polish 4(196)'16
sociological
review
ISSN 1231 – 1413

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Pathogenesis of the Polish Public Sphere. The Intelligentsia and Popular Unrest during and after the 1905 Revolution

Abstract: In this paper we analyze the nascent years of the Polish public sphere during the years before and after the 1905 Revolution. We assert that it was a moment of clash between, on the one hand, the intelligentsia and its *de facto* bourgeois vision of politics, and on the other a rising proletarian counter-public. The popular unrest initiated a massive upsurge of workers into the process of mass politics. As we argue, this situation shocked the elites, attached to their utopian vision of the Polish people, "enlightened" from above by the intelligentsia. Consequently, their reaction was ambivalent, if not reluctant. The intelligentsia's attitude was growingly tainted with a conservative fear of the masses, which inhibited the development of plebeian constituencies and forms of political articulation. This posed a cornerstone for the future layering of the public sphere, leading to what we call its pathogenesis. It produced outcomes lasting for years, as well as a general contempt towards democratic demands resulting in the impossibility of collective bargaining about popular economic interests.

Keywords: public sphere, pathogenesis, intelligentsia, masses, the 1905 Revolution.

The 1905 Revolution in the Russian-controlled Kingdom of Poland was one of the few bottoms-up political modernizations and general democratizations in Polish history, paralleled probably only by the 'first' Solidarity movement in the early 1980's. Both upsurges were similar in that they led to the defeat of popular class uprisings aimed at political recognition and economic alleviation. Leaving the larger comparisons aside for armchair political theorists, we aim here to investigate the popular unrest in 1905–1907 as a constitutive factor in the ongoing development of civil society and the public sphere in Poland.

However, we do not posit that the Revolution was simply an "awakening" of Polish society and its initial entrance into modern politics, accompanied by nascent civil society institutions (Żarnowska and Wolsza 1993), prematurely trampled down the tsarist repressions (Blobaum 1995: 286–287). Instead, we examine its long-term influence on the evolution and constitution of the Polish public sphere, seen as a realm of political reasoning, discussion and practice, "in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk" (Fraser 1990; see also Hauser 1998). We argue that the diachronically-evolving relationship between a) the state, b) civil society (in both senses, i.e. the narrower Hegelian—that is bourgeois private interests—and the broader Tocquevillean, that is various overarching civic institutions relatively independent from the state), c) elites (i.e. those holding symbolic

power and having the highest level of public legitimacy on their disposal), and d) popular classes produced a particular form of public sphere. The year 1905 marked a conjunctural moment or a tipping point (Althusser 2006; Sassen 2008), leading to an important reconfiguration of all the elements and relationships between the aforementioned groups, while the actually-existing public sphere constituted itself at their very intersection.

It would be an exaggeration to claim that this event triggered a direct oligarchic, counter-democratic reaction of the Polish elites (Jacques Rancière 2014). The growing civic activity of Polish popular classes was doubtlessly crushed by the tsarist repression. However, the Revolution among the Polish intelligentsia was both broadly greeted with awe and severely criticized as an uncontrolled outburst of untamed masses along the well known late 19th century pattern of conservative critique (Jonsson 2013). The reactions of the Polish intelligentsia for the masses protesting on the streets and reading and debating in factories, was ambivalent at best and openly hostile at worst. The intelligentsia's faith in a benign Polish people withered away, introducing an unbridgeable rift in the imagined body politic of the Polish nation (Micińska 2008). When the postulates of the radical intelligentsia circles came true, after initial moderate support they were not so willing to fan the flames of change further. Instead, they often engaged in elitist discourse collating the real political struggle with an imagined, quasi-utopian picture of an "enlightened" Polish people, condemning the former in favor of the latter. This reconfiguration weighed on the future deployments and field dynamics of the public sphere, in a way preventing the broader addressing of the popular grievances and incorporating the working class and peasants into assumed body politic as legitimate and independent claimants.

We look for the genealogy of this situation, investigating the primary context of Polish political modernity—the 1905 Revolution. We posit that this moment was an initial conjuncture, triggering a path of dependency of public sphere lineages, which we shall call, for reasons to be explained, pathogenesis. It was of course Reinhardt Koselleck who coined the term. He scrutinized the main systemic building blocks constituting the relationships between the state and civil society in European modernity, seeking to explain the particularly utopian pattern of political thinking, which appeared to be an intransigent residue which lasted long after its initial, historically-embedded genesis (Koselleck 1988). While we do not endorse his conservative (at least in his early, mostly "Schmittian" period) conclusions (Mehring 2006; Pankakoski 2010; Olsen 2011), nonetheless we also trace long lasting effects in political thinking and practice back to the initial conjuncture of major elements in the public sphere setting, namely the (tsarist) state, the (particular, intelligentsia-led) public sphere, and the proletarian revolt and claims for public recognition.

This study is grounded in our long-acquired expertise in the popular upsurge of 1905, its political aftermath(s), and the Polish intelligentsia and liberal press at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries, as well as an extensive critical review of the existing secondary literature and empirical findings from two research projects aimed at analysis of primary sources from the period.[1] In the first part of the article we introduce the historical context of the

[1] The textual corpora utilized here were gathered and analysed in two research projects. On of them concerns the entire corpus of preserved political leaflets issued by major parties during the 1905–1907 Revolution (ca. 800 items). The second project is a collaborative initiative launched to scrutinize discourses of modernity in late 19th and 20th century Łódź. It comprised a complete query of major local dailies (three titles) in the period 1898–

Polish modern public sphere and its peculiarities. Later we revisit the ideological tenets of the Polish intelligentsia's liberalism, which to large extent framed its striving to rebuild and modernize Polish society and politics. Consequently, this permits us to enmesh the vicissitudes of the intelligentsia's attitude toward the popular unrest loomed large. What follows is an insight into the development of the proletarian publics and the respective alternative public sphere during the 1905 Revolution.

The theoretical scaffolding weaved in between the subsequent parts are arguments from the big triangle in theorizing public spheres, civil society and the state, the vertices of which are laid out in the seminal contributions of Koselleck, Habermas and Negt and Kluge with respective growing secondary literature and critiques. Instructed by these analytical sensitivities, in the final part of our work we investigate the discursive reactions of Polish liberal and nationalist opinion during and after the Revolution, and conclude with the pathogenetic history of the Polish public sphere, seen as nested systems of subfields, with respective class-based embeddings and separate political agendas.

The Vagaries of Distorted Modernization. The Prehistory of the Polish Public Sphere

In comparison with the Western European path of development, epitomized by the Habermasian ideal-typical, but also normative, model of the public sphere (Habermas 1989), in the Kingdom of Poland in the late 19th and early 20th centuries this process was very limited or even muffled. In Central and Eastern Europe, the development of the public sphere, if projected on the (falsely) universal benchmark of Western Europe, fell at least one century behind. The reasons lay both in particular historical background and the then-present political circumstances. The developmental trajectory of the region was determined by different economic paths than in the West, however both were already closely integrated (Małowist 2010).

The old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth—a peculiar republic of noble landowners (known in Poland as *Szlachta*), with elected and often puppet royal authority, was plagued by anarchy and substantial backwardness (Sowa 2011; Czapliński 2011; Pobłocki 2010: 37–73). It finally collapsed in 1795 and Poland became partitioned between three despotic neighbours—autocratic Austria and Prussia and despotic, but ambitious, Tsarist Russia. What is crucial, the agrarian structure of the Commonwealth, the interests of the landed gentry and general swerve of Polish culture resulted in a strongly anti-urban political culture (Jedlicki 2000: 83–90).The position of towns and bourgeoisie in this peripheral state, whose economy and position in the relationship with the new Western capitalist order was entirely based on the export of grain, decreased dramatically in the modern era. As a result, Polish cities and towns at the beginning of the 19th century were astonishingly small and completely underdeveloped.

For instance in the late 18th century, just two decades before the beginning of its industrial development, Łódź the soon-to-be capital of the country's industry, had only less than 200 inhabitants and… 44 wooden houses! Moreover—ridiculous as it seems—formally it

1914. However, due to harsh word-count constraints of the PSR, in this study we do not quote almost any primary sources at length.

was still a town (sic!). Dozens of similar "urban centres" in Central Poland were regarded by the nobles with contempt. They were in fact almost rural and to large extent inhabited by non-Polish populations—Jewish in the bigger centres, and also German—which fuelled their perception as foreign and hostile places. The Jews, whose trading activities were considered by the *Szlachta* as shameful and unchristian, were the actual operators of the urban economies. Consequently, the Polish 'fallen' towns had no prospects to become truly opinion-creating centres for the Polish public sphere before 1850 (Kopczyńska-Jaworska 1993: 100).

The agrarian and peripheral nature of the country, the widespread illiteracy of popular classes, the political weakness and small number of bourgeoisie, and finally—the domination of *Szlachta* and noble-origin Church hierarchy in narrow-minded public life—all these factors inhibited the development of institutions commonly associated with the emerging bourgeois public sphere. Neither the significant development of the press, as in Britain, nor the privatization of the public, which was represented by the Parisian *salons*, were possible in the I Republic, pre-partitioned Poland (Habermas 1989: 31–43). The *Szlachta*'s manors, which were the real centres of public life in Poland, rather represented a the court lifestyle. Thus, there was no distinction between the private and the public, so the entire edifice conditioning the ethos of individuals acting in public sphere, typical for the Western bourgeoisie, did not emerge (Tazbir 1978). Under these circumstances, the development of a modern public sphere and its characteristic institutions was highly improbable.[2]

The partitions were a turning point in the modern history of Poland. Their impact on the Polish public sphere was variegated, according to the diversity of the *Belle Epoque*'s realities in Berlin, Vienna and Saint Petersburg. Instead of analysing differences in the development of the Polish public sphere in various partitions, we will focus on central part of the country, which—except for the Duchy of Warsaw era (1807–1815), became a part of Russian Poland, known as the Kingdom of Poland. It was a crucial part, not only because of its centrality, but mainly because it had the biggest ratio of industrialization and urbanization, which made social and political changes there much more advanced and simultaneously more rapid that in Prussian Poland or Galicja (Austrian Poland) (Nietyksza 1986).

Although the processes of the first, state-licensed industrialization began in 1820s, when the Kingdom still had some political autonomy vis-à-vis Saint Petersburg, most of the irreversible changes happened after Russia's defeat of the 1863 January Insurrection. Then the last remnants[3] of autonomy were lost and the country was subjected to repressions, including integration with the Russian imperial institutional order and Russification of whole administration and education spheres. The fallen insurrection, called by Karl Marx a "notable revolution" was indeed the last of great 19th century Polish romantic movements, prepared and implemented mostly by the *Szlachta*. Paradoxically, the substantial failure to encourage other social strata to revolt in the name of Polish revival secured the political domination of the noble class in the local public life (Kita 2013).

[2] Of course, some institutions typical for the public sphere, like a political press, existed even in the pre-partition Poland, but their social impact was much more lower than in Western Europe.

[3] The Kingdom of Poland lost most of its separate institutions, including its constitution, parliament and own army, after the 1830 November Insurrection and following failed Polish-Russian war.

The 1864 agrarian reforms, with the abolition of serfdom aimed at securing peasant support for the Russian rule, merged with political repressions against landowners and triggered the economic collapse of the Kingdom's agriculture. This finally ended the long epoch of secondary feudalism in Poland. Subsequently, thousands of unemployed peasants, as well as bankrupted nobles, were forced to migrate to cities. The latter started to develop rapidly because of the rapid pace of industrialization (Blobaum 1995: 10–28; Porter 2000: 76–77).

Not surprisingly, this period of impressive industrialization, supported by Russian trade protectionism, dramatically remodelled both the existing social structure and the nature of Polish politics. Between 1850 and 1900 three industrial urban centres flourished. Warsaw, which had still the reputation of a capital city and became the uncontested centre of Polish culture and public life on the entire-country scale, grew significantly, reaching a half-million inhabitants in 1900. It's growth was accompanied by two even more rapidly growing large big industrial centres: textile Łódź, which in the course of just several decades was transformed from a forgotten village into a city with 400,000 inhabitants by 1900, and Dąbrowa Basin, based on a heavy industries. Both had become huge isles of capitalistic modernity, surrounded by rural Polish landscapes (Nietyksza 1986; Jezierski 1982).

However, what distinguished the industrial centres from the capital was that they were controlled almost exclusively by German-born and Jewish bourgeoisie, with a limited tendency to cultural Polonization and generally indifferent to Polish national strivings (Żarnowska 2004). Researchers of the Central European public spheres have noted the importance of local publics for emerging counter-imperial nationalisms (Hoffmann 2006), and the strong polarization of urban public spheres along national and ethnic divisions (Hofmann and Wendland 2002; Ury 2012, chap. 6). Consequently, nationalistic Polish intellectuals regarded the urban non-Polish elites rather as a threat than as agents of economic and social modernization (Śmiechowski 2012; Zysiak 2014). All in all, the second half of the 19th century was a time of intensive class formation in the Kingdom of Poland, resulting in the appearance of new social agents: capitalist bourgeois, an industrial working class and urban intelligentsia. It was also a time when a modern Polish public sphere finally could be formed. How it unfolded is the issue of principal interest to us here.

The Public Sphere of the Intelligentsia

Although the direction of migration was overwhelmingly urban, the goals of the peasants and former noble class members moving from their villages into the cities were different. For the unskilled and illiterate popular classes, leaving the overpopulated and poor countryside was just a matter of struggle for survival. Thus, it was not initially accompanied by very many newly emerging cultural or political needs (Żarnowska 1974: 102–157). However, situation of noblemen attending universities in Russia and abroad[4] was much differ-

[4] Warsaw Main School (in Polish *Szkoła Główna Warszawska*), the only Polish university in the Kingdom, which was strongly influenced by liberalism and reformist movement and became the Alma Mater of future's Warsaw Positivists, was closed in 1869 and changed into the Russian University as a form of political repression after the January Uprising. After the Russification, except its Faculty of Law, it was not so popular among Polish students like other universities in Russia (especially in Dorpat or Saint Petersburg) and abroad, in Western Europe.

ent. For them, training in professional jobs, for instance civil engineers, lawyers, physicians, private clerks, artists, writers or journalists, was actually necessary to achieve elementary economic stabilization. Moreover, it was also connected with a striving for social status. To shed light on the specificity of social background, economic and intellectual pursuits of those emergent groups, it is useful to clarify the term "intelligentsia" in respect to particular Eastern European, especially Polish context.

In the Central and Eastern Europe the term "intelligentsia" is commonly understood slightly different that in the Western world (and often in the anglophone academia), where it is used interchangeably with the term "intellectuals." However, in local specificity it is analytically more accurate to consider Eastern European intelligentsia as a particular social strata, composed by educated groups of society. In such depiction intellectuals are just a part of it (Kurczewska 1998). It is neither a bourgeois intellectual elite nor a middle-class composed of professionals more common in Western European societies (Kocka 1993; Frykman and Löfgren 1987). Intelligentsia used to sometimes defined as an underspecified "sphere of the society" (Czepulis-Rastenis 1973: 5), which additionally underlines historical and geographical specifity of this formation. Some authors pointed at specific "ethos," calling or vocation to social service, buy also important "missionary" attitudes (Walicki 2006). Other authors underline psychological foundations of belonging to intelligentsia. What allegedly characterized this group was the strong self-identity and certain exclusiveness despite close links to other social strata (Micińska 2008: 111–113). As Tomasz Zarycki notes, the major factor constituting the intelligentsia in this part of Europe was cultural capital, derived from the level of education, contrary to the bourgeoisie having economic capital on their disposal, but deprived of the social recognition which limited its real powers (Zarycki 2008).

As a result when the centre of the Polish public sphere moved from villages to cities after 1863, economic elites, formed mostly by Jews and Germans, did not assume the mantle of opinion-makers. This position had become occupied by the intelligentsia, which appeared to be the only group able to replace *szlachta* as the predominant creators of socio-political and cultural discourse and public opinion (Żurawicka 1978: 206–207). As we argue in this study, the hegemony of intelligentsia in the public sphere, established in the 19th century, has some significant long lasting consequences.

In the aforementioned circumstances the massive search for work in occupations typical for the intelligentsia resulted in high unemployment among educated Poles just two decades after the January Insurrection. The 'overproduction' of intelligentsia, the Polish version of the impoverishment of educated professionals noted throughout all of Europe, was additionally strengthened by the Russification of administration and local government. This led to frustration which manifested itself in a significant intellectual ferment known as "anti-positivist turn" in 1890s (Weiss 1966). Then the hegemony of tacit liberalism essentially ended and new ideologies including nationalism and socialism reached their heyday between younger generations of intelligentsia (Jedlicki 1999: 173–178; Mencwel 2009; Sdvizkov 2011: 148–150).

The result was a narrowness of the public sphere, participation in which was limited to a small number of literate members of the intelligentsia, old elites and bourgeoisie. It was initially not contested by its plebeian counterpart, which would secure the presence

of counter elitist discourses (Calhoun 2012, chapter 4 and 5; Lottes 1979). Moreover, the ethos of Central and Eastern European intelligentsia considered this group to be a missionary of progress, leading the lower classes to a better future. This, paradoxically, also inhibited the actual inclusiveness of the public sphere (Zahorska 1978; Sdvizkov 2011: 255–258; Mencwel 2009; Iwańska 2010). It caused the relations between the enlightened elites—represented by intelligentsia—and the masses, especially workers, to take on a very paternalistic nature. As a result, almost the entire Kingdom's social and political discourse manifested a supposed universality, despite the fact that it hardly represented anything besides the intelligentsia's particular standpoint (for comparison and general logic of the process see Kocka and Muller-Luckner 1986; Kocka 2015, chapter 6).

Obviously, this discourse was strongly embedded in liberal thought, the impact of which on the 19th century bourgeoisie was unquestionable. However, the 19th century Polish liberalism, represented mostly by Warsaw positivists, was much different from its Western counterpart in many aspects (Stegner 1990; Janowski 2004; Porter 1996; Porter 2000: 43–58). First of all, Polish liberals supported only the political dimension of the European liberalism and, in principle, rejected its laissez-faire ideology (Jedlicki 1999: 241–244; Jaszczuk 1986: 160–163). Social and economic progress was rather seen primarily as an instrument of national integration.

If radical Westernization was regarded as threat, as well as alleged national apostasy caused by Russification, the working class, which became an unwanted product of industrialization, was a serious problem for Polish intellectuals (Jedlicki 1999: 279–282; Śmiechowski 2012; Marzec and Zysiak 2016). Actually, only a few believed that—after the future victorious revolution—it would be the proletariat who would lead the country on the path of progress. Furthermore, for the positivists class divisions were more rhetorical distinctions than a real form of antagonism as a principle of society's organization (Stegner 1990: 73). They were convinced that the lack of education of the masses and the 'foreignness' of the capitalists were more important reasons underlying the economic exploitation of the proletariat than the existing economic system itself (Stegner 1990: 57–62). Thus, the envisioned future was more a Polonization of production rather than abolishing capitalism as such (Zysiak 2014).

Generally speaking, despite all the generational and ideological differences, the intelligentsia's attitude to the working class was very condescending. Workers were considered as an immature population, who could become a real partner in the process of Poland's economic and cultural development only after fulfilling numerous preconditions. For liberals, the most important of these preconditions was education, which was believed would almost inevitably turn the masses into citizens (Stegner 1990: 41–44). In consequence, in this prenatal stage of the development of the modern Polish public sphere, workers were accepted as a part of the society or nation, but their subordinate position was regarded as an axiom.

It is worth noting that the Polish intelligentsia, with a minuscule exception of aristocratic loyalists, generally refused to cooperate with the tsarist state, seen unanimously as foreign, threatening, uncivilized and hostile. Indeed, Russian policies in the Kingdom of Poland left much less place for any civic activity than in mainland Russia. Thus, even a moderate development of state-licensed civil society institutions was virtually non-existent (contrary

to situation in Russia; see Bradley 2002; Bradley 2009). Consequently, the rift between state and the (non-existent) civil society was stronger than elsewhere. What developed, in the context of Western absolutist monarchies, as a civil alternative to a sovereign state (Koselleck 1988), or concessioned sub-sphere facilitating the development of knowledge (Hoffmann 2006), in Poland could only be a very limited fantasizing of the future, very detached from any serious political activity in real time.

Before the Revolution, Russian Poland was just a type of a police state, with an oppressive preventive censorship system. Political life was marginalized to mere private activities. For instance, in Warsaw private meetings of the most influential individuals from the local bourgeoisie and intelligentsia became a Polish form of the Parisian *salons*. Discussions were also held in editorial board meetings of Warsaw's cultural magazines, but their effects were seen by only small groups of subscribers. Nevertheless, journals as *Biblioteka Warszawska*, *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, *Przegląd Tygodniowy* or *Prawda*, all of them written in an ambitious, allusive way, played a genuine role in opinion-making. However, there were hardly any possibilities for a broader impact owing to the never-built (or dismantled by the Russian administration) educational system and the massive illiteracy (Łojek, Myśliński, and Władyka 1988a :54–89).

Although Kingdom's press was full of projects and manifestos, most of them were in reality unaddressed. Since neither the government nor the local establishment could be partners in the process of creation of a civic society, the only real avenue and possibility was to appeal to the responsibility of individuals. Thus subscribers of magazines or newspapers could read that something important should be done in the whole country or in their hometowns, but in actuality no one had the courage to indicate those responsible for the *status quo*. Unsurprisingly, the real results of these 'actions' were very modest and disappointing (Śmiechowski 2013: 354–358).

This situation notwithstanding, on paper the radical nascent liberal intelligentsia demonstrated an unshaken faith in ultimate progress and a fully rational future world of happiness. They were not, however, dealing with the actual pressing problems of popular participation or a plebeian public. Only the most radical part of the intelligentsia engaged—in accordance with its own particular calling—in spreading knowledge "to the people" (Walicki 2006; Mencwel 2009; Cywiński 2010). Our claim in this paper is that these historically-determined circumstances had an important impact on the modern Polish public sphere, which became established during and after the 1905 Revolution.

Watershed of Political Participation

All the premises and imagined futures for the Polish people present in the writings of the intelligentsia were soon to be verified by historical events. The "masses" didn't want to wait until the intelligentsia would lead and educate them, and went out on the streets in January 1905. Above all, the 1905 Revolution brought about massive political participation in various forms of public shapes. Even a brief look at the historical research that has already been conducted concerning political organizations, the legal and illegal press, labour unions, strikes, and factory occupations reveals a striking intensification of political

life and public participation. The Revolution mobilized new groups of society, in particular workers, to actively participate in the public sphere. The events ushered the Polish Kingdom into modern politics (Samuś 2013).

Despite the immediate martial law repressions, the Manifesto of October 1905, with its announcement of constitutional reform and the abolition of censorship, as well as the liberal law on associations from March 1906, triggered a new era in the development of Kingdom's public sphere. The development of both a commercial and political press, as well as all types of voluntary organizations, including trade unions, was enormous and very rapid. Hundreds if not thousands of new, often radical newspapers, cultural and educational associations, social primary and secondary schools—with lectures in Polish, external courses for adults, open lectures given by serious intellectuals or local professionals—and active discussion clubs, all of which had been previously unavailable, appeared in the Kingdom in 1905 and 1906 (Kmiecik 1980; Blobaum 1995; Śmiechowski 2014).

Apart from this, cities across Poland witnessed emerging new publics and civic culture, among the Polish and Jewish populations alike (Żarnowska and Wolsza 1993; Ury 2012). Parties and labour unions directly mobilized at least 150,000 people and introduced them to the public sphere for the first time (Samuś 2013, chap. 1; Blobaum 1995: 113). Workers, who earlier were rather passive and politically unaware, began to enter various forms of the public sphere. Membership in all types of political parties was rising rapidly, as they grew from tiny, cadre organizations to mass membership parties, reaching approximately every fifth worker in the Polish Kingdom (and even more in Łódź).[5]

Political parties not only organized economic strikes, but also highly advanced public activities. During the heated days of 1905–1907 they formed factory committees responsible for managing labour resistance and negotiating with factory owners, and sponsored mobile agitators who moved from one factory to another to organize agitation assemblies, where workers gathered to listen to and discuss political programs (the "*masówka*," or mass meeting, was one of the main forms of political participation). Often the meeting involved not just the presentation of a single program, but became a kind of a contest—speakers from different political milieus competed and tried to convince the workers to join them, thus creating an environment for political discussions and forcing the audience to rethink and find better grounds for their political commitments.

Programs were discussed and severe discursive battles fought, sometimes even ending in a quarrel or fight. Mass-meetings and rallies were organized, with workers reclaiming not only the streets, but also non-public, privately owned spaces such as factories, where the vast majority of political activities were undertaken during, after, or instead of work. Another form of activity was a kind of a march through streets with banners and the singing of revolutionary and national songs (depending on the political affiliation). A third major form was the "*majówka*" (a May play-day). On holidays or Sundays workers headed to nearby forests and organized open air meetings where they ate, sang, danced, listened to political speeches and discussed the issues of the day (Blobaum 1995; Karwacki 1975).

[5] In the end of 1906 three main socialist parties were as numerous as 55000 (PPS), 35000 (SDKPiL), Bund (30000), giving in total 15% of workers in Polish Kingdom, whereas direct before the revolution all three of them have no more than 1,500 members. NZR has reached about 25000 members (Karwacki 1975; Monasterska 1973; Samuś 1984; Tomicki 1983).

This abundant political life was, on one hand, connected with the massive production of agitation leaflets and newspapers and, on the other, resulted in the workers increasing overall interest in public life and gave them a broader experiential frame of reference. Both these dimensions led to a huge increase in the production of written texts and readership audiences. Party committees issued thousands of fliers directed to the masses and distributed illegal workers' newspapers, which were secretly read together with the legal ones, commented on, discussed and clarified among the comrades (Myśliński 1982). In spite of the huge level of illiteracy (up to 60% of all workers) the readership rate of the press (not only socialist) and number of titles issued increased rapidly.[6] Moreover, due to the broadening of interests, a general growth of intellectual aspirations and economic gains (such as a shorter working day), caused various kinds of general readerships to also increase (Krajewska 1979).

To sum up, the revolution broke a certain threshold in the uses of literacy among people (Hoggart 2009). At night workers met to learn and discuss the political agendas, creating a kind of new circuit of knowledge, acting as a self-lifting mechanism raising their level of both cultural practices and class position (Marzec 2012; see also Jacques Rancière 1989). All of this occurred in the context of a fierce political struggle between various parties competing for the building of mass political identities, be they class, national, or various combinations of the two.[7] A vibrant proletarian public sphere emerged.

The peculiarities of the proletarian public were investigated by Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge in their research on plural and oppositional public spheres (Negt and Kluge 1993). Being contentious towards Habermas's classic approach, the authors scrutinized forms of publics, different from a liberal salon. By referring public spheres to subjective experiences as their feeding soil, which were simultaneously reconfigured by various forms of participation, Negt and Kluge focused on a specific life world and practices constituting the proletarian public sphere. It was not a failed, derivative or imitative form of bourgeois public sphere, but an alternative pattern of argumentative structures, turning various prob-

[6] The number of illegal titles doubled during the revolution. For example in Łódź the number of illegal titles published periodically grew from one in 1904 to fourteen in 1907. The number of legal titles tripled in the same period reaching over 300 Polish titles in the Russian Empire. Also, the circulation rates raised rapidly; for example *Robotnik* issued by PPS in the beginning of 1905 has 2200 copies, while in November 1905 30000 were published (Kmiecik 1980; Myśliński 1982).

[7] Social Democracy in the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy—SDKPiL) had founded its program, strategy, and agitation on class as the basic frame of reference and affiliation, and on labour unity as the main identity, overcoming or even annulling national identity (Blobaum 1984; Samuś 1984; Radlak 1979) There was a common struggle alongside the Russian proletariat for class goals and internationalist socialism, sublating the nation state based on exploitation, which was to be an efficient and appealing strategy. The Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna—PPS) tried to combine the class struggle with claims of national independence, and treated a sovereign Polish state as the path towards socialism, whereas the labour struggle was a means of regaining independence. Such an inherent tension was also a reason for the split in 1906, which had its main cause in the divergence of class and national claims in the party's political agenda (Żarnowska 1965) Circles connected with National Democracy and their labour branch, the National Workers Union (Narodowy Związek Robotniczy—NZR) created in June 1905, took the nation as the basic form of affiliation, concentrating on the struggle for political and cultural autonomy and the right to use Polish in different spheres of life. The superiority of the focus on national unity meant abandoning economic claims or class demands which could have acted against "Polish" industry. That meant, among other things, subordinating to factory owners or landlords (Crago 2000; Monasterska 1973; Fountain 1980).

lems into debatable issues and aimed at solving conflicts. It had its own genealogy and principles of organization.

These phenomena may be observed in the rapidly-emerging Polish proletarian public. Inasmuch as there were little stock patterns on what to do in public, workers redeployed and re-articulated the forms of participation which were already known to them. Thus "repertoires of contention" (Tilly 1995), being an important pillar of the emerging labour movement, were often combined with previous or still-practiced forms of church rituals. For instance, a workers' rally, with its singing and banners, resembled a church procession; even the melodic structure of revolutionary songs was similar to traditional church hymns (Chwalba 1992; for more on proletarian songs, see Ajnenkiel 1964; Kozłowski 1977; Zakrzewski 1982). Last but not least, a May day play drew a lot from traditional rural festivities, with eating, singing and dancing, and with political speeches and discussions added on the top of these entertaining and familiar activities. Was this then the long-awaited constitution of the Polish people as a political agent?

Elites Strike Back

At first glance, it may seem that the dreams of Polish intelligentsia had come true. After all, workers were reading and discussing, educating themselves and being educated politically.

The notion of the popular body politic raising against the hated tsar was posited even by early National Democracy (Bończa-Tomaszewski 2001). Finally, it was a great opportunity to push the regime in the direction of liberalization, thus making the workers agents of the "bourgeois-liberal" revolution. Indeed, it to some extent worked in Russia, where there was no context of national oppression (Harcave 1964). As demonstrated above, Polish intelligentsia and the literary public profited enormously from the loosening of censorship after the October manifesto.

Correspondingly, the revolutionary upsurge initially gained partial support by other social groups which were hostile towards the Russian administration, or just were interested in a modest liberalization of the regime. Even the industrial bourgeois was somehow in favour (or at least so it claimed later; for a confession in that matter by a member of the most powerful Łódź industrialist family, Maurycy Poznański, ironically in the midst of a great lockout, see *Rozwój* 1907). For instance, Aleksander Mogilnicki, an attorney and liberal politician working in Łódź, recalled after many years that "in the year 1905 almost everybody was following the same route in fighting 'for our freedom and yours'. People helped each other despite their different beliefs." He added that, as one of the leaders of local liberal intelligentsia, he "was not a member of any leftist party, but near to them" (Mogilnicki 2008: 107). Significantly, however, just months later even informal collaboration between the liberals and socialists became almost impossible.

After the early achievement, the economic demands grew in significance in the revolutionary struggle, aiming at utilizing the mass political act directly. These struggles had also gained partial success, but this success severely affected the character of subsequent strike waves—the support, or at least acceptance, by non-proletarian social strata diminished drastically or entirely disappeared. The desperate attempt to be recognized as legitimate

claimant, and to redraw the borders of the public sphere in a way which would incorporate proletarian participation on the streets and factories, ended in failure. The proletarian public sphere was not recognized as universally legitimate claimant within the realm of the general public. Once excluded, it started to develop separately, further compromising its general acceptance (See Calhoun 2012).

What followed was that—instead of the generalization of social claims of popular social strata—there was a broad tide of liberal, derogatory discourse about the masses, accompanied by further right-wing discourse about discipline, condemning revolutionary anarchy and attempting to integrate workers into the social body without much sensitivity for their political needs and potential (Marzec 2014). To a large extent this popular outburst of public participation failed to gain broad acceptance among the elites and those who ruled the symbolical order of the public sphere and defined what (and who) is a part of the desired civil society. The democratic tendency, i.e. allowing contentious claims of those who were not supposed to speak before (Jacques Rancière 2007; Jacques Rancière 2014), was in countless ways reigned in, controlled and driven aside by various kinds of "elites."

Now the question is: how do these narratives fit together? How did it happen that—taking into consideration that by any "objective" measures workers were more "enlightened," better educated and more active culturally after than before the Revolution (Marzec 2013)—other classes, political forces such as National Democracy, and even large groups of intelligentsia were less in favour of the workers' case after than before? It would seem that the intellectual emancipation of workers was precisely the process which radical intelligentsia (both left and right)—promoting popular radicalism for years—had been struggling for.

The results, however, were far from what one may have expected. Clearly, the workers had started to be politically active and began to make serious claims as political subjects, finally putting into practice the earlier calls for the politicization of the people, issued by all kinds of popular radicals—from socialists to early National Democrats. Nevertheless, the results did not comply with the intelligentsia's expectations. For liberal professionals, who considered themselves as the only authorized leaders of social progress—ready to represent and taking care of the masses—dealing with the huge outbreak of political participation was a real challenge. As the situation became very serious, progressive opinion-makers and journalists began calling on workers to keep calm. For instance, a local newspaper in Łódź argued in the spring of 1905 that:

> Although nothing has been done till now, it is obvious that the physician is in his place, is taking care of the patient and—what is most important—has already made the diagnosis. So if the doctor is watching over the patient and not refusing to give the cure, the patient should stay calm and remain patient. Hence, patience and peace are now recommended everywhere and for everyone (Weberski 1905).

Rhetoric like the above was unsurprising among the intelligentsia. Their belief in their social vocation shaped their attitude toward the popular classes. However, the treatment imagined by the intelligentsia was rejected by the revolting patients. As a revolution deserving of its name, the events of 1905–1907 were far from the pastoral idealization of the people in politics as sometimes imagined by the progressive elites, who accepted a moderate redefinition of political visibility, but rejected a deeper renegotiation of social roles

and distribution of wealth. What had been earlier only imagined in the writings of party thinkers was now turned into political practice. The assumed political community could no longer be postponed or deferred, but had to be mobilized and disciplined in the here and now, without a vision of future reconciliation of the tensions inside it (Porter 1999).

The revolution failed and was bloodily suppressed, leading to a vast array of social disintegration processes and political repression measures. In his seminal depiction, Robert Blobaum bemoans the demise of the nascent civil society in these words:

> [M]artial law (…) did much to arrest, if not reverse, the development of civil society. That society (…) perhaps had been brought to a premature blossom by the revolution. Like a warm, early, but also stormy spring, the revolution fostered the sudden budding out of a multitude of associations, societies, and organizations (…). These bodies, intermediate between state and society (…) were strained, sometimes violently, by their too-rapid growth and by the pressures of popular participation, in unprecedented numbers, by many whose only experience had been that of subjects and not that of citizens (Blobaum 1995: 286–287).

Inasmuch as tsarist repression was certainly the case, one may wonder what was hidden under the wording of the phrase "pressures of popular participation." Whereas parties and organizations undoubtedly had a lot of trouble trying to master the sky-rocketing participation growth, it hardly could be a main factor of their dispersal and ultimate failure. Similarly, Scott Ury concludes his outline of the theory of "democracy and its discontents" (as the title of his book chapter goes) with the somewhat surprising conclusion that "[w]hile democracy may have brought many blessings, it also came with at least one curse that would scar Polish society for generations: political antisemitism" (Ury 2012: 216).

What both authors exclude, albeit in different registers and for different reasons, is that it was not the tragedy of popular participation but rather the elitist reaction to it which prevented civil society from "blossoming" and redirected popular anger against "the Jews" (Marzec 2015). The post-revolutionary regression in civil activities cannot be explained either by the unambiguously repressive nature of the tsarist regime, relentlessly suppressing any emerging civic institutions, nor by the inherent incapacities of the Polish people. The tsarist administration was not the only agent frightened by the emerging self-determination of the people and the democratic surge. Also in the views of National Democrats it was carrying a Trojan horse, destroying the true nation and endangering the procession of progress as envisioned by the liberal intelligentsia.

Ironically, for the liberals the Revolution was simultaneously their biggest success and their greatest failure. On one hand they achieved real opportunities for legal politics; their dream since the 1870s. During the 1905–1907 period former positivists and younger liberals, now called progressives or radicals, were able to organize vital parties and politically-involved associations like the Polish Culture Association (*Towarzystwo Kultury Polskiej*) or other institutions of a bourgeois public sphere. Without doubt, during the Revolution, like before and after, the liberals remained influential, especially among intelligentsia. However, after this postponed political coming out, the serious political weakness of the liberal intelligentsia and its alienation from the masses became apparent and almost incontestable (Stegner 1990: 131–185; Janowski 2004; Jaszczuk 1999: 67–85; Stegner 2005; Śmiechowski 2014: 245–250). As Maciej Janowski notes, liberals "gained an opportunity to take political action exactly at the same time as they lost real political influence through a sudden radicalization of society" (Janowski 2004: 220).

In the reality of the Revolution, neither activism nor the retained social esteem were sufficient for an effective competition with the socialists and the national democrats. Moreover, the logic of revolutionary movements and their dynamics were hardly graspable in the traditional, bourgeois vision of the public sphere in action. These circumstances brought about an exaggerated fear of the masses among the liberals, strengthened by an intensifying conviction about the 'external origins' of the social discontent. The liberal diagnosis was clear: the workers were immature and too irresponsible for active participation in politics. The intelligentsia began to believe that the Revolution was not a serious social movement, but just a blind act of violence inspired by "aliens," including Jews and various socialist instigators who were either pursuing their own private interests or the wicked and bloody visions of political ideologists (Weeks 1995; Micińska 2005; Krzywiec 2009). This logic, characteristic even of noted intellectuals like Świętochowski, was gradually transferred to local leaders. It is easily observable in Mogilnicki's memoir, where he argues:

> It is easier to initiate a storm than to control it. Every revolution evolves differently than it was planned by its initiators. Initial ideological reasons often perish when the masses reveal their worst instincts. […] During the fighting for freedom (which means just holding power) the biggest failure for socialist leaders is a worker in a wealthy condition. If workers were satisfied with their living conditions, socialist parties would become to a large extent obsolete and their leaders would have to undertake productive labour. Thus, many socialist leaders had an interest in maintaining discontent among workers. As a result, the strikes, which were initially politically-focused and directed against Tsarist absolutism, so beneficial for the whole society, lost their political and national character. Political parties took control over them and the workers, who were for ideological reasons not working for a long time, became happy with this idleness and began to organize militias murdering each other in madness (Mogilnicki 2008: 96).

As the liberals were going deeper into political isolation, the national democrats took a turn toward discipline and autocratic order. The democratizing aspect of the revolution was supplemented—even replaced—by the disciplinary practice of political organizations, above all the National Democracy and the National Labour Union (NZR) affiliated with it (Porter 1999; Marzec 2014). This political milieu was most active in the vicious political struggles, aimed at eliminating the germs of civil society, which mobilized politically in a different way than the National Democrats themselves imagined. While one cannot deny the impressive effort of the National Democrats to induce civic activities, alternative education, rural institutions and even factory representative bodies (Crago 2000; Monasterska 1973; Porter 2000), they did much to eliminate competitive bodies of equally civil capacities, active in favour of the socialist case, or the Jewish population. The Catholic church willingly accompanied the National Democrats in this counter-democratic move, entering into a long-lasting alliance with the initially secular National Democracy (Blobaum 1988; Zaleska 2014). Consequently, the Catholic hierarchy was at least a passive supporter of the raging antisemitism (Porter 2013), and an active player in suppressing movements in favour of popular education (Światło 1981; Lewalski 2005).

Pathogenetic Conjuncture

In conclusion we reframe the material provided above to shed light on the conjuncture of factors responsible for the pathogenesis of the Polish public sphere. The emerging prole-

tarian public—because of its alternative genesis, different forms of participation and alternative governing principles, as well as the divergence of class-based interests—was not the public which had been imagined by the bourgeois elites. The fact that it raised claims which were counter to the social stasis was only one side of the coin. The very fact that these claims were discounted stemmed also from the particular regime of representation of private and collective claims, which render the latter illegitimate.

It was Negt and Kluge who pointed out the non-incidental and non-contingent role of exclusion in the process of creation of the bourgeois public sphere, and its material conditions of possibility, heavily embedded in capitalist relations of production (Negt and Kluge 1993; Calhoun 1992; Goode 2005) Similarly materially embedded were the proletarian public spheres. These material structures are responsible for the historically emergent ideas of public spheres, in which forms of public activity are actualized, made into flesh as definite, empirically detectable practices determined by subjective experiences in the sphere of production. Modes of reasoning, representation of interests, the reference of subjective experience to a broader systemic whole are embedded in the life context (*Lebenszusammenhang*).

Thus the public practices of the workers (as reconstructed above) and modes of universalization of particular experiences and demands are difficult to integrate in a general public sphere which is tainted by its (bourgeois, or in our case—intelligentsia) context of emergence. As Habermas noted, "laws passed under the 'pressure of the street' could hardly be understood any longer as embodying the reasonable consensus of publicly debating private persons" (Habermas 1989: 132). But 'the street' is the place where the proletarian public sphere emerged and the popular demand was debated. If such an integration is inhibited and an oligarchic reaction is triggered, the spheres develop separately, causing further divergence (Calhoun 2012). Consequently, the popular demand, when not included into the public sphere, degenerates and political liberalism cannot be practiced, maintained or introduced without its basic needs being meet, as Hannah Arendt perfectly well understood (Arendt 2014). Instead of co-opting the popular revolt as a factor facilitating and later solidifying political balance and civil institutions, the workers' claims were excluded from legitimate public activity and removed from the domain of rationality. This tendency led to suppression of the popular unrest and redirected it further into social disintegration and unrestrained revolt (Kaczyńska 1983).

Nevertheless, this does not fully explain why the previously progressive and pro-democratic intelligentsia also to a large degree rejected general cooperation and identification with the proletarian surge. While the foreign tsarist regime inhibited any practical political action and modes of reasoning, the quasi-utopian way of thinking of the liberal salon detached it from the political way of thinking proper (Freeden 2013), much more than when forged in opposition to the Western absolutist state (Koselleck 1988) or in the context of mainland Russia under Tsar (Bradley 2002).

The bourgeois or intelligentsia press criticized the underdevelopment of public institutions and civic communities and envisioned their emergence as a way of securing the modernization of the Poles under the partitions. Such a rendition of public activity was to a large extent opposed to the (hostile) state and the apolitical, if not anti-political (Łojek, Myśliński, and Władyka 1988b: 54–57). The developed visions of the moral order of pub-

lic activity prevented it from including non-prescribed phenomena, both from above (state politics) and below (a popular contentious public and alternative public sphere). In these circumstances the liberals, if not strictly speaking elitist, aimed at spreading knowledge among the people until they reached the "entry conditions" of rational public participation. In this realm the prospective, utopian dimension of Polish liberalism unveils itself. This 'plan' could simply not have worked during the rapid rise of mass politics. As a result liberal logic of phased democratization of state politics and urban life became commonly rejected (Śmiechowski 2015).

Following the rapid entrance of the popular classes into politics, Polish enlightened elites remained almost helpless. The "fear of the masses" (Balibar, Stolze, and Giancotti 1989) intensified in a way which prevented the Polish liberal intelligentsia from acknowledging and recognizing the proletarian public and its claims as a legitimate, albeit far from liberal visions, counterpart of the rising public sphere. The long path the 'public' of popular classes in England or France was marked by gradual polemics, with proletarian contenders raising claims and renegotiating with a still not ossified capitalist order (Thompson 1963; Steinberg 1999; Lottes 1979; Aminzade 1993; Sewell 1980). In such circumstances, it was possible for emerging elites to at least partially recognize their claim for political visibility. The oligarchic elites of the *ancien regime* and *nouveau riche* bourgeois alike were eagerly trying to define the situation in their own way, however it was not possible to fully preclude and dismiss the proletarian claims and the plebeian public as the mere inarticulate calls of an uneducated mob (Eley 1992). In Russian Poland it was much easier to make this distinction, and the progressive milieus were able to neglect the proletarian public at ease, excluding the democratic tendency brought about by popular struggle (Hill and Montag 2000). This happened even though the intelligentsia tradition had seemingly predisposed the public sphere to be much more recipient of emergent and contentious claimants.

When the liberals lost the ground under their feet, facing socialist contention and popular demands, the National Democrats (now transformed into modern nationalist conservatives) gained the upper hand (Krzywiec 2013). What followed was a long lasting nationalist hegemony which blocked the articulation of social claims, setting the tone for the mainstream political discourse. It was the National Democrats who orchestrated the public debate in subsequent rounds of Duma elections in 1907 and 1912 (Blobaum 2001; Ury 2012). After the revolutionary surge even the progressive circles took a step backwards, to an increasing degree becoming hegemonized by language of the political right. The process went so far that instead of being a continuous, unambiguously liberal, secular and progressive agenda resisting the wave, Polish liberals were not hesitant to launch a very particular product of Polish politics, so-called "progressive antisemitism" (Weeks 1995; Krzywiec 2009).

As a result, major social demands (as for instance land reform) were left unaddressed also in the Polish Second Republic after the reconstruction of the Polish nation state. They were brought back on the table only after the disastrous WWII catastrophe and later realized from above by the Stalinist state. This general contempt towards ultimate democratic demands and the impossibility of collective bargaining over the popular economic interest of course had an even longer afterlife (Dunn 2004; Ost 2005). Thus, going one step further one may also float a hypothesis about a long-lasting moralized vision of politics of the

Polish intelligentsia (the beginnings of which are documented by our contribution). The events described were a prelude to a complex conceptual-political lamination lasting for years (Arndt 2007; Gawin 2013) and haunting the Polish public sphere even today. Seen in this way, the 1905 Revolution, with its preludes and aftermaths, is a pivotal moment which helps to understand the particular conceptual-political form of the Polish public sphere in general.

Acknowledgments

The article presents results of two research projects financed by the (Polish) National Science Center, contracted as UMO-2011/03/B/HS6/01874 and UMO-2012/05/N/HS3/01158. The research was conducted at the University of Lodz, Poland. We would like to thank James Hartzell for meticulous polishing of our English in this article. Useful remarks to the proposed argumentation were generously offered by Stephan-Ludwig Hoffman, Jurgen Kocka and Jurgen Schmidt. Also anonymous Polish Sociological Review reviewer added important comments.

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