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## FROM THE HISTORY OF THE POLISH PEASANT PARTY IN KRAKÓW IN THE YEARS 1945–1946

### Abstract

The Polish Peasant Party officially had a chance to win the parliamentary elections and to eliminate its weak rival, SL Lublin (Peasant Party – Lublin). In large cities such as Warsaw, Łódź, Wrocław and Kraków, the structures of the party were becoming more and more powerful. There were, among others, many citizens who had limited or even no previous connections with rural areas. Most members of the Małopolska PSL were townspeople living in Kraków.

It is estimated that between 1945–1947 the total number of Party members in the cities was about 2,500. The number of associations also increased. By the middle of March 1946 there were 25, and at the end of September there were 31. In Kraków, the most numerous members in the party were farmers, intellectuals, workers and craftsmen.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (PSL), Kraków, Legalna opozycja, partie polityczne.

**Key Words:** Polish Peasant Party (PSL), Kraków, legal opposition, political parties.

The aim of this article is to describe some aspects of the Polish Peasant Party's (henceforth PSL) activity in the most important city in Małopolska in light of previously unknown documents from the Urban Board of PSL in Kraków.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The materials of the Urban Board of PSL in Kraków (Kraków PSL ZG) were transferred years ago to the Department of Regional Museum in Tarnów – Wincenty Witos Museum in Wierzchosławice (MWW) by the PSL activist Jan Sokół.

The dramatic story of the legal opposition in Poland has already been repeatedly studied. The most important scientific description of PSL activities in the city of Kraków remains Paweł Sękowski's *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe w Krakowie i powiecie krakowskim w latach 1945–1949*, Warszawa 2011, and *Rozwój struktur Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego w Krakowie w latach 1945–1946 (przed głosowaniem ludowym)*, „Rocznik Biblioteki Naukowej PAU i PAN w Krakowie” 2010, V. LV, pp. 359–375. The most important works showing the context of PSL

Before the Second World War, the structures of the peasant movement in Małopolska were the strongest in the country.

Therefore, its exceptional position during the Nazi occupation is not surprising. The district directed from Kraków<sup>2</sup> was the only one in Poland which had a representative in the central authorities of the Roch Peasant Party Stronnictwo Ludowe – henceforth SL). It was the largest political group in the country and had great influence in the Polish Underground State on all levels of its organisation.<sup>3</sup> The Roch SL was a rival to the Raclawice Peasant Movement, which also had its civilian and military branches in Kraków, and which had a smaller impact on rural areas and underground independence structures.<sup>4</sup>

What put the popular movement in a difficult situation was the liberation of Polish territories from German occupation by the Soviet Army and the formation of power structures by communists who took advantage of, for example, the Lublin Peasant Party's absolute dependence on them.<sup>5</sup>

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activities in the city of Kraków in 1945 and 1946 are publications by Bolesław Dereń, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe w Krakowskim 1945–1947*, Warszawa 1998, and *Krakowscy Konfederaci. Ludowa opozycja w Krakowskim w latach 1945–1974*, Warszawa 2003; Alina Fitowa, *Stanisław Mierzwa „Słomka” na tle swoich czasów*, Wierzchosławice 1994; Zdzisław Zblewski, *Okręg Krakowski Zrzeszenia „Wolność i Niezawisłość” 1945–1948. Geneza struktury działalności* Kraków 2005, *Między wolną Polską a „siedemnastą republiką”. Z dziejów oporu społecznego na terenie województwa krakowskiego w latach 1945–1947*, Kraków 1998; Maciej Korcuć, *Zostańcie wierni tylko Polsce... Niepodległościowe oddziały partyzanckie w Krakowskim (1944–1947)*, Kraków 2002. Worth mentioning is also B. Klich-Kluczevska, *Przez dziurkę od klucza. Życie prywatne w Krakowie (1945–1989)*, Warszawa 2005.

<sup>2</sup> More information about SL Roch and its subordinate armed organisation in Małopolska can be found in A. Fitowa, J. Marcinkowski, *Ruch Ludowy w Małopolsce i na Śląsku 1939–1945. Ludzie, myśl programowa, praca konspiracyjna*, Warszawa 1987; A. Fitowa, *Bataliony Chłopskie w Małopolsce 1939–1945. Działalność organizacyjna, polityczna i zbrojna*, Warszawa–Kraków 1984.

<sup>3</sup> For more information about this, see J.R. Szaflik, *Początki konspiracyjnego ruchu ludowego*, Warszawa 1973; A. Wojtas, *Działalność polityczna ludowców w okresie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1979; A. Fitowa, *Stronnictwo Ludowe po klęsce wrześniowej (IX 1939 – VI 1941)*, „*Studia Historyczne*” 1972, z. 3, pp. 365–416; G. Górski, *Polskie Państwo Podziemne 1939–1945*, Toruń 1998; K. Przybysz, A. Wojtas, *Bataliony Chłopskie*, vol. 1–3, Warszawa 1985. From more recent studies mainly on the regional structures of PSL, see H.C. Miciński, *Ludowe twierdze: działalność Batalionów Chłopskich na terenie środkowej Lubelszczyzny 1940–1944*, Warszawa 2009; T. Doroszuk, *Konspiracyjny ruch ludowy na Podlasiu 1940–1944*, Siedlce 2004; *Prawda i pamięć o Batalionach Chłopskich: materiały z naukowej konferencji odbytej 15 września 2005 w Kielcach*, eds. M. Adamczyk, J. Gmitruk, Warszawa 2006; *Bataliony Chłopskie w Lubelskiem – Powstanie Zamojskie: Scientific Symposium*, 16–17 September 2006, ed. M. Wojtas, Zamość–Lublin 2006; *Bataliony Chłopskie w ocenie współczesnej historiografii*, ed. M. Pawlina-Meducka, Kielce 2001; J. Gmitruk, *Powstanie Zamojskie*, Warszawa 2003.

<sup>4</sup> For more on this subject, see i.a.: S. Pietras, *Polska Organizacja Zbrojna: Siew – Raclawice – POZ – AK*, Warszawa 1996.

<sup>5</sup> The most knowledgeable source of information about the Lublin SL is A. Mieczkowski, *Geneza i działalność polityczna Stronnictwa Ludowego 1944–1949*, Lublin 1987.

The most important problem was Joseph Stalin's uncompromising attitude towards Poland. The authorities of the Roch Peasant Party considered it necessary to reconcile with the part of Soviet policy and begin legal activity. The communists, however, made it impossible for them to take full control over the Lublin Peasant Party.<sup>6</sup> This had far-reaching consequences, for the structures in the capital of Małopolska became more or less formally subordinate to the Lublin Peasant Party. According to Zygmunt Wrona, the chairman of the Prądnik-Czerwony circle:

The question of the transition from SL to the PSL, [...] is the crucial issue [!] since all members who joined the circles did so only on the condition that the Party leadership would be in the hands of [Wincenty] Witos, [Stanisław] Mikołajczyk and [Władysław] Kiernik – since PSL, remaining in the conspiracy, revealed its activity under the leadership of the above-mentioned, the case of transition from SL to PSL became an accomplished fact that does not require any further comments.<sup>7</sup>

It is significant for the contemporary reality that the quoted statement was made in the militia hall, where the meeting of the circle board of the opposition party was taking place...<sup>8</sup>

PSL officially had a chance to win in the parliamentary elections and eliminate its weak rival – SL Lublin. They wanted the state system to be based on

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<sup>6</sup> The fate of PSL in the country was most extensively discussed by: R. Turkowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe w obronie demokracji 1945–1949*, Warszawa 1992; R. Buczek, *Na przełomie dziejów. Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe w latach 1945–1947*, Wrocław 1989; S. Łach, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe w latach 1945–1947*, Gdańsk 1995. There have also been several monographs about the structures at the level of the individual voivodeships, e.g. B. Dereń, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe w Krakowskim 1945–1947*, Warszawa 1998; J. Sielezin, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945–1949*, Wrocław 2000; B. Bidzińska-Jakubowska, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe na Śląsku Opolskim i jego miejsce w antykomunistycznej opozycji w latach 1945–1947*, Opole 1993; S. Łach, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe w konfrontacji z władzą komunistyczną na Pomorzu Zachodnim w latach 1945–1947*, Słupsk 2001; B. Łukaszewicz, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe na Warmii i Mazurach w latach 1945–1947*, Olsztyn 1991; A. Daszkiewicz, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1945–1947, lata walki*, Rzeszów 1993. A great deal of information is also given in more general works, e.g. S. Durliej, R. Turkowski, *Dzieje ruchu ludowego na Kielecczyźnie 1944–1996*, Kielce 1996. The whole political system in Poland in 1945–1947 is discussed by Janusz Wrona (*System partyjny w Polsce 1944–1950. Miejsce – funkcje – relacje partii politycznych w warunkach budowy i utrwalania systemu totalitarnego*, Lublin 1997).

<sup>7</sup> MWW ZG PSL Kraków, protocol from the meeting of the PSL circle Kraków-Prądnik Czerwony Board from 4 November 1945 (copy). „kwestia przejścia z SL do PSL, [...] sprawy natury zasadniczą[!], wszyscy bowiem członkowie, którzy przystępowali do Koła, wpisywali się li tylko pod warunkiem, że kierownictwo Stronnictwa jest w rękach [Wincentego] Witosy, [Stanisława] Mikołajczyka i [Władysława] Kiernika – skoro pozostające w konspiracji PSL ujawniło swoją działalność pod kierownictwem wyżej wymienionych, sprawa przejścia z SL do PSL stała się faktem dokonany[m] nie wymagający[m] bliższych komentarzy.”

<sup>8</sup> MWW ZG PSL Kraków, Protocol from the meeting of the Board of PSL Kraków-Prądnik Czerwony Circle from 4 November 1945 (copy).

democratic principles. It was emphasised that the real source of power was the will of people.

Many members of the Peasant Party thought that:

The difference between Marxism and capitalism is not qualitative but quantitative: [...] ‘proletarian culture’ is nonsense. Agrarianism referring critically to the world of urban culture and its materialistic ideals, aims at perfection by harmonious development of its mental and physical strength. [...]. Biological sciences dealt a death blow to Marxism, regardless of life experience which discredited him.

Doctrinal Marxist socialism represents ideals which are in complete opposition to the outlook on the world of a peasant, these are ideals of materialistic urban culture, which uses the categories of urbanization, planning, mechanization and barrack-like lifestyle. Materialism is destructive to human and threatens him with regression in humanity progression if it takes control.<sup>9</sup>

The growing terror of communists (removal from posts, imprisonment of activists, tortures, forced resettlement, killings of activists, etc), did not change PSL’s attitude towards other movements on the political stage. They emphasised that the party would fight its opponents not by force, but with arguments. Moreover, it was claimed that the democratic state created by the PPR was only a poorly camouflaged dictatorship.<sup>10</sup>

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Knowing public sentiment, the most important Party authorities insisted on going further than just creating the power of PSL in the countryside. They emphasised that “Nowadays the interests of the peasants no longer need to be defended in the countryside, but in the cities, where there are still forces that wish to stop the spontaneous development of the peasant movement by doing

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<sup>9</sup> The Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw 01480/184 „Ideologia Ruchu Ludowego”, the document includes the programme of the folk intelligence organisations associated with PSL-Orka-copy, pp. 182–184, „Różnica między marksizmem a kapitalizmem nie jest jakością, lecz ilościową: [...] «kultura proletariacka» jest nonsensem. Agraryzm ustunkowując się krytycznie do świata kultury miejskiej i jej materialistycznych ideałów dąży do uszlachetnienia przez harmonijny rozwój jego sił duchowych i fizycznych [...]. Marksizmowi śmiertelny cios zadały nauki biologiczne niezależnie od praktyki życiowej, która go skompromitowała. Marksistowski doktrynalny socjalizm wysuwa ideały całkowicie sprzeczne z postawą światopoglądową chłopą, są to ideały materialistycznej kultury miejskiej, obracające się kategoriami urbanizmu, planizmu, maszynizmu i koszarowego stylu życia. Materializm jest zabójczy dla człowieka i grozi mu w razie jego zapanowania cofnięciem się ludzkości w rozwoju.”

<sup>10</sup> Political slogans placed between articles in *Piast* on 23 March 1947, no. 9, p. 4; on May 25 1947, no. 18, p. 4; on April 13 1947, no. 12, p. 7.

considerable harm to the village.”<sup>11</sup> Attempts to gain influence in all social groups in that period were not surprising. During that period, it was a common feature of all political parties that sought to come to power in the country.<sup>12</sup> It was argued that many former peasant workers had become intellectuals or were working in the private sector of the economy. The Party was encouraged to make contact with them and make an effort so that “the hands and brains of [...] those from villages and those in the city”<sup>13</sup> would help the village ensure its rightful place in the country. These efforts proved to be successful. In big cities such as Warsaw, Łódź, Wrocław and Kraków, the movement’s structures grew in power. There were, among others, many citizens whose previous relationship with the rural areas was often not so close or simply did not exist.<sup>14</sup> The majority of members of the Małopolska PSL who inhabited urban areas lived in Kraków, which was the home of the headquarters of the party’s Regional and Provincial authorities. The power of the independent peasant movement strengthened its supporters’ faith in winning the parliamentary elections. They not only believed that they would be able to stand up to the activities of the PPR (Polska Partia Rpbtnicza – Polish Workers’ Party), but also to those of the authorities’ dependents. The legal opposition gained influence in administration, national councils, the co-operative movement, some of trade unions, factories and militia.<sup>15</sup>

The communists from Kraków also took the power of PSL into account. The proof of this was the statement made by a PPR activist on 24 May 1946 during the interparty conference. He asked the PPR to “insert articles about the peasant referendum in the *Piast* magazine.”<sup>16</sup> At the same time, however, they made sure that there was a disproportionately small representation of the party in the city authorities.

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The PSL Urban Board was established in Kraków, with the first meeting taking place on 9 September 1945. During the meeting, the following committee chairmen were elected: for commerce – Dr Józef Migała; self-administration – Dr Stanisław Grodzisk; education and culture – Dr Józef Mężyk; and propa-

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<sup>11</sup> Quotation by R. Turkowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, pp. 95–96: „dziś interesów chłopskich nie trzeba bronić już na wsi, lecz właśnie w miastach, gdzie działają wciąż siły, pragnące z krzywdą wsi powstrzymać żywiołowy rozwój ruchu ludowego.”

<sup>12</sup> J. Wrona, *System partyjny...*, pp. 166–167.

<sup>13</sup> i.a. R. Turkowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, p. 96: „dłonie i mózgi [...] te ze wsi i te z miasta.”

<sup>14</sup> For more about the structures in other cities of the voivodeship, see the works mentioned in note no. 5.

<sup>15</sup> The most extensive source on this subject is P. Sękowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*

<sup>16</sup> MWW ZG PSL Kraków, Report of the Inter-Party Conference in Kraków on 25 May 1946. „o zamieszczenie na łamach «Piasta» artykułów odnośnie referendum ludowego.”

ganda – Dr Tadeusz Seweryn.<sup>17</sup> Some of them combined their functions with work at a higher level of the PSL structures. For example, Seweryn was the deputy chairman of the Press and Propaganda Commission at the ZW of the legal opposition.<sup>18</sup> Seweryn sometimes also gave speeches on behalf of both the structures simultaneously. For instance, during the meetings of the PSL circles, he instructed the members of PSL “about the present political situation.”<sup>19</sup>

The Medical Assistance Section at the Urban Board was also established. The membership of this active structure included<sup>20</sup> Prof Franciszek Walter, Dr Leon Tochowicz, Prof Miodoński, Prof Marian Wilczek, Dr Edward Szczerbiński, Dr Mieczysław Jakóbiec and Dr Jan Kowalczyk.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the growing communist repression in the spring and summer of 1946, a further increase in the number of PSL members in Kraków was observed. In 1946 alone, the Urban Board issued a total of 2,399 PSL Membership Cards.<sup>22</sup> It is estimated that between 1945-1947 about 2,500 Cracovians were in the party. Previous residents of Kraków for various reasons (e.g. repression, health issues, frequent permanent visits to other parts of Poland) withdrew from party business in 1945. There were, however, others who joined PSL as late as in 1947.<sup>23</sup> Formally, there were even more card holders, probably far beyond 3,000.<sup>24</sup> The number of circles increased as well. In the middle of March 1946,

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<sup>17</sup> MWW ZG PSL Kraków, Report of the Urban Board of PSL in Kraków (without a date). After sometime these structures underwent major changes. One example is Antoni Podraza, who acted as the District Manager of Press and Propaganda in the city of Kraków (MWW ZG PSL Kraków, the attendance list for the conference participants for District Managers Publicity and Press in the voivodeship of Kraków, see P. Sękowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, p. 92).

<sup>18</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, Draft of the invitation to the Commission of Propaganda and Press on 26 October 1945 for a meeting with a list of persons to whom an invitation was sent.

<sup>19</sup> MWW ZG PSL Kraków, Copy of the protocol of the PSL circle in Płaszów (without further information), „o obecnej sytuacji politycznej”.

<sup>20</sup> MWW ZG PSL Kraków, Writing to an unknown professor of ZG PSL in Kraków on 6 September 1946; MWW ZG PSL Kraków, Writing by ZG PSL in Kraków of 20 September 1946.

<sup>21</sup> MWW ZG PSL Kraków, „Sekcja Lekarska”; compare with P. Sękowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, pp. 32, 371 and others.

<sup>22</sup> He took many blank membership cards in ZW, all of which he accounted for in financial terms (MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, the letter from ZW PSL to the Urban Board of PSL in Kraków on 4 December 1946). This number could not be much less than the number of identity cards given. It might be the result of very close personal contacts between the activists of ZG PSL in Kraków and ZW PSL.

<sup>23</sup> E.g. MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, Copy of a ZG PSL writing in Kraków to the District Board of PSL in Szczuczyn (north-eastern Poland) on 4 December 1946.

<sup>24</sup> After the parliamentary elections in 1947, it was common for members of PSL from various districts in Galicia, where the Communists suspended the activities of the legal opposition structures, to enroll in the PSL City Centre Circle in Kraków. Paweł Sękowski estimates that only about 500 people from the Bielsko District enrolled in Kraków (P. Sękowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, p. 198). It is worth mentioning that as early as 1945, as a result of massive post-war migration, some active members are listed in the PSL ZG acts as residing outside Malopolska, for example in Silesia (e.g. Dr Eugeniusz Garbacik formally lived in Niemczy in Silesia).

there were 25,<sup>25</sup> and at the end of September there were 31.<sup>26</sup> For example, the new PSL Wola Duchacka circle was established on 12 May 1946,<sup>27</sup> while the PSL Zwierzyniec circle was established in July.<sup>28</sup> The High School circle was also formed.<sup>29</sup> This organisational development was probably to make the structures' activity more effective.

The rise in the number of the members contributed to the transition of some from being suspended as a result of communist repressions, which were numerous in the city's Labour Party (*Stronnica Pracy*, SP).<sup>30</sup> In Kraków, it was dominated by citizens reluctant to support the communists.<sup>31</sup> The point of view of the President of the Urban Board, Karol Buczek, is also significant. In July 1946, he was not inclined to accept members of the Labour Party except for workers and peasants into PSL.<sup>32</sup>

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This does not mean that PSL functioned in the city without any disturbances. In such a large party, there were people who were united only in opposition to the communists. It is worth remembering that the supporters and common members of PSL in Kraków<sup>33</sup> were more reluctant towards communism than the national authorities of PSL. This was the same throughout the country.

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<sup>25</sup> The Department of History of the People's Movement in Warsaw (ZHRL) 912.01.10. PSL's organisational status according to reports sent by district governors on 17 March 1946; ZHRL 912.01.10., Statement of changes in the organisation of the Kraków District of PSL in March 1946; B. Dereń, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, p. 85.

<sup>26</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, „Rezolucja [władz kół PSL w Krakowie] w sprawie sprzedaży Gazety Ludowej na terenie m. Krakowa a nawet lokalu PSL przy ul. Basztowej 17” on 29 September 1946 (copy).

<sup>27</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, Report of the PSL Wola Duchacka Circle for the first half of 1946.

<sup>28</sup> MWW, ZW PSL Kraków, Protocol of the ZG PSL meeting in Kraków on 25 July 1946.

<sup>29</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, Protocol of the ZG PSL meeting in Kraków on 11 October 1946.

<sup>30</sup> In Kraków, SP had about 20 circles and 2,000 members. (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Kraków (AIPNKr) 075/31, Copy of the questionnaire to the Main Board report to the Congress from the voivodeship of Kraków on 10 July 1946. For more information on the circumstances of the suspension of the Labour Party in Kraków, see T. Skrzyński, *Losy Stronnictwa Pracy w województwie krakowskim (lipiec 1946 – lipiec 1950)*, „Krakowski Rocznik Archiwalny” 2002, t. 8, 76–78.

<sup>31</sup> More information about the post-war fate of the Labour Party see: K. Turowski, *Historia ruchu chrześcijańsko-demokratycznego w Polsce*, t. 2, Warszawa 1989; W. Bujak, *Historia Stronnictwa Pracy 1937–1946–1950*, Warszawa 1988; A. Andrusiewicz, *Stronnictwo Pracy 1937–1950. Ze studiów nad dziejami najnowszych chadecji w Polsce*, Warszawa 1988.

<sup>32</sup> MWW, ZW PSL Kraków, Protocol from the meeting of ZG PSL in Kraków on July 25, 1946.

<sup>33</sup> According to Krzysztof Kosiński PSL took over numbers of the pre-war right-wing and sanitation supporters in Kraków (K. Kosiński, *Walka o miasto z tradycjami. PPR w Krakowie*, „Więź” 1997, 40, no. 9, p. 146).

The proof of this lies in the answers to the questions in the referendum which took place in the city on 30 June 1946 (initiated by the PPR and its political supporters).<sup>34</sup> Those who belonged to the organisation in Kraków differed in professions, political and religious beliefs, and of course character. A good example is that a delegate from one of the PSL circles who was dissatisfied with a decision made by the Party's urban authorities. In the middle of 1946 he sent the attorneys to the Urban Board.<sup>35</sup> In Kraków, the Party Court of the Urban Board had a great deal of work in adjudicating various disputes between citizens who were united together only in opposition to communists.

There were other internal problems in the party, too. The proof of that was a strong protest, in September 1946, by the presidents and secretaries of the circles against the fatal, in their opinion, distribution of the *Peasant's Newspaper* in the city – the most important magazine of the party.<sup>36</sup>

The most numerous members of PSL in Kraków were farmers, intellectuals, workers and craftsmen. Among scientists, Jagiellonian University historian Professor Jan Dąbrowski (who was with Karol Buczek in the Propaganda Section) is worth mentioning.<sup>37</sup> The intelligentsia also played an important role in the structures situated far from the city centre. For example, in 1946 the next president of the Bronwice Małe circle<sup>38</sup> was an archaeologist, Dr Gabriel Leńczyk.<sup>39</sup> The situation in totally different professions was similar. It is not surprising that PSL was represented on the Main Board of the Technician Trade Union located

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<sup>34</sup> Most of the people treated the referendum as a plebiscite on trust in the communists. According to the instructions of the PSL, voters were to answer YES to the first question; in Kraków, only 57,296 people did so, NO votes numbered 107,002 (MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, „Ostateczny wynik Głosowania Ludowego Okręgu Kraków odbytego w dniu 30 VI 1946 r.”). Other information is presented by Paweł Sękowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, p. 137. More about the contradictions between the results of the referendum in the Kraków voivodeship: B. Dereń, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, pp. 118–120; idem, *Referendum 1946 roku w Krakowskim*, „Roczniki Dziejów Ruchu Ludowego” 1992, No. 27; C. Brzoza, *Referendum w województwie krakowskim w świetle interpelacji PSL*, „Studia Historyczne” 1993, vol. 36, no. 1. Of the data not included in these works that is, however, worth mentioning are: AIPNkr 081/62, Summary of the referendum results in the voivodeship of Kraków according to copies of the protocols made by the members of the Labour Party, no data [July 1946].

<sup>35</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, The writing from ZG PSL in Kraków to the Board of the Circle in Witkowice on July 26 1946; MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, letter of attorney Tomasz Aschenbrenner to ZG PSL Kraków on 10 July 1946.

<sup>36</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, „Sekcja Propagandowa”, list of members, no data.

<sup>37</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, „Sekcja Propagandowa”, list of members, no data.

<sup>38</sup> Originally the chairman of the circle was Kazimierz Rosół (MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, Organisational protocol of the PSL Bronowice Małe Circle, 9 December 1945).

<sup>39</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, Copy of the protocol of the PSL Bronowice Małe Circle, 24 July 1946; see P. Sękowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, p. 100). The large part of the scientist's legacy sent to the Archaeological Museum in Kraków does not contain, according to information obtained by the author of this article, materials concerning his activities in PSL.



in Kraków.<sup>40</sup> Many people were working both on farms and in factories,<sup>41</sup> as the area of the city of Kraków had been expanded during the Second World War.<sup>42</sup> It should also be mentioned that many members of PSL from Kraków districts that had separate organisational structures were working in Kraków.<sup>43</sup> Many workers were also badly treated in their workplace by management, who were dependent on the communists. For example, the first secretary of the Bronowice Małe circle, Władysław Młodzianowski, was a printer.<sup>44</sup> Other professions of PSL members in Kraków worth mentioning included professors, teachers, physicians, printers, bakers, shoemakers, mechanics, locksmiths, carpenters, bricklayers, blacksmiths, firemen, Railway Protection Service workers, accountants, gardeners, beekeepers, cabmen, farmers, municipal clerks, labourers, lawyers, historians, chemists, philologists, priests, students, pensioners, merchants and tram drivers.<sup>45</sup>

Such great variety was the result of the low opinion about the communists among the inhabitants of the city and the voivodeship. Many had the point of view that “you thieves wait, because your government is temporary and so are you. Soon it will change [and] we will show you.”<sup>46</sup> It is worth mentioning that in contrast to the material conditions of an average citizen, many communist activists had a very good financial situation. For example, a PPR activist, the deputy director in the voivodeship living in a city suffering from a lack

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<sup>40</sup> AIPNKr 075/32/149, Special report made by the chairman of the WUBP to the MBP on 10 May 1947[!].

<sup>41</sup> Including the report written by A. Podraza on 6 December 2002 in the author’s collections; H. Komarnicki, *Rola i miejsce PSL w systemie społeczno-politycznym Polski Ludowej 1945–1947*, Warszawa 1987, pp. 168, 172, 174.

<sup>42</sup> The peasants were also in other parties such as the PPS (recent contributions on this subject include T. Skrzyński, *Z dziejów Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej w województwie krakowskim w 1945 i 1946 r.*, „Krakowskie Studia Małopolskie” 2005, no. 9, pp. 167–180; P. Sękowski, *Udział Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej w działalności Towarzystwa Uniwersytetu Robotniczego w Krakowie w latach 1945–1948*, „Studia Historyczne” 2007, vol. 50, pp. 333–348; idem, *Działalność oświatowo-wychowawcza socjalistów w ramach Organizacji Młodzieży TUR i Związku Niezależnej Młodzieży Socjalistycznej w Krakowie w latach 1945–1948*, „Annales Academiae Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia Historica” 2009, no. 8, pp. 239–252. Older studies include: K. Ćwik, *Problemy współdziałania PPR i PPS w województwie krakowskim 1945–1948*, Warszawa–Kraków 1974; Z. Kozik, *Partie i stronnictwa polityczne w Krakowskim 1945–1947*, Kraków 1975.

<sup>43</sup> The largest amount of information and the most accurately descriptions of the structures in the district of Kraków is in P. Sękowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*

<sup>44</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, Organisational protocol of the PSL Bronowice Małe Circle, 9 December 1945.

<sup>45</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, Lists of members of the PSL circles in Kraków.

<sup>46</sup> The National Archives in Kraków, PPRKr 312, Copy of the protocol to the chairman of the works council of Artur’s mine in Siersza from 2 August 1946 „wy złodziejcie czekajcie, bo wasz rząd jest tymczasowy i wyście też tymczasowi. Niedługo się zmieni [i] my wam pokażemy.”

of flats “now has a 5-room apartment, luxuriously furnished, high-style furniture, carpets, tapestries, two radios, keeps the maid and a special educator for a small child.”<sup>47</sup>

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The main struggle between the legal opposition and communists in Poland was supposed to be the campaign before the parliamentary elections. It began in the second half of 1946 after a long period of postponement by the communists.

Obviously, PSL members in Kraków were also involved in that situation. For instance, for the purposes of the election campaign they organised an action of voluntary self-taxation. By 4 December 1946, it resulted in collecting 240,000 zł in Kraków. It is not known, however, how much of the money declared by the members was actually collected. By 19 March 1947, the Urban Board accounted for less than 22,000 zł.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, the distribution of the declarations of payment for the electoral fund resulted in 73,600 zł.<sup>49</sup>

On 4 December 1946 the plenipotentiary of the PSL list of district candidates received an order to cooperate with the Urban Board of PSL in collecting signatures. Abuse by the communists was anticipated. It was recommended to “choose people who would sign the list” and collect at least twice the amount of the required number of 100 signatures.<sup>50</sup>

Despite the opponent’s terror campaign, they continued their activities. For example, the detention of the chairman of the Urban Board from September 1946 did not dissuade them. The members of PSL were also preparing for further communist repressions. They called for self-discipline. In order not to give any pretext for repression, the wreaths were abandoned in favour of the circle meetings being attended only by party members and conferences of activists.<sup>51</sup> Those who were arrested and their families were also supported. This was consistent with instructions sent previously to the party’s central authorities where the necessity of every possible assistance to members of the circle “in

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<sup>47</sup> AIPNkr 075/32/ 156, Writings from the Workers’ Provincial Committee in Kraków PPS to the Minister of Justice of 29 July 1946. „Obecnie posiada 5-cio pokojowe mieszkanie, luksusowo umeblowane, wysokowartościowe meble stylowe, dywany, gobeliny, 2 odbiorniki wielolampowe, utrzymuje służącą i specjalną wychowawczynię do małego dziecka.”

<sup>48</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, the writing from ZW PSL to ZG PSL in Kraków on March 1947.

<sup>49</sup> It was planned to collect 118,000 zł (MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, the letter from ZW PSL to ZG PSL in Kraków on 19 March 1947).

<sup>50</sup> MWW, Materials of ZW PSL Kraków, letter by ZW PSL in Kraków to Ignacy Jakubiec on 4 December 1946 (including the quotation). „wytypować ludzi, którzy listę podpiszą”.

<sup>51</sup> i.a. B. Dereń, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, pp. 150, 153; The Department of the History of the Polish Peasant Movement 912.01.05, Instructions on the issue of identity cards for PSL members, 1947.

cases of arrest, prolonged illness or murder of a member of the PSL,<sup>52</sup> was mentioned.

The effects of increasing repression against PSL mitigated in that area i.a.: the authority of those who were in charge of the party, derived from the wartime experience of many activists in the conspiratorial activity, putting new members in the place of the ones arrested or those new who reached a compromise with the government, insufficient supply, high prices and the experience of the inter-war repression by *Sanacja*.<sup>53</sup>

The Urban Board and the management of circles were still working but in a more and in more limited form. For example, in September the Urban Board chose five delegates to the extraordinary congress of PSL in Warsaw (it did not take place)<sup>54</sup>. On October 13, 1946, the Urban Board decided to call a meeting of the circles representatives. In October there was in Kraków a propaganda course attended by 40 PSL activists<sup>55</sup>. The Urban Board decided<sup>56</sup> to use the masses celebrated around 1 November as a reminder of the peasant movement's values. A good opportunity came on the anniversaries of the deaths of Wincenty Witos, as he was treated with the utmost respect, and of other peasant activists who worked during the Second World War and the Interwar Period.<sup>57</sup>

To support organisational activities, which had been weakened from repressions, in the city they reached for other options. On 16 December 1946, the Regional Board ordered the convening of the Kraków City District Congress without the participation of an audience. It was supposed to open the PSL campaign in the city. Not surprisingly the subjects of the congress were to be "political situation in the world and in Poland", "election issues" and "organisational matters".<sup>58</sup> It was planned to invite personally those who were in the Urban Board, the Circles' Management Boards and Audit Committees and those who

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<sup>52</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, Letter from the Women's Department of the Supreme Secretariat of the Provincial and District Boards of PSL, 29 July 1946 (quotation); MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, Letter of Subcommittee of Social Care of ZW PSL to ZG PSL 9 November 1946. „W razie aresztowania, zamordowania czy długotrwałej choroby członka PSL.”

<sup>53</sup> T. Skrzyński, *Przygotowania PSL do wyborów na przykładzie Krakowskiego*, [w:] *Koniec jaltańskich złudzeń. Sfałszowane wybory – 19 I 1947*, ed. M. Wenklar, Kraków 2007, p. 87.

<sup>54</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, Protocol of the meeting of ZG PSL in Kraków on 2 September 1946.

<sup>55</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, Protocol of the meeting of ZG PSL in Kraków on 11 October 1946.

<sup>56</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, Protocol of the meeting of ZG PSL in Kraków on 11 October 1946.

<sup>57</sup> Compare with i.a. T. Skrzyński, *Przygotowania...*, pp. 85–86; idem, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, pp. 152–153; B. Dereń, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, pp. 153–154.

<sup>58</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, The writing of ZW PSL in Kraków to ZG PSL in Kraków on 4 December 1946. „Sytuacja polityczna na świecie i w Polsce”, „sprawy wyborcze”, „sprawy organizacyjne.”

had “positions of responsibility in the state administration, local government and business organizations.” The Regional Board was well-versed about the situation in the city. It estimated that the maximum number of people who could come to the congress, despite the repressions, was 70. This shows the scale of the desolation. In assessing this number, one needs to remember that the Management Board was very knowledgeable about the situation of the circles in the city.

It was estimated that even in June 1946, using the same criteria, at least 170 invitations had been sent. Fearing the intrusion of armed groups organised by the communists on the debate, it was ordered to provide at least 50 members of the ordinal guard with armbands.<sup>59</sup> Despite its gradual disappearance, the structures of PSL Kraków still managed to organise the activists meetings in Kraków.<sup>60</sup> Plans for the resumption of activities were unrealistic due to the huge communist terror.<sup>61</sup>

After the rigged parliamentary elections held by the communists in January 1947, the Kraków PSL still had significant influence among the inhabitants of the voivodeship. This was still more than the supporters and members of the ruling camp had. In the summer of 1947, the Kraków PSL contained the majority of the members of the party in the country.<sup>62</sup> However, the terror controlled by the communists and pressure in the workplaces had their consequences, particularly in the city of Kraków where the activities and the size of the structures were many times smaller than in 1946.<sup>63</sup> Before the elections, the vast majority

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<sup>59</sup> MWW, ZG PSL Kraków, Letter by ZW PSL in Kraków to ZG PSL in Kraków on 4 December 1946. „odpowiedzialne stanowiska w administracji państwowej, samorządzie i organizacjach gospodarczych.”

<sup>60</sup> I.a. „Raport pełnomocnika MBP na województwo krakowskie za 1–15 I 1947 r.” [in:] C. Osękowski, *Wybory do sejmu z 19 stycznia 1947 roku w Polsce*, Poznań 2000, p. 303; The Department of The Polish Peasant Movement 912.01.05., Protocol of the Protocol Conference of Chairmen of the PSL District Economic Commission of 1 December 1946; IPNkr 075/32/146, Report to the UB from 20 December 1946.

<sup>61</sup> As widely described in the literature, including in: P. Sękowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, pp. 147, 150–151, 157–164, 172 and others; B. Dereń, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, pp. 173–189 and others.

<sup>62</sup> R. Turkowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, p. 245.

<sup>63</sup> More information about further activities of PSL and the communist repressions (in the district of Kraków and Kraków metropolitan area) was written by P. Sękowski, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*, pp. 177–273 and following. Throughout the voivodeship, its fate after the elections was described in, i.a.: B. Dereń, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...*; idem, *Krakowski Konfederaci...*; A. Fitowa, *Stanisław Mierzwa...*; *Proces Krakowski 11 VIII – 10 IX 1947 r. działacze WiN i PSL przed sądem komunistycznym. Materiały z sesji*, „Zeszyty Historyczne WiNu” 2002, no. 18; T. Skrzyński, *Ludowcy w Małopolsce 1945–1947*, [in:] *Wokół legendy „Ognia”, opór przeciw zniewoleniu: Polska-Małopolska-Podhale 1945–1956*, ed. R. Kowalski, Nowy Targ 2008; idem, *Pozycja Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego na scenie politycznej w pierwszej połowie 1947 r. (Na przykładzie Krakowskiego)*, „Rocznik Historyczny Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego” 2006, no. 22; idem, *Represje wobec Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego w wojewódz-*

of activists permanently withdrew from party activities. In the following years, many of them were subjected to repressions and harassment.

The transformations within PSL after the departure of Mikołajczyk from the country did not result in the restoration of the Urban Board's activities in Kraków. Quite the opposite. This was due to the PPR's control. The communists did not want PSL to be active among the inhabitants of cities in Poland. The communists in Kraków were accordingly instructed: "Facing us is the problem of getting rid of PSL from the cities, especially the large ones, PSL has to be a peasant organisation."<sup>64</sup> The only exception in the country was an urban organisation in Warsaw. In Kraków, PSL obtained consent only to create a circle in place of the Urban Board.<sup>65</sup>

After the departure of Mikołajczyk, the program of what was in fact a new party did not criticise the mistakes of the communist regime. They wanted to formally maintain the party's continuity, save as many of the achievements of the peasant movement as possible, protect its activists from further repressions, and to have some influence on the economic and social transformation. The price they had to pay was to adjust to the regime and unequal cooperation with the communists.

The goals they set proved to be unrealistic. The communists demanded total subordination to their instructions. From the summer of 1948, among the local activists of the dominant party in Kraków the view that the existence of the party was only a "temporary result of the political structure in Poland" became more common.<sup>66</sup>

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*twie krakowskim w 1947 roku (wybrane zagadnienia)*, „Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej” 2005, vol. 55; M. Szpytma, *Działalność represyjna UB wobec PSL w powiecie krakowskim w latach 1945–1947*, „Zeszyty Historyczne WiNu” 2002, no. 18.

<sup>64</sup> The National Archives in Kraków Polish Workers' Party, 7 Minutes of the KW PPR plenum, 14 November 1947: „stoi przed nami sprawa likwidowania PSL w miastach, zwłaszcza dużych; PSL musi stać się organizacją chłopską”.

<sup>65</sup> Paweł Sękowski wrote the most widely about the activities of PSL since the end of 1947 (in Kraków and the Kraków area) in *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe... Its history in the voivodeship as a whole has been described i.a. by: B. Dereń, Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe...; i d e m, Krakowscy Konfederaci...; A. Fitowa, Stanisław Mierzwa...; M. Szpytma, Ku ZSL. Proces unifikacji stronnictw „ludowych” w woj. krakowskim 1947–1949*, „Rocznik Historyczny Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego” 2005, no. 21; T. Skrzyński, *Polityka komunistów wobec „odrodzonego” Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego w województwie krakowskim (XI 1947 – VI 1948)*, „Krakowski Rocznik Archiwalny” 2006, V 12; i d e m, *Z dziejów SL i „odrodzonego” PSL w województwie krakowskim*, „Roczniki Dziejów Ruchu Ludowego” 2006, no. 34; i d e m, „Wejście” do ZSL. Miejsce na scenie politycznej i losy „odrodzonego” Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego w 1948 i 1949 r. (przypadek Małopolski), [in:] *Materiały z IV Kongresu Historyków Wsi i Ruchu Ludowego IX 2010*, Warszawa 2012.

<sup>66</sup> The National Archives in Kraków Polish Socialist Party 280, Minutes from the gathering of the independent activists from the PPS circles of the Kraków Central District, 16 September 1948. „Wynik chwilowy struktury politycznej w Polsce.”

*Tomasz Skrzyński*

## Z HISTORII PSL W KRAKOWIE W LATACH 1945–1946

### Streszczenie

Po wojnie PSL miała szanse wygrania wyborów parlamentarnych i wyeliminowania swojej słabej rywalki SL „Lublin”. W dużych miastach, takich jak Warszawa, Łódź, Wrocław czy Kraków, struktury partii stawały się mocniejsze z upływem czasu. Jej członkami stawały się osoby, których związki ze wsią były słabe lub nie istniały w ogóle. Większość członków PSL w Małopolsce to mieszczenie mieszkający w Krakowie.

Szacuje się, że w latach 1945–1947 liczba członków PSL wśród mieszkańców oscylowała wokół liczby 2500. Wzrastała liczba kół partyjnych. Od marca do września 1946 ich liczba powiększyła się z 25 do 31. W samym mieście najliczniejsi członkowie PSL to rolnicy, intelektualści, robotnicy i rzemieślnicy.