-WRN was coming to a close. The people most involved in the structures of this organization, who had managed to survive the war and the German occupation, had to capitulate in the face of the new occupation. In the order imposed by Moscow, there was no longer any place for the "enemies of people's democracy." All those who formed the Polish underground state subordinate to the government in exile were considered to be such. As Zaremba wrote: "We will go on a new path, with a sense of duty fulfilled and many achievements that history is yet to judge. We will go with an unyielding conviction of the rightness of the democratic idea, rejecting the restraint of organisation, press and speech."[6]

In Exile

As a result of the outbreak of the Second World War, hundreds of Poles found themselves outside the country, initially mainly in France. Of the Socialists, only Herman Lieberman had been there since 1933; others joined later: Adam Pragier, Jan Stańczyk, Tadeusz Tomaszewski, Alojzy Adamczyk, Józef Beluch-Beloński, Ludwik Grosfeld, Adam and Lidia Ciołkosz.[7] Some held high-ranking positions in the party: Adamczyk, Ciołkosz, Grosfeld, Lieberman and Stańczyk were members of the Supreme Council appointed by the XXIV PPS Congress in Radom in 1937, while Ciołkosz and Stańczyk were also members of the Central Executive Committee, of the last pre-war term, and Tomaszewski was a member of the Central Party Court.

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5 Letter from Zygmunt Zaremba to the Foreign Committee of the PPS, 3 July 1946, Adam and Lidia Ciolkosz Archive in London (hereafter ALC), ALC 161, collection 133a, Polish Underground Movement Study Trust, London.

6 Letter to members of the Polish Socialist Party, 15 July 1945, quoted in: Żuczkowski, *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*, 449. Zaremba and Białas spent the rest of their lives in exile. Pużak, Zdanowski, Misiorowski, Dzięgielewski, Szturm de Sztrem and others, were arrested in 1947 and sentenced to several years in prison. Pużak died in prison, Zdanowski and Dzięgielewski, terminally ill with tuberculosis, died soon after his release from prison.

7 Jerzy Tomicki, *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna 1892-1948* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1983), 393; Dorota Urzyńska, *Polski ruch socjalistyczny na obczyźnie w latach 1939–1945* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza, 2000), 35.

On January 22, 1940, these activists formed the Central Executive Committee Abroad, headed by Lieberman as Chairman and Grosfeld as Vice-Chairman. The committee consisted of Tomaszewski, Adamczyk, Ciołkosz and Stańczyk. Under this name, the CEC operated until the defeat of France. After the evacuation to England, in March 1941, the name of the PPS Foreign Committee (Polish abbreviation KZ PPS) was adopted, which reflected the actual state of affairs, meaning that the party leadership existed in the occupied country, with only the Foreign Committee in exile. In practice, such an arrangement did not quite work smoothly and there were tensions over competences. It should be mentioned as an aside that in the past, during the period of partition in the 19th century, socialists also had to solve the problem of co-operation between the domestic and foreign centers.

On October 21, 1941, Herman Lieberman died. After his death, there was a change in the composition of the Committee. Adam Ciołkosz and Jan Stańczyk became Vice-Chairmen, Ludwik Grosfeld became Secretary. The post of Chairman remained vacant until May 1942, when Jan Kwapiński arrived from exile in Siberia. Kwapiński was unanimously elected Chairman.

The formation of the Provisional Government of National Unity and the withdrawal of recognition of Tomasz Arciszewski's government in exile by the USA and the United Kingdom on July 5, 1945, and later by other Western countries, came as a shock to the political class in exile. Formally, from then on, Warsaw and the government operating there became the center of decision-making. The actions taken by Polish politicians remaining abroad should be considered in this context.

As mentioned above, at home on July 5, 1945, the members of the pre-war PPS Supreme Council recognized the Provisional Government of National Unity in Warsaw and urged comrades abroad to return to continue their activities. The PPS Foreign Committee did not accept this and, in a separate resolution of 30 July 1945, stressed that there was a need to preserve the Foreign Committee in exile in order to carry out political action "for the full realisation of Poland's independence, socialism and democracy."[8] Moreover, the Committee's role was to grow, not only as a superior body to all PPS centers in exile, but also as a coordinator of the political activities of other parties and an active participant in the forum of the Socialist International (SI). The intention to develop the PPS in exile was also evidenced by the fact that a recruitment drive was launched as early as July of that year.[9]

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8 Resolution of the Foreign Committee of the PPS of 30 July 1945, Private Collection of Stanisław Wąsik in London.

9 Minutes of meetings of the Foreign Committee of the PPS of 3 August, 5 October, 5 November and 12 December 1945, Private collection of Stanisław Wąsik in London.

Information coming out of Poland about numerous arrests and terror against political opponents only strengthened the socialists in exile in their conviction that building an independent socialist party at home would not be possible. On February 16, 1946 the PPS Foreign Committee adopted another resolution stating that, despite the entry of "Zygmunt Żuławski and comrades into the ranks of the PPS," the party did not constitute an authentic representation of the Polish socialist movement because its leadership, which had been largely imposed by "foreign factors," consisted of people who had had nothing to do with the PPS, its program and ideological assumptions in the past. Consequently, the Foreign Committee – "standing firm in its position of remaining faithful to the party's ideology and programme" – and aware of the political conditions making it impossible to carry out activities according to the PPS programme, decided to continue "to be an advocate in the world of the cause of Polish socialism and the Polish cause."[10]

This took place almost at the same time when, in Warsaw, in conspiracy, the top leadership of the PPS-WRN, headed by Pużak, finally decided that there was no chance for the existence of an independent PPS in the country. The center of gravity therefore shifted to exile. It could be said, however, that it was the PPS Foreign Committee that better understood the historical processes taking place, outlining the tasks of the PPS in exile as late as July 1945 and embarking on its expansion.

As soon as Zaremba and Białas arrived in France on August 9, 1946, the Foreign Delegation was constituted in Paris. Zygmunt Zaremba became Chairman, and Vice-Chairmen: Franciszek Białas and Adam Ciołkosz.

Almost immediately after the Foreign Delegation was constituted, its Chairman addressed a letter to the former Chairman of the Socialist Workers' International, Camille Huysmans (Belgian Prime Minister 1946–1947), explaining that "in view of the impossibility of the legal development of the Polish Socialist Party on Polish territory" the domestic and émigré

> leadership elements of our movement, had decided to set up a Foreign Delegation with the aim of:
> – maintaining and continuing the 54-year legacy of the PPS,
> – coordinating the efforts of the PPS foreign and domestic outposts in the struggle for the full independence of the country and, in particular, the right to exist as an independent PPS,

[10] Resolution of the Foreign Committee of the PPS on the concessionary PPS, 16 February 1946 in *„My tu żyjemy jak w obozie warownym". Listy PPS-WRN Warszawa-Londyn 1940–1945* (London: Polonia Book, 1992), 497.

– representing the PPS before the fraternal socialist parties and contributing to the work of rebuilding the Socialist International.[11]

As the document testifies, the Foreign Delegation claimed to be the sole representation of Polish socialists abroad. This must have aroused objections from members of the Foreign Committee headed by Tomasz Arciszewski. Another, no less important element of division among the PPS was the attitude to the Polish authorities remaining in exile.[12] The dividing line in this case seemed to depend on the degree of involvement in governmental structures. Tomasz Arciszewski – Prime Minister, Jan Kwapiński and Adam Pragier – Ministers, and Tadeusz Tomaszewski – President of the Supreme Audit Office, were all declared supporters of maintaining the government center not only as a symbol of an independent Poland, but as an actual, legal representative of the Polish authorities. They did not accept the fact that this Government was not recognized by most countries. For them, the situation in Poland bore the hallmarks of temporariness. Gustaw Herling-Grudziński wrote of this milieu: "there is a general conviction there that it is enough to represent patiently and to cut coupons from the pension of legality."[13]

The second direction was represented by Adam Ciołkosz and Zygmunt Zaremba. They assumed that the situation in Poland would take on the characteristics of permanence. In their view, social sentiment had shifted to the left and not all reforms proposed by the authorities in Warsaw were rejected by the people. They believed that the burden of the struggle to reform the political system in Poland should shift from the diplomatic to the ideological plane, which could be done through the Socialist International. They were aware of the weakness of the Arciszewski. Government, whose role was reduced to expressing protests, but – at least for the time being – they could find no other structural solutions. Besides, they both believed that the government's alliance with the national right was not beneficial to the Socialists. As Ciołkosz wrote:

> [...] I do not see any need for us to continue to accompany political bankrupts, without a thought, without a future, and only with platitudes about honour [...] Detach ourselves from them at the earliest opportunity, if it is not too late, and do not allow ourselves to be concreted over, as Stanisław (Arciszewski's pseudonym, A.S.) did, with the prospect of forever "standing at the post," but only standing.[14]

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11 Letter from the Foreign Delegation of the PPS to the President of the Socialist International, 20 August 1946, ALC 161.

12 In the end, only a few countries recognized the Polish government in London: Holy See, Spain, Ireland, Lebanon, Cuba.

13 Letter from Gustaw Herling-Grudziński to Zygmunt Zaremba, 9 March 1947, ZZ6/1, Archive of the Polish Scientific Institute (hereafter: APIN), New York. For more on Grudzinski's activity in the PPS in exile: Anna Siwik, "Gustaw Herling-Grudziński – mniej znany socjalista," in *Człowiek i społeczeństwo. Political Studies*, ed. Adam Ilciów (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe FNCE, 2021), 107–18.

14 Letter from Adam Ciolkosz to Zygmunt Zaremba, 14 December 1946, ZZ 4/1, APIN.

Around the New Formula – "Legalism" or "Committee"

The problem of political representation of political refugees did not only concern the Polish diaspora. Refugees from all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that fell under the USSR's sphere of influence were in a similar situation. After the initial shock of losing their homelands and adapting to the new conditions, a tendency to create supra-party structures representing the subjugated peoples emerged. They were united mainly by a more or less radical anti-communism, the recognition of the installed governments as puppets of Moscow and the conviction that, in the bipolar world that emerged after Yalta, the orientation should be towards the United States. The consequence of this was to make the political exile of the countries behind the Iron Curtain dependent on the political strategy of the United States in relation to Moscow. US policy towards Central and Eastern Europe was not only conditioned by US-Soviet relations, but was also derived from them. The evolution of US policy after 1947, which came to be known as the Truman Doctrine, implied a global commitment by the United States to defend the free world against communism. In this doctrine, Eastern Europe, as this part of the European continent was consistently called, was recognized as an area already dominated by communism. In practice, this meant preventing the further expansion of communism into the West, rather than liberating the East. In the document Aide Memoire Polish Emigration Possibilities of Its Participation in the Anti-Communist Front of June 1948, the possibility of using emigration for anti-communist activities was indicated.[15]

In the words of the deputy director of the State Department's Bureau of European Affairs, Llewellyn Thompson, "the liberation and restoration of independence" was to come in the longer term, and for the time being the Americans' aim was to keep the hopes and morale of the Poles alive, and to show a continuing interest in and sympathy for Poland.[16] From the American point of view, the biggest problem hindering the political use of emigration was its fragmentation. In a report to Washington, the counsellor of the American embassy in London reported that Polish emigrants were united by three strong feelings: "1) ardent patriotism 2) desire to return home 3) hatred of communism. These factors reinforce their sense of community, so that they can become a Cold War asset on our side."[17]

Particularly strong US pressure towards uniting the Polish emigration was undertaken in the spring of 1949, when preparations were being finalized for the establishment

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15 Andrzej Mania, *The National Security Council i amerykańska polityka wobec Europy Wschodniej 1945–1950* (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1994), 73 et seq.

16 Anna Mazurkiewicz, *Uchodźcy polityczni z Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w amerykańskiej polityce zimnowojennej 1948-1954* (Warsaw–Gdańsk: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2016), 28.

17 Paweł Machcewicz, *Emigracja w polityce międzynarodowej* (Warsaw: Więź, 1999), 45.

of the Free Europe Committee, which was to take over the burden of contacts with the exile from behind the Iron Curtain. The Americans made it clear that the Free Europe Committee would cooperate with a representation (committee/commission) selected from the broad spectrum of émigré politicians, but that this could not be an institution linked to the émigré government. The Americans recognized the government in Warsaw and did not want to enter into a collision in this field.

Among the refugee groups from Central and Eastern Europe, the Polish milieu played a key role not only because of its numbers, but also because of Poland's position among the Soviet satellites. Refugees from these countries set up organizational structures aspiring to be the political representation of their own nations. However, they tried to avoid a formula based on the "legal continuation of state structures," as the Poles did.[18]

In 1947, there was a crisis in the émigré authorities which split into two opposing camps. Each claimed to be the sole legitimate representative of the subjugated nation, and created institutions that copied the state authorities. The crisis was precipitated by the withdrawal of the already agreed presidential nomination for Tomasz Arciszewski. President Władysław Raczkiewicz, who was terminally ill, appointed August Zaleski as President. Zaleski appointed a government, which, however, was boycotted by the main political parties, who in December 1949 formed the Political Council. The mission to reconcile the feuding parties was undertaken by General Kazimierz Sosnkowski. However, although after long negotiations it was possible to get both sides to sign the Act of Unification on March 14, 1954, the General's efforts failed. Zaleski did not resign from his post, thus creating the camp known as the "Castle" (in Polish: Zamek) with a Government, a President and a National Council. In turn, the "Unification" (In Polish: Zjednoczenie) camp established the Council of Three purporting to be the President, the National Unification Executive in the role of government and the Provisional Council of National Unity considering itself the parliamentary representation of the nation.[19]

Thus, despite American pressure, it was not possible to establish a single center representing political exile. In addition, both "Castle" and "Unification" were based on the concept of a "state in exile," which the Americans did not recognize. However, this did not mean that the containment policy failed to exploit opportunities to influence Polish

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18 There is a large literature on this topic, including *East Central Europe in Exile*, vol. 2, *Transatlantic Identities*, ed. Anna Mazurkiewicz (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013); *Political Exile from Central and Western Europe. Motives, Strategies, Activities and Perception in the East and the West 1945–1989*, Bratislava 2017; Mazurkiewicz, *Uchodźcy polityczni*; Paweł Ziętara, "Rada i Komitety. Rada Narodowa Rzeczpospolitej na tle emigracyjne przedstawicielstw politycznych narodów ujarzmionych," in *Depozyt Niepodległości. Rada Narodowa Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej na uchodźstwie (1939–1991)*, eds. Zbigniew Girzyński and Paweł Ziętara (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2018), 369–400.

19 Committee of Signatories of the Act of Unification, AIPMS 408/277, Polish Institute and General Sikorski Museum, London.

society through the exile centers. This was particularly true of the communication and courier channels available to the political forces of the "Unification" camp, especially the National Party (in Polish: Stronnictwo Narodowe), but also the PPS. This action culminated in the compromising "Berg affair," which was used by propaganda in the communist regime in Poland to finally crack down on opposition in the country.[20]

However, looking from a historical perspective, it turned out years later that it was the "Castle" camp[21] that was "historically right" in sticking to national imponderables. When communism collapsed in 1989 and Poland's first President was elected in universal and free election in 1990, it became almost a necessity to refer to national imponderables. It was then, on December 22, 1990, that the last remaining guardian of the symbols of presidential power, Ryszard Kaczorowski, President in exile, handed over to President Wałęsa, elected by the nation, the insignia of power: the flag of the Republic of Poland, the seal of the President's Chancellery, the original of the Constitution of 1935, as well as the Orders of the White Eagle and Polonia Restituta.

The Goal – Independent Poland

The post-war Polish exile represented a broad political spectrum: from opposition groups – nationalists, Christian Democrats, socialists and people's party – to the Sanacja camp, which had ruled before the war. They were all united by anti-communism and the aspiration to regain Poland's full independence. The goal formulated in this way, however, outlined a distant time horizon. As mentioned above, the current task was to choose a political formula for organizing the exile. Another differentiating issue was the attitude to the economic and social transformations taking place in Poland. Here, too, the socialists took a more nuanced position.

The communists, coming to power, introduced reforms that were part of the socialists' program postulates (nationalization, land reform, free education), but at the same time "stole" all the slogans, symbols and emblems that had for years built up the PPS's credibility as an independence party, a progressive party fighting for social and economic reforms. The appropriated symbols, serving only propaganda and tactical purposes, caused confusion in society. This was an extremely dangerous process, proceeding almost asymptomatically. First, the ideas from which the concepts were adopted were appropriated,

20 In more detail: Anna Siwik, "Sprawa Bergu: współpraca Emigracyjna Rady Politycznej z zachodnimi wywiadami," *Studia Historyczne* 44, no. 2 (2001).

21 Finally, in 1972, after the death of August Zaleski in 1972, the merger of the castle camp and the unification took place after long and arduous talks.

often giving them a contradictory meaning, and in the end no one "in these words of ours, slyly changed by shysters" recognized their original sense any longer.[22] From the point of view of émigré socialists, it was very important to make people at home aware of the fundamental differences between democratic socialism and communist dictatorship.

As Adam Ciołkosz wrote: "If the understanding of the Polish workers is erased that both the aim and the way of the socialists is completely different from that of the communists, the history of the Polish socialist movement will come to an end."[23]

The moral rebuilding of Polish society and sustaining the shaken faith in democracy were equally important. Gustaw Herling-Grudziński,[24] writer and columnist, with his experience in Soviet labor camps, wrote in a letter to Zygmunt Zaremba:

> Only from the camp of socialism can come out a fierce and uncompromising struggle against communism only the left can restore the meaning of the struggle against Russia by enriching it with ideological accents. Anyone can get along with Stalin: a Christian, a conservative or a landlord – as long as it is only a matter of dividing spheres of influence. But a socialist from the Second International will never get along with him, because in this section the stakes are more serious, the danger more serious.[25]

The Socialist International

Polish socialists were quicker than their western European colleagues to give up any illusions about arranging cooperation with the communists. From the beginning they ruthlessly fought against any form of cooperation with it. They considered it their main duty to expose the totalitarian character of the regimes of the countries behind the Iron Curtain. They accused the Western Social Democrats of having allowed the "heavy defeat" of the socialist movement in Central and Eastern Europe. However, despite the disappointment they had suffered, they believed that only through the Socialist International was there a real possibility of influencing world opinion on the Polish question.

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22 Andrzej Mencwel, *Etos lewicy* (Warsaw: Krytyka Polityczna, 2009), 264.

23 Adam Ciołkosz, "*Cel: Polska socjalistyczna*, *Droga: Walka z komunizmem. Uwagi o polityce socjalistów polskich*," "Lewy Nurt" Summer 1966, no. 1, in Adam Ciołkosz, *Walka o prawdę. Wybór artykułów 1940–1978* (London: Polonia Book, 1989), 60.

24 Gustaw Herling-Grudzinski (1919–2000) – writer, essayist, author of *Inny* świat and *Zapiski sowieckie*, among others. From 1947, he was a member of the PPS in exile.

25 Letter from Gustaw Herling-Grudziński to Zygmunt Zaremba, 13 February 1947, ZZ 4/1, PIN.

The PPS sought membership of the Socialist International, which was established in July 1951 at a congress in Frankfurt am Main.[26] The problem was that, as a party remaining in exile, it could not be a full member of the International. Other social democratic parties from countries behind the Iron Curtain were in a similar situation: The Czech Republic, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and also Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Ukraine, which continued to work in exile. These parties – with considerable activity on the Polish side – established close cooperation and on July 4, 1949 formed the Socialist Union of Central-Eastern Europe (SUCEE), which after strenuous efforts became a member of the Socialist International, albeit not with full rights.[27] The Socialist International, bringing together parties that ruled alone or in coalition in Europe, was an influential organization. The participation of Central and Eastern European socialists in it was undoubtedly important, all the more so because the émigrés lacked effective tools to influence Western opinion. It was all about constantly reminding of the oppression by communist regimes of societies living east of the Iron Curtain.

However, the possibilities of breaking through with the issues of these countries were a reflection of the general policy of the West towards the USSR. After 1956, in a climate of warming, the ideas of creating a demilitarized zone in Central Europe and solving the problem of the division of Germany emerged. The Polish side's position on this issue was unequivocal: any discussion of German reunification was conditional on the recognition of the Oder-Neisse border and the adoption of a pact guaranteeing Poland's security.[28] At the beginning of the 1960s, the Socialist International Council set up the Study Group on Eastern Europe, consisting of socialists from Central and Eastern Europe (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, Romania and Lithuania) and Western Europe (Austria, France, Germany and Sweden). The first meeting of the Group was held in Bonn, despite the reservations of the Polish side, which feared undue influence of the German Socialists on the other members of the SUSEE.[29] It is worth remembering that Zygmunt Zaremba, as Chairman of the Union, actively participated in its work. The group prepared a number of reports on Central and Eastern Europe, and its mixed composition extended to include representatives of Western social democracies was supposed to provide a more "objective" view. In a sense, the concerns of the Polish side were confirmed in the decisions of the 6th SI Congress in Hamburg on July 14–17, 1959, when the concept

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26 Talbot C. Imlay, *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1914–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), chapter 6.

27 See more: Anna Siwik, "Cooperation Among East European Emigres: The Socialist Case," in *East Central Europe in Exile*, vol. 2, 177–92 (chapter 12).

28 Speech by Adam Ciołkosz at the 5th IS congress in Vienna on 3 July 1957, ALC 1957. Speech by Otto Pehr at the 6th IS congress in Hamburg on 14–17 July 1959, *Robotnik*, no. 6/7, 1959.

29 Letter from Zygmunt Zaremba to Stanisław Wąsik, 7 March 1963, Anna Siwik's own collection.

of a combined treatment of the German question with the question of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe was adopted.

Willy Brandt's election as Chancellor in 1969 and his new Eastern policy were reflected in the political line of the International. The 1970 treaty between the USSR and West Germany became the starting point for the new German Ostpolitik. There was a marked relaxation between the two antagonistic political blocs. The extreme anti-communist émigré parties, although relatively uninfluential, were becoming politically inconvenient ballast. In 1976, at the 13th SI Congress in Geneva, changes were made to weaken their status.[30] It should be remembered that more than 20 years had passed since the end of the war and the political role of the émigrés was necessarily diminishing. The war generation was leaving and the young were not coming in. The émigré socialists were finding it increasingly difficult to define their role in the International.

While just after the war it was hoped that the solutions in Central Europe would be temporary and that democratic systems in which the socialists could play a dominant role could return, as time passed, the situation there took on the characteristics of permanence. Constantly reminding people that democracy was a sham there became ineffective. Moreover, some communist leaders such as Edward Gierek enjoyed the support of the West, including the social democrats, especially the German ones.

At the 13th SI congress in Geneva on November 26–28, 1976, Willy Brandt became President. His influence on the International was so great that one can successfully speak of the Brandt era. The main direction of activity was determined by the policy of detente and the strategic exit of the SI outside Europe. There was an opening up to the problems of the so-called third world. Issues of lack of civil and labor freedoms in Central and Eastern Europe had no place on the SI agenda and were simply politically inconvenient.

The best example of this was the silence of the Geneva Congress on the pacification of workers in Radom and Ursus in June 1976, even though President Brandt had received a detailed report on the subject, and the representative of the Socialist Union, Stanisław Wąsik, devoted his speech to discussing the situation in Poland. In response, Willy Brandt, in a letter addressed to the émigré PPS, wrote rather euphemistically that, although "numerous difficult problems" needed to be solved, the Polish government, compared to others in this part of Europe, was much less tough. Furthermore, he reassured that "a close cooperation between all Europeans countries" would improve the situation.[31]

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30 Wojciech Ziętara, *Międzynarodówka Socjalistyczna a socjaldemokracja Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej* (Lublin: UMCS, 2012), chapter 2.

31 Willy Brandt to the Polish Socialist Party, 11 November 1977, Private collection of Stanisław Wąsik.

Following the imposition of martial law in Poland, the International limited itself to a moderate statement signed by Willy Brandt and Bernt Carlson on December 29, 1980. Outraged, the French called a meeting of the Council of the International to Paris, but Brandt did not attend. This time, the condemnation of martial law, the demand for its lifting and for an end to repression was put in a much more emphatic form.

It was only in the second half of the 1980s that the International turned towards Eastern Europe again. This was undoubtedly influenced by Mikhail Gorbachev's assumption of the post of General Secretary of the Communist Party Central Committee in March 1985. An expression of this interest was the resumption of the Study Group on Eastern European Affairs after a hiatus of years, and in December 1985, SI Chairman Willy Brandt paid a visit to Warsaw. History accelerated. Year 1989 ended the Yalta era and opened the way to democracy for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The paradox of history was that the Socialist International included parties from Central and Eastern Europe, most of them with origins in the formerly ruling Communist parties.[32]

Independent but Democratic

As already mentioned, the socialists did not completely negate the reforms introduced in Poland. They rejected the totalitarian character of the state. They believed that the big industry of steel mills, mines and transport and monetary policy should remain in the hands of the state. Medium and small industry was to be private or cooperative. The agricultural sphere had to be reformed. The overpopulation of the countryside could only be eliminated through the development of industry, which would absorb the surplus labor. An active state policy was also to manifest itself in the sphere of redistribution, thanks to which it would be possible to meet basic social demands, such as free education, social care, the fight against unemployment and equal access to cultural goods. In the international sphere, the PPS postulated the elimination of the division into spheres of influence, the active participation of the United Nations in conflict resolution, the fight against all forms of subjugation of nations, and the rejection of war as a means of conflict resolution. Comparing the program of Polish socialists with the program of Western European social democracy, the doctrinal basis of which was contained in the document *Objectives and Tasks of European Socialism*,[33] it can be concluded, apart from some solu-

32 For more on this, see: Ziętara, *Międzynarodówka Socjalistyczna*.

33 Aims and Tasks of Democratic Socialism: Declaration of the Socialist International Adopted at Its First Congress Held in Frankfurt-on-Main on 30 June – 3 July 1951, Socialist Party (U.S.), Socialist International, 1951.

tions adapted to Polish specifics, that the views of Polish socialists coincided with the systemic concepts of Western social democrats of the party.

Socialists rejected the scenario: first independence, then discussion of the system. They argued that there could be no national unity when there was "reactionary political, social and economic content" behind it. This approach, however, carried the danger of alienation from the political structures of the émigrés, which could not be completely ignored. It was therefore optimistically assumed that it would be possible to "democratize" these structures, which in socialist terms meant eliminating right-wing forces. In this respect, however, fundamental obstacles were encountered due to the lack of unanimity within the party leadership. Some were strongly in favor of sticking firmly and consistently to the formula of the "state in exile" embodied by the "Castle" camp. Adam Pragier and Tadeusz Tomaszewski took this side.

The second much more numerous group: Tomasz Arciszewski, Jan Kwapiński, Adam Ciołkosz and Zygmunt Zaremba were associated with the "Unification" camp, which also appealed to "legalism." However, over time a rupture occurred here too. Symbolically, this orientation was represented by Zaremba, who drew most of the PPS members mainly from France and Belgium (where the socialist influence in the mining districts went back to pre-war times), and also some British socialists. At the fifth PPS congress in Belgium in 1961, they severed all ties with the "Unification" camp.

Two Roads – Zaremba and Ciołkosz

When discussing the road leading to the goal of an independent Poland, two orientations can be distinguished among socialists: one embodied by Zygmunt Zaremba, the other by Adam Ciołkosz. In general, both agreed on the essence of the communist system, as an undemocratic system dependent on Moscow. Differences emerged in the assessment of the changes that took place in Poland after October 1956.

Broadly speaking, Zaremba adhered, as did Juliusz Mieroszewski of the Paris-based "Kultura,"[34] to the view that the communist system was evolving and, as a result of working-class pressure and internal party contradictions (the activities of the so-called revisionists), would move towards democracy. It was therefore necessary to support all forces that could accelerate this process.

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[34] Juliusz Mieroszewski, "Kronika angielska," *Kultura*, no. 12 (1958); Juliusz Mieroszewski, *Ewolucjonizm* (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1964).

It can be assumed that this approach was derived from Zaremba's attitude to what was happening in the country. Although, like other émigrés, he was a declared enemy of communism, it was not total anti-communism. He saw the positive changes in Poland. "The malicious delight demonstrated in the émigré press over every misfortune or failure of society," he treated as "an émigré degeneracy that must be fought as a morbid phenomenon."[35] He separated the state and society from the prevailing communist regime. He believed that a negative attitude to the Polish state condemned the "camp of the unbroken" only to "hostility and derision." According to Zaremba, the correct assessment boiled down to a statement: the Polish state is dependent on the USSR politically and economically, but despite this dependence the Polish state exists, and within its borders the Polish nation lives, works and develops, and "the fate of this state cannot be indifferent to any Pole."[36] For these reasons it was not possible to formulate goals for the emigration analogous to those formulated before World War I, when the rebuilding of the state was the main content of the Independence slogan. Now it was a matter of "extending the independence of the Republic of Poland both in international politics and in internal relations." This is why the émigré PPS formulated the restoration of full independence as its main objective, because in the restriction of the freedom of the Polish state "lies the crux of the matter in the present period." Zaremba answered his opponents who believed that the PPS program was designed for Yalta Poland: "One can go either way: in any case, not for the shadow of London Poland, but for the Poland that exists, such as it is. For we want our programme to become an element of transformation in Polish life on the Vistula, Warta and Oder rivers, and not on the Thames or Seine."[37]

Zaremba was a pragmatist who calculated in terms of profit and loss. After Gomułka came to power, he did not even rule out the possibility of returning to the country if it turned out that there were chances for the rebirth of an independent PPS. He was convinced that egalitarian socialist ideas were firmly rooted in Polish society; they just needed to be restored to a genuinely socialist content. This was proved by the demonstrations in Poznań, where demonstrators demanded socialism with a "human face." Zaremba therefore focused on the theoretical preparation of a "socialist alternative" as a platform for overcoming communist totalism. The role of the PPS was to show society "a picture of a desirable future."[38]

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35 Zygmunt Zaremba, *Cel i droga* (Paris: Wydawnictwo "Światło", 1963), 9.

36 Even more decisively on this subject, he wrote to Felix Gross: "For it would be worthwhile [...] to analyse and shatter the myth of the connectivity of our emigration with the great emigration that lost the state, and we were removed by violence from influence on the state that remained, and who knows if not in a better shape than the one that emerged from the turmoil of the First World War." Letter from Z. Zaremba to Feliks Gross, 13 March 1966, Feliks Gross's private collection in New York.

37 *Robotnik*, no. 3–4, March–April 1961.

38 Letter of Zygmunt Zaremba to K. Majkowski dated 28 May 1961. Private collection of K. Majkowski made available to the author.

Seeking an analogy with General Franco's regime in Spain, which gradually opened up opportunities for organizations to the right of center, Zaremba expected the Gomułka regime to create such opportunities for left-wing groups.[39] He was even willing to make concessions with the authorities in the communist Poland regarding the "form of organisation of the PPS" at the price of its return to the political scene. For he believed that breaking the political monopoly of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polish abbreviation: PZPR) was worth the price. He was convinced that every smallest crack in the wall of dictatorship should be exploited to transmit the ideas of democratic socialism through it. Zaremba was isolated (not only in the PPS) in his optimism about the transformation in the communist camp. His views were not shared by his SUSEE colleagues, as became evident in September 1963 in Amsterdam during the SUSEE conference traditionally held on the eve of the next Congress of the Socialist International. There Zaremba sketched a picture of the ongoing changes in the communist movement associated with the weakening ideological pressure from Moscow. He cited as evidence the evolution of views in Western communist parties, especially in Italy, and the emergence of revisionists in the Soviet bloc. He foresaw the emergence of conditions for an evolutionary transition from dictatorship to socialist democracy. In view of this, he postulated a revision of the socialist attitude towards the communist camp.[40] Zaremba's views were critically received by socialists from Central and Eastern European countries who did not share the Polish politician's optimism. Consequently, such deep differences in the assessment of the evolution of the communist system led Zaremba to withdraw from the Union and the Socialist International. This was undoubtedly a defeat for this eminent socialist, who gradually withdrew from political life in exile. A progressive illness, made it impossible for him to return to his country. He died in France on October 5, 1967.

Zaremba, together with other socialists from Central and Eastern Europe, drafted a document outlining an alternative socialist model to the communist dictatorship, entitled Socialist Alternative for Eastern Europe. The document was adopted on October 20, 1961 at the 11th SUSEE conference in Rome. It was developed on the basis of the declaration Goals and Objectives of Democratic Socialism, but with an emphasis on the differences between democratic socialism and "real socialism."

Adam Ciołkosz was strongly critical of Zaremba's predictions. He believed that the *sine qua non* condition for the construction of genuine democratic socialism was the liberation of Poland from Moscow's control. The role of Polish socialists in exile should therefore be to focus on the fight against Soviet imperialism, because only after breaking

39 Jan Rowiński, *The Polish October 1956 in World Politics* (Warsaw: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2007), 311.

40 Twelfth conference of the Socialist Union of Central-Eastern Europe, Amsterdam, 7 and 8 September, 1963; 'Labour's Call from behind the Iron Curtain', October 1963, Private collection of Stanisław Wąsik.

dependence on the USSR will it be possible to build a democratic socialist system in Poland. Unlike Zaremba, he did not make subtle distinctions between more or less liberal communists. He regarded communism not as a Bolshevik faction of socialism, but as a separate and opposed current in history. Co-existence with communism was not possible because communism excluded coexistence. For Leninism, coexistence meant only a tactical endeavor. A common language with the communists was not to be sought internationally, let alone in Poland. The Polish example of "coexistence" between socialists under the sign of Edward Osóbka-Morawski ended in total failure, and this was sufficient proof that the PPS could not enter into any agreements with the communists.[41] Ciołkosz allowed only one type of communists with whom the socialists could negotiate: it was communists of the Milovan Djilas or Imre Nagy type, but only because they had moved to the position of integral democracy and *ipso facto* ceased to be communists.

The only acceptable formula for Poland, Ciołkosz wrote, is through free and democratic elections. And there cannot be half-hearted solutions in this regard, for example by agreeing to legalize the PPS in the first place – as Zaremba allowed. According to Ciołkosz, this was a fundamental mistake. The first step must be to regain the right to full freedom of action for all political parties in Poland, including the Communist Party. "We are fighting not for an amendment to the communist dictatorship, not for its liberalisation, but for its abolition. The alternative to dictatorship is democracy, and democracy – like independence – must be for everyone, not just for socialists,"[42] he concluded. In the long run, a fully democratic system, allowing even the most extreme parties, is healthier than the concession method. History proved, Ciołkosz argued, that banned groupings always found a way to operate under "various covers" if they had enough supporters. He understood the evolution of the system in communist countries as allowing free elections to the constituent assemblies that would give these countries their political, economic and social system.

Ciołkosz's road to socialism led through an emphasis on maintaining communication with the country and familiarizing himself with the ideological and practical achievements of Western social democracy. The aim of socialists in exile was not to "liberalise the communist dictatorship," but to liquidate it.

In conclusion, one can say that the process of liberalization of the system, initiated after October 1956, was quickly halted and in this sense it was Ciołkosz who was right. On the other hand, it was thanks to the pressure of the working class in Poland that the first free trade union, Solidarity (in Polish: Solidarność), was established. The idea of establishing such unions was in the program of the émigré PPS.

41 Ciołkosz, "Cel: Polska socjalistyczna."

42 Ibid., 56.

One should also mention the socialists who belonged to the "intransigent" group. They looked at the country's affairs and the role of emigration from a completely different perspective. Undoubtedly, Adam Pragier,[43] a prominent socialist intellectual associated with the "Castle," was one of them. In a nutshell, his attitude could be described as follows: detachment from domestic reality was on the one hand an element of weakness, but on the other hand an element of strength for the emigration. For it opened up the possibility of approaching issues, not from the point of view of the practical needs of the socialist movement, but from the "fundamental positions" inherent in its own tradition and the humanism of Western European socialism from the period "before it had access to power." He believed that Western social democrats were "unashamedly opportunist." Pragier, however, apart from his criticism, did not bother to present a coherent program, written from a principled position, which would be the quintessence of socialist doctrine in the Polish version.

The role of the socialist emigration is difficult to overestimate and manifests itself in several areas. Firstly, the huge involvement of the PPS in the international forum of the Socialist International, where there was an opportunity to expose the problems of the "Eastern Bloc" from a Polish perspective. Secondly, a rich theoretical and journalistic output presenting the evolution of Western social democracy and the resulting programs for Poland. Thirdly, material assistance to the persecuted in the People's Republic of Poland, from the Stalinist era to the martial law.

In conclusion, it is hard to resist the reflection that the verdicts of history are not just, and it is ironic that those who fought for an independent and democratic Poland for years have been swept from the political scene. One can only hope that the ethos of the left will preserve the achievements of these outstanding representatives of Polish democratic socialism.

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[43] Before the war – member of parliament, member of the Supreme Council of the PPS in the years 1921–1937. See also: Paweł Chojnacki, *Prof. Adam Pragier – wykładowca i doktor honoris causa PUNO – jako adwersarza „Kultury" i Juliusza Mieroszewski*, accessed October 20, 2023, https://www.omp.org.pl/artykul.php?artykul=433.

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