

Jacek M. Majchrowski

NATIONAL-SOCIALIST GROUPS IN POLAND (1918—1939)

The very diversity of party organizations active in the period between two wars in Poland is the reason why their structure and ideological programmes have not been studied evenly and thoroughly so far. The best investigated of them are in fact the political parties that have been continued in People's Poland and so the researches done on them could have been better organized. Consequently if we can speak of relatively good studies of the workers' and peasants' movements, and in the latest period those concerning the two main political parties in the prewar Poland: the national and the Piłsudski ones there are naturally many wide gaps in the researches on the ephemeral groups.

To those organizations, shamefacedly forgotten by the historians, belongs a group of parties which used to describe themselves as national-socialist. As a whole they can be divided into two groups. The first was made up of the German minority and was in fact a branch of the NSDAP, and we shall leave it out of our considerations, the second was Polish and would deny having any links to the third Reich although those connections were commonly attributed to them.

Here we may be expected to name the whole list of those groups. But alas this would be an impossible task. There are several reasons for it. First, these groups did not have many members and in many cases no trace of them is left, even in the reports of police informers which is an evidence how insignificant they were, hence the difficulty in some cases of establishing their correct names. And once we have found out the trace of a party,

the only commentary to be made on it is to say that it did not play any role at all. Nor can we be informed by the party's press, and this is the second reason. Because if there was an organ its circulation would be very small and the enterprise "Ruch" concerned with the distribution would refuse as a rule to deal with it. So the impact of such a journal was insignificant. This is a great disadvantage since the editorial staffs being often the only centres of activity for particular groups, their press would enable us to reproduce the ideological outlook of particular parties, as well as their organizational evolution.

Because of all these elements this article does by no means set itself the task of discussing comprehensively the national-socialist movement in prewar Poland. It can only touch upon the problem and encourage further studies in this particular field.¹

The earliest of these parties was the Party of National Socialists [*Partia Narodowych Socjalistów*]. Its origin went back to a period that was a little earlier than the times when the Italian and German movements of this type would be imitated.

Its seeds could be found as early as 1918; then at the October Congress of the National Workers Association [*Narodowy Związek Robotniczy*] a motion was put forward suggesting a change of the Association's name into the National Socialist Party [*Narodowa Partia Socjalistyczna*] and consequently also a change of the programme.² The motion was submitted again in May of 1920 at the unification congress between the National Workers' Association and the National Workers' Party, but neither on this occasion was the proposal accepted.³ There were then in the newly formed

¹ The only work dealing with this problem is an article by A. Paczkowski, *Z folkloru politycznego II Rzeczypospolitej. Narodowy socjalizm* [*The Political Folklore of the 2nd Republic. National-Socialism*], "Więź", 1973, No. 3. Also A. Piłch discussed it incidentally in his studies, *Dzieje ruchu robotniczego w Krakowskim 1918—1939* [*The History of Workers' Movement in the Cracow Area, 1918—1939*], Kraków 1987.

² The motion was withdrawn as it was suggested that many NZR members were not prepared to accept the term "socialism" which might have reduced the party's chances in the elections to the Diet [Sejm].

³ The text of the motion, together with its grounds, was published by "Narodowy Socjalista", 1934, No. 5—8.

National Workers' Party differences right from the beginning, among other things, on the accession of the Party to the government led by the Chjeno-Piast coalition to which also the national-socialist group was opposed. The state of internal dissention could not last long and indeed, after Piłsudski's *coup d'état* in May of 1926, a split occurred as a result of which the national-socialist group found itself in the NPR-Leftist. The break-up made it necessary to work out a programme of the new group, as well as to do some organizational transformations. It might appear then—which found its expression in the Supreme Council's resolutions—that things were going well for the national socialists. But once the congress to be held in May of 1932 was postponed with no date stated, the Warsaw group of national socialists decided, with some members of the NPR-Leftist, to accelerate the process of transforming it into a true national-socialist party by setting up a journal representing its outlook. Thus, in July 1932 a monthly "Narodowy Socjalista", in future the main organ of the PNS, began to appear, edited by Fryderyk Fiałkiewicz. More or less at the same time the Association of National-Socialist Youth [*Związek Młodzieży Narodowo-Socjalistycznej*] was called into being. These acts made, among others things, the leadership of the NPR-Leftist announce the holding of the postponed congress in October in 1931.

However, there emerged at the congress differences over the programme and the name of the party. Eventually, by 100 votes to 43 a new name was adopted: the National Labour Party [*Narodowe Stronnictwo Pracy*], as well as a programme borrowed largely from that of the NPR.⁴ This decision was hotly contested by the groups of national socialists who declared they would fight it and which found its expression in a statement read by an activist from Pabianice, Mieczysław Tomczak. In time they came to the conclusion that the party was dying away being deprived of vital elements. Consequently, on 20 June, 1933, the

⁴ See: C. Demel, J. Krawulski, K. Rzepa, *Działalność NSR i NPR w Wielkopolsce w latach 1917—1938* [*The Activities of the NSR and NPR in Great Poland in the Years 1917—1938*], Warsaw—Poznań 1980, pp. 295—296.

decision was taken to set up a Party of National Socialists [*Partia Narodowych Socjalistów*] and on 15 July of that year the first proclamation of the Central Organizational Committee was issued which was entitled *The National Socialist Party—to All Working Poles* [*Partia Narodowych Socjalistów—do wszystkich pracujących Polaków*]. From then on the PNS¹ could be regarded as actually existing. The leaders of the newly created party became F. Fiałkiewicz as chairman and M. Tomczak as his deputy.

Members of the party wore green shirts and the party acted through the centres of the previous NPR which secured it a relatively wide-ranging organizational presence. It had its cells in Warsaw, Pabianice, Chojnice, Częstochowa, Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Białystok, Poznań, Łódź, Cracow, Kielce, Radom and Płock, and as these developed they were turned into districts.⁶ The party headquarters was in Warsaw and it fulfilled at the same time the function of the District Council for central provinces. At the municipal elections in Łódź PNS submitted its list of candidates but did not have any success.

It was much engaged in publishing its organs which proved of a higher intellectual quality than those of the remaining national-socialist groups. So apart from the above-mentioned "Narodowy Socjalista" the party was issuing in Cracow a bi-weekly "Zwycięstwo"⁷ edited by Kazimierz Macek, in Vilna and Łódź "Front Narodowego Socjalisty" edited by Władysław Obrębski, in Katowice "Błyskawica" whose editor was W. Kosarz during his short-lived co-operation with the PNS, and in Lvov the weekly "Wczoraj, dziś, jutro" whose editor was Tadeusz Zaderecki. In time others joined the PNS: a group of the National Socialist

⁵ The origin of the PNS is described in "Narodowy Socjalista", 1934, No. 5—8, and 1935, No. 8.

⁶ *PNS w walce o Nową Polskę* [*The PNS in Its Struggle for New Poland*], "Narodowy Socjalista", 1933, No. 9—12. During the elections to village councils in the Poznań province they won 4 seats out of 33,570: Archives of Modern Records, cited further as AAN, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, further as MSW, the Socio-political Department. Komunikat Informacyjny, vol. 852.

⁷ Subsequently K. Macek changed the party adherence by joining the NSRR.

Party [*Stronnictwo Narodowo-Socjalistyczne*], active at Bielsk, and also originating from the NPR-Leftist Polish National-Socialist Labour Party [*Polska Narodowo-Socjalistyczna Partia Robotnicza*] issuing at Pabianice the journal “Świt” edited also by W. Obrębski.⁸ The grass-roots of the PNS were similar to those of the NPR: members and sympathizers were mostly workers, craftsmen and minor civil servants. A similar following had the Association of National-Socialist Youth [*Związek Młodzieży Narodowo-Socjalistycznej*] which was an annex to the PNS and which was active mainly in Warsaw, Częstochowa, Sosnowiec, Białystok, Oświęcim where it had relatively strong circles.⁹

As regards its programme the PNS was referring to the old tradition of the Great Polish Emigration, to the Democratic Society, Grudziąż Community and Bolesław Limanowski.¹⁰ The main watchword reflecting the Party’s views and intentions was—along with a quotation from Mickiewicz’s “Tribune des Peuples”: Socialism in order to become universal must first become national—the slogan: “Proletarians of Poland Unite!”

The Party’s programmatic ideas were presented mainly in the press and their clearest statement was issued in 1936 to be then reprinted in the “Narodowy Socjalista” as the *National Catechism of the Polish Working Class* [*Katechizm Narodowy Polskiej Klasy Pracującej*] which was an extension of the Polish National socialism [*Polski Socjalizm Narodowy*] of 1931 and of the *Programmatic Ideas of National Socialism* [*Zasady Programowe Narodowego Socjalizmu*] of April 1933. Also separate pamphlets were issued comprising articles published in the press: J. Łagowski’s *An Independent State or a Colony* [*Państwo nie-*

⁸ Having moved to Łódź Obrębski ceased publishing “Świt” of which only 3 numbers had come out (Between July and September of 1933) and started issuing “Front Narodowego Socjalisty”. See also *Polityczny Komunikat Informacyjny—PKI—10 October, 1934, AAN, MSW, vol. 851.*

⁹ See e.g. *Sztandar narodowego socjalizmu łopocze nad Oświęcimiem i okolicą* [*The National Socialist Flag is Flying over Oświęcim and Its Area*], “Narodowy Socjalista”, 1933, No. 4.

¹⁰ As an example see the articles printed in “Narodowy Socjalista”, No. 4 of 1935: *Polski socjalizm narodowy* [*Polish National Socialism*] and *Bolesław Limanowski w narodowym socjalizmie* [*Bolesław Limanowski in the National Socialism*].

podległe czy kolonia] and Dec's *Asking for a New Polish System and National Socialism in the Face of Communism* [*O nowy ustrój Polski i Narodowy Socjalizm wobec komunizmu*] which indicated how much importance was attached to these problems. Indeed publishing was thought essential but the reality fell short of the requirements by far which was due to the absence of their own printing-press. And although a special fund was set up to buy it the plan never materialized.

It must be said—anticipating a little the facts—that the national-socialist movement was filled with dissensions. Hence for instance the PNS would have nothing to do with the national-socialist groups in Silesia and the Basin [Zagłębie] describing them as “diversive activities of the National-democratic and Christian-democratic reaction which is trying under this cover to revive and get influence on the impoverished and ignorant working class masses”.

But this did not mean that they gave up any co-operation with those groups. They acted on the assumption—as did also the young national democrats—that an understanding was necessary and that it had to be achieved over the heads of the leaders and embrace not only national-socialist groups but all those “who care for the working class. The understanding must be achieved by the young generation because it finds in its way the old generation involved in long-standing disputes and making an agreement very difficult”.¹¹ But the first step to an agreement could be made through a common front of all national-socialist groups. To this end a conference was held in Warsaw in January 1935 in which apart from the PNS also representatives of the National Socialist Party participated headed then by Antoni Malatyński.¹² The purpose of the conference was to achieve a consolida-

¹¹ This was an identical way of reasoning to that shown by the split groups of the National Party. Comp. J. Majchrowski, *Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny—okres działalności legalnej* [*The National-Radical Camp—Period of Legal Activities*], “Dzieje Najnowsze”, 1979, no. 3.

¹² The Voivodship State Archives in Katowice—WAP, Dyrekcja Policji w Chorzowie, vol. 257. By reading “Narodowy Socjalista” one can learn that the future leader of the New National Movement was at that time a busy activist of the PNS.

tion of the National-Social Labour Camp [*Narodowo-Spoleczny Obóz Pracy*] in Poland, the effect of which would be the establishment of a common commission. This was intended to be the first step towards a consolidation of national-socialist organizations in defence against the left. "There can be some tactical-political differences between us—they stated—but we must put above those temporary deviations our common vital ideas, the current needs of the working class".¹³ In November of the same year a joint manifesto of the NPR and National Labour Party was issued, and a month later the National Labour Camp¹⁴ was set up. This involved the resignation of some ideological principles and later on brought about also a decline of the PNS.¹⁵

The chronologically next, but much smaller group, was the only one among them to have its roots in the national camp. In the mid-1920s that camp began experiencing a crisis. The solution was found in the setting up of the so called Camp of Great Poland¹⁶ [*Obóz Wielkiej Polski*] which was a reaction to the young people leaving the National Democracy. However, there was one group which, unlike the others, could not see itself within the even broadest framework of the national camp; in the early February of 1926 it formed itself into the Association of Polish Nationalists [*Związek Nacjonalistów Polskich—ZNP*].

The Association, like all groups of this type, was not big in number and its activity was focused in the editorial staff of its press organs. And these were: a weekly "Nacjonalista Polski", issued and edited by Jerzy Raabe, transformed later into a monthly devoted to "the theoretical problems of transforming the capitalist-socialist democracy" and its mutations in the field,

¹³ In the first numbers of the "Narodowy Socjalista" of 1935 this fact was stressed systematically.

¹⁴ "Narodowy Socjalista", 1935, No. 11; 1936, No. 1—2; 1936, No. 3—4.

¹⁵ The party attracted then the interest of some people making up the so-called Front Morges, see: H. Przybylski, *Chrześcijańska Demokracja i Narodowa Partia Robotnicza w latach 1926—1937* [*Christian Democracy and National Workers' Party in 1926—1937*], Warszawa 1980, p. 277.

¹⁶ See on that subject the works by R. Wapiński, *Narodowa Demokracja 1899—1939* [*National Democracy in 1899—1939*], Wrocław 1980, and J. J. Terej, *Idee, mity, realia* [*Ideas, Myths, Realities*], Warszawa 1971 and the literature indicated in it.

the bi-weeklies "Nacjonalista Mazowiecki" edited by Jerzy Brym, "Nacjonalista Radomski" edited by Tadeusz Wielhorski, and "Nacjonalista Łódzki" edited by J. Raabe. The fact that the journals were short of contributors indicated the intellectual insignificance of the movement. It expressed itself in the mutual reprinting of their articles.

The structure of the Association was territorial—ranging from a local group which had to number no less than 20 people, then going through the district, province up to the Executive which managed the ZNP's work according to the instructions of the All-Polish Congress¹⁷ held every three years. This apparently wide-ranging structure was in reality mere fiction. What it lacked above all was those 20 people who could not be brought together easily in the field to form the basic groups.

At more or less the same time as the ZNP another group emerged. It functioned about half-a-year and was made up practically of the editorial staff of a paper which was to be the focus of the party. The paper was called "Faszysta Polski" and was set up in Warsaw in April of 1926 (its first number came out in two issues each 20,000 copies). It served as a basis for the Party of Polish Fascists [*Stronnictwo Faszystów Polskich—SFP*] that was called into being three months later. Its founders were: Antoni Starodworski, Władysław de Vitt and Waclaw Zaremba who were joined, after the May *coup d'état*, by Roman Boguta-Staszyński.

The SFP programme stated the necessity of a strong authority and was therefore—a characteristic feature of all groups of that type—in opposition to any forms of liberalism. The aim of authority—they claimed—was the interest of the nation as a whole and not that of particular political parties. So they defined themselves as a party "bringing together all the citizens who believe that it is possible to straighten all the affairs in the State with their own efforts and make the State economically independent". This position, similar to that which had motivated the May 1926 *coup d'état*, put the SFP—so they thought—in

¹⁷ *Statut Związku Nacjonalistów Polskich [Statutes of the Association of Polish Nationalists]*, "Nacjonalista Polski", No. 14, 17 Oct., 1926.

opposition to all political parties acting then in Poland. "There you are with your mandates, political bankruptcy, with tens of thousands of unemployed, with moral depression, corruption and political swindles" and on the opposite side—"There are we, the Fascists, new men. And the nation will go with us. Woe to you, political bankrupts! We will not stop half-way".¹⁸

But in fact the Party did not exceed beyond the editorial staff which did not prevent them from calling all the clandestine fascist organizations to unite and be subordinated to the SFP. In a declaration signed by the SFP Directorate they stated: "What matters here is not ambition, private affairs, but a great cause. There are no creators of fascism, fascism is the product of the whole nation. All must stand in rank!"¹⁹ But they did not arrive at an accord; because here too, like in the nationalist camp, the rule was: unification, yes, but under our leadership. Nor did they manage to conclude an agreement with the Government party (the so called "Sanacja"). In spite of that Staszyński did receive, on several occasions, some money to subsidize the paper and party but these did not function long. The Directorate disbanded itself, and Staszyński, who remained by himself, was unable to revive the party's activities; in September 1926 the SFP ceased definitely to act. And the role Boguta-Staszyński and his organization had played with the 2nd Section (intelligence) of the General Staff have never been completely cleared up.²⁰

A decisive majority of the national-socialist groups was concentrated in Silesia and the Basin. The working class area, in which the misery of the Polish proletariat contrasted with the fortunes of the non-Polish industrialists, rather lended itself to accept favourably the slogans and arguments advanced by the national socialists. Although it is beyond dispute that the shallowness and ideological emptiness of those slogans could attract only simple-minded people, still there were many such groups and tiny parties. This was also the reason for the internal splitting of the movement since the particular leaders, and each

¹⁸ "Faszysta Polski", 1926, No. 1.

¹⁹ After: "Biuletyn polityczny no. 2", editor A. Bełcikowska, Warszawa, p. 653.

²⁰ See: "Rzeczpospolita", No. 284, 17 Oct., 1926.

of them considered himself a personality at least equal to Mussolini, did not spare themselves mutual accusations and libels so that they would settle their accounts at court or even more frequently through fighting squads.

Of a number of groups acting there the best known was probably the one set up on 15 August, 1933, by a court official, Józef Kowal-Lipiński and which called itself the Radical Sanatory Movement [*Radykalny Ruch Uzdrawienia*—RRU].

The movement went in its activities through two phases: the first till May 1935 when as a result of police persecutions and personal squabbles it suspended its activities,²¹ and the second one when in February 1937—that is simultaneously with the formation of the Camp of National Unification—it got reactivated by its leader under a slightly changed name: National-Radical Sanatory Movement. According to the situation reports of the Silesian Province Office those who took part in the initial 19 meetings of the reactivated organization numbered in all 460 persons which indicated a fall in popularity²² considering that in the first phase of its existence the Movement numbered, after police sources, 90 squads comprising 5,500 members. So this not very numerous party consisting mainly of militarized squads maintained its influence solely in Katowice, in some localities in Silesia and the Basin, while being only symbolically represented in the Cracow and Łódź areas. They did not resume activities, however, in the originally Movement's main centres, the districts of Świętochłowice and Rybnik.²¹ The RRU had also its organ—"Front Polski Zbudzonej", issued under the slogan: "We are fighting for labour

²¹ Letter of the Executive Committee of the NRRU to the Police Headquarters in Katowice on 8 May, 1935, signed by Kowal-Lipiński, Robert Malcherek and Jerzy Smykal, WAP in Katowice, Dyrekcja Policji w Chorzowie, vol. 58. The writers exaggerate in this letter the number of their members and sympathizers stating it to be 15 thousand. See also "Front Polski Zbudzonej", No. 19, 12 May, 1935.

²² This is confirmed also by the next Political Information Bulletins (Polityczny Komunikat Informacyjny).

²¹ Central Archives of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, further as CA KC PZPR, 275/II-21; *Sprawozdania Urzędu Wojewódzkiego Śląskiego z pierwszej połowy 1937* [Reports of the Silesian Voivodship Office of the First Half of 1937].

and bread, for the disjudaization of Poland and welfare of the citizens". The paper's agencies found themselves at Sosnowiec, Kępno Wlkp., Rybnik, Bielsk, Tarnowskie Góry, Lubliniec and Chorzów. They also issued a monthly "Front Kobiet" addressed to women with a view of forming female squads. The main purpose of those detachments was to have been a fight against atheism and demoralization. But as those efforts had little appeal only a few female squads were formed and their activity was almost non-existent although they had to concern themselves with such things as "secure for the members of families honest entertainment: radio, home libraries, family games and flower gardens" while the meetings proved rather rare, at them the female members of the RRU got the basic instructions of the Movement, e.g. "why is Kowal-Lipiński the most suitable leader for the camp".²⁴

The Movement had also its trade union, the Central Polish Trade Union [*Centralny Związek Zawodowy Polski*] which numbered 36 branches the membership of each of them ranging from 60 to 100.²⁵ For a trade union this was not an impressive force, the more so that there were all the time dissensions in the Union going back to the secession of a group of members headed by Walenty Kosarz who had set up a rival group concentrated around the journal "Jedna Karta".²⁶

The Movement's political programme was set out, apart from the publications being issued by the RRU, mainly in two similar pamphlets written by the leader. The pamphlets were treated as "a constitution of the blue camp" and any departure from them was regarded as harmful. Each activist and member was obliged to subordinate his public statements to the substance of the pamphlets otherwise he would be immediately excluded from the RRU with no possibility of readmission. From April of 1938, in view of the dwindling influence, the Movement

²⁴ Regulations of the female squads of the RRU in : *Poznaj mój program uzdrowienia Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [*Learn my Programme of Improving the Polish Republic*], Katowice—Warszawa 1937.

²⁵ L. H a s s, *Organizacje zawodowe w Polsce 1918—1939* [*Professional Organizations in Poland 1918—1939*], Warszawa 1963, p. 88.

²⁶ "Front Polski Zbudzonej", No. 8, 1—15 Oct., 1933.

began to co-operate closely with the Association of Young Nationalists [*Związek Młodych Narodowców*], but the Association's activists were not showing off that co-operation very much, in fact they did not take it seriously.²⁷

So now let us look at a group of national-socialist parties which stemmed from the same stock but which soon split just because of the unsatisfied ambition of local leaders. Each of them did not wish to share his power with others and so each required a separate party for himself.

The beginning was idyllic. Two separate journals "Świat i Ojczyzna" [World and Homeland] edited by a would-be priest Aleksander Mieszalski and "Strzecha Rodzinna" [Family Roof] of Walenty Kosarz decided to fuse. The fusion gave birth to a jointly edited journal "Świat i Ojczyzna pod Strzechą Rodzinną" [World and Homeland under the Family Roof] which has appeared as an organ of the Confederation of Working and Professional Self-help [*Konfederacja Samopomocy Robotniczej i Zawodowej*] showing catholic, anti-communist and pro-national attitudes,²⁸ then in April 1933 it also gave rise to the publication *Jedna Karta* issued by the Independent Party of National Socialists [*Niezależna Partia Narodowych Socjalistów*]. At the same time a centre of the party was forming itself in Katowice, led by the former activist of the National Party, lawyer Władysław Kozielski who was helped in this noble task by the "countryman" (this is how the national socialists called themselves) Józef Graña. Soon, however, the two centres split, and later, owing to the differences between Kozielski and Graña the latter joined the Katowice group only to set up in time his own party. The result was a number of small thoroughly mixed up parties.

We must start our descriptions with the group which called itself the National-Socialist Workers' Party [*Narodowo-Socjalistyczna Partia Robotnicza—NSPR*].

However, the Party, like most of those in this group, did not display an intensive organizational or ideological activity. Any at-

²⁷ According to information given to the author by Dr Klaudiusz Hralbyk, one of the ZMN's leading ideologists.

²⁸ "Świat i Ojczyzna pod Strzechą Rodzinną", 1931, no. 18; 1933, no. 1.

tempts at such activity, made in Katowice-Zawódź and Mikołów in which most of the NSPR followers were concentrated, met with a decisive ripost from the authorities which decided to disband those centres.

The point of the Party's concentration, if one should speak in this case of concentration and not of disintegration, became a weekly "Polska Karta" replacing "Jedna Karta" ("One Card" replaced by "The Polish Card") and the "Błyskawica" issued in Katowice. The first of them had, in January of 1935, about 3 thousand subscribers and 10 thousand readers in the Sosnowiec area, the second a circulation which was described with exaggeration as "numbering not hundreds but thousands". The relationship between the groups editing the journals was far from being good which was finding its expression in the way they abused each other and the ensuing lawsuits for libel. "Jedna Karta" admitted with disarming sincerity: "Our national-socialist cauldron is bubbling. There are discords and intrigues. And it cannot be otherwise. In each party there are those devoted to ideology and schemers".²⁹ The Silesian group was criticized for not having proper leaders in the persons of Niškiewicz, Graña and Ślisko who adopted to help them Kosarz (the latter by the way had changed several times party adherence) and Żmidziński, they were accused of being in the Jewish pay and trying to break up the national-socialist movement. The Silesians were giving back as good as they got and were pointing out that the Sosnowiec group and Kozielski in particular were in the German pay. Apart from the mentioned districts, remaining at logger heads with each other, there was also the Cracow district based at Oświęcim which had emerged in 1932 from an organization calling itself the National-Socialist Party [*Stronnictwo Narodowo-Socjalistyczne*]. It was led by Kazimierz Macek.³⁰

The party was divided into sections: the general, organizational, social-professional, administrative, legal and defensive ones and it was headed by the standing Supreme Command [*Komenda*

²⁹ "Jedna Karta", 29 June, 1933.

³⁰ "Jedna Karta", 13 June, 1933 and 17 June, 1933.

Główna].³¹ But in view of the fact that the party was split into two fighting groups, each trying to form the centre, that structure proved illusory.

The NSPR was mostly active among the unemployed, so even when we take at their face value the claims it was made up of 95 groups each numbering from 100 to 500 members—and the reports of the district officers stated clearly that the party membership was sinking and attendance at the meetings was dwindling—the finances of that type of organization must have been very poor. Nor was it to the party's advantage that among its most prominent members were people like Józef Gryffita Jaxa-Chamiec, "a swindler who underwent in his life a variety of metamorphosis".³² Of little help were also the slogan claims that the party was inspired by the Holy Spirit. As time went by the membership was decreasing and those who remained were becoming more and more zealous, the consequence of which was the party's eventual liquidation.

Besides the party's organizers were of the opinion that it was not the programme that mattered but the realization of the aim to be pursued. It would confirm the then prevailing feeling about the national-socialist movement that anyone who had some brains could set up a party, call himself its leader and then seek partisans, formulate a programme. Something of the NSPR programme can be considered two documents: one published in the "Błyskawica", representative of the Silesian group, and the *10 Points of the National Socialism* [*10 Punktów Narodowego Socjalizmu*].³³ They were the starting point of a number of national-socialist groups and were intended to appeal to the hearts and minds of Polish workers. And they were issued in the form of leaflets numbering as many as 60 thousand copies.

On 13 June, 1934, due to the activities which in the words of the Department of Security "were assuming a character

³¹ WAP in Katowice, Dyrekcja Policji w Chorzowie, vol. 58.

³² CA KC PZPR Urząd Wojewódzki Śląski, Report on the Situation, No. 1 of January, 1934, 275/II-20.

³³ "Jedna Karta", No. 1 (May 1933), 26 June, 1933.

threatening public order and security”³⁴ the NSPR was disbanded and its appeals remained unanswered.

In September of 1934, in place the NSPR two separate organizations emerged: the National-Social Radical Party [*Narodowo-Społeczna Partia Radykalna—NSPR*] bringing together the partisans of Grałła and issuing as its organ “*Nasza Polska*”, and the National-Socialist Urban and Rural Party [*Narodowo-Socjalistyczna Partia Miast i Wsi—NSPMiW*] made up of Kozielski’s adherents and issuing “*Polska Karta*”. The former was supposed to have as its members only adult citizens, of unquestionably Polish nationality, of purely Polish descent, free of any moral blemishes and who did not pursue capitalistic exploitation. These requirements situated it clearly in the political geography of that period and as there were hardly any people meeting these demands and at the same time willing to join it, the party played no political role at all and did not manage to place any of its candidates in the urban council at the municipal elections. At Będzin, where it did have a slight chance, the authorities annulled the list. Its programme published in the “*Błyskawica*”,³⁵ for a short time organ of the NSPR, did not differ much from the afore-mentioned 10 points. They added only an article on the necessity of ensuring a proper fighting force in Poland, bowing thereby to the Government party, an article on liquidating the territorial vestiges of Poland’s partitions, they also stressed racial elements—“our countryman is only the Pole of purely Aryan-Slavonic blood”.

The absence of an analytical approach, a superficial treatment of the problems without asking for the causes was both the reason and result that there were no intellectuals or at least educated people in the party. It appealed instead to the lowest classes, especially to the young, keen on action. Its influence on women was almost none, though there was a circle for girls headed by a “countrywoman”, Mayerówna.

On the whole the NSPR did not play even a small role in the Silesian-Basin region. The successive splits and mutual recrimina-

³⁴ WAP in Katowice, Dyrekcja Policji w Chorzowie, vol. 58.

³⁵ “*Błyskawica*”, No. 1, 13—19 Aug., 1933.

tions stopped what was anyway only a slight recruitment to the party, the more independent individuals were simply repelled by the intellectual primitivism.

The Party was dissolved on 25 February, 1935, as being a threat to public order and following an attack in January of that year on the railway station at Gierałtowiec carried out by the party members to get funds for that organization—one of the railwaymen was killed.

After the disbandment of the National-Social Radical Party and the sentencing of Józef Graña to 2 years of jail for his part in the attack, some of the activists tried to resume their work under another name. They won for it one of the leading activists and co-founders Alojzy Patrzak of Mikołowo and called into being the Polish Fascist Party [*Polska Partia Faszystowska—PPF*] whose constitutional meeting was held on 22 April 1935 with 20 persons participating coming from Łódź, Mikołów and Knurów.³⁶ They condemned the attack on the station and, on 13 May, 1935, they reported to the Police Headquarters the fact of the PPF having been set up, however this was not taken note of. At the same time they got the proposal of getting closer to or uniting with the NSPMiW, the proposal having been made to Patrzak by Kozielski, the former, however, rejected it stating that Kozielski's party had communist (?) leanings. He changed the name PPF into the Polish Fascist Front [*Polski Front Faszystowski—PPF*] and tried to go on with the activity but did so without any success.

Also the other group, the National-Socialist Urban and Rural Party tried to be very active being prepared to unite all national-socialists in Poland with the proviso that they would accept the 10 points of national socialism and recognize the Sosnowiec centre as the Party's authority.³⁷ It was active mainly in the Dąbrowa Basin and also to some extent in Silesia and Łódź. In October of 1935 the Party numbered 42 active groups and in 6 localities it had organizational committees. The "Polish Karta" reckoned its circulation to be 3 thousand.³⁸ So this was a small party and in

³⁶ AAN MSW, vol. 853, PKJ 6, 1 May—31 May, 1935.

³⁷ "Polska Karta": July 1935.

³⁸ "Polska Karta", No. 3, 30 Jan., 1935, *ibid.* No. 42, 20 Oct., 1935.

time it became merely symbolic. The reports by district chief officers either make no mention of it or, as in Chorzów, note the attendance of 19 people at its meetings. True, some new units were set up, such as at Michałowice, Szopienice or Brzezinka but those remained practically inactive, so the NSPRiW remained insignificant in Silesia.³⁹ And once its shop “Nasz Sklep” had to be closed because of poor sales the Party’s activity was reduced to naught. Wishing to save their existence they tried two ways—firstly fearing that the Party might be disbanded they forbade its members any public acts against the State security which had always attracted some people to that type of party; secondly in 1939 they started talks on joining the National-Radical Movement which might rescue both the NSPMiW and the Movement which by then had already been breaking up—the talks, however, did not bring the results the two sides had expected. Yet the Party’s activity, although scanty, did go on till the outbreak of war.

The origin of a national-socialist group we are going to present now is connected to the “Echo Tygodnia”, “the independent weekly for all” edited by Kajetan Paprocki. Its first number appeared in Cracow on 21 May, 1933, and nothing seemed to suggest it would be a paper of the national-socialist character. The only indication that it was actually interested in that line of thought were articles describing the leaders of that movement in derogatory terms. They were applied to Mieszalski and Kozielski who were described as “swindlers”, “notorious cabaret rakes” men “who had turned many a coat”. Mieszalski is “rather a good soul but an awful oaf, an would-be priest who when still a seminarist had a passion for writing and for girls”. The others are no less vile: “may not the paper they issue become soon the last page of their mean lives”.⁴⁰ But the situation was changing quickly. In the paper’s no. 12 we get an announcement that Kajetan Paprocki had been excluded from the publishing partnership for having “committed a series of financial inaccuracies

³⁹ WAP in Katowice, as an example the reports of July 1936 and December 1938, Starostwo lublinieckie, vols. 141, 142.

⁴⁰ Comp. the article *Pies, co dużo szczeka, mało daje mleka* [Their Bark is More Than Their Bite], “Śląskie Echo Tygodnia”, No. 15—16, 4 Nov., 1933.

which caused us considerable losses and by having published a series of untrue, trumped up articles which damaged the prestige of our editorial staff".⁴ So he ceased to be the chief editor, this function having been taken over by Augustyn Józefiak. It also informed that the paper had nothing in common with "Śląskie Echo Tygodnia", a new journal similar in its get-up to "Echo Tygodnia". The former was being signed also by Paprocki, though he did it in jail where he was serving a few-month sentence at that time. From then on "Echo Tygodnia", "the first paper which had openly started to unmask the swindlers" linked to "Błyskawica" was now engaged in tracking all the failed or even successful meetings and get-togethers of the national-socialists while also demanding the removal of all foreigners from Polish industry. And the number dated 5th November appeared with a subtitle indicating that it was now the organ of a just formed group calling itself the Polish Party of National-Socialists "Warta".

Its leader was Henryk Otto Pawelski, chairman of the Building Fund of Saving and Lending [*Budowlana Kasa Oszczędności i Pożyczek*] who, to be not unlike his national-socialist colleagues, had on his record financial frauds affecting more than 200 people around the country. He was joined by the former NSPR "Błyskawica" theoretician, Żmizdiński who, according to his former friends of "Jedna Karta", played the part of scholar in the "Błyskawica". The relations between the two "Echos" were being settled throughout several numbers. Then in number 11 of "Echo Tygodnia" appeared a note informing that on 20 November the Publishing Partnership Echo had been liquidated and the publishing of "Echo Tygodnia" found itself in the hands of a single person. And the number of the "Śląskie Echo Tygodnia", comprising in brackets the number 12 which suggested that it was a continuation of "Echo Tygodnia", brought a dispatch in which Paprocki was informing that he was obliged for fundamental reasons to leave the partnership, but wishing not to deprive the public of reading matter he was starting the publication of "Śląskie Echo Tygodnia" with a subtitle "the weekly for all", and those who had attacked him would be prosecuted by him in

⁴ "Echo Tygodnia", 1933, No. 12.

court. And sticking to his guns he described the "Jedna Karta" as "the 20th century disgrace" adding that "the gentlemen of this organization" were "an embodiment of Judas", "selling out our beloved country" and that some points of their programme were "so idiotic that even a most serious person could not help laughing", that they were openly favouring Hitler by quoting false data on the turnover and output in Germany. And then he wrote embracing the two branches of the Silesian national-socialism: "you won't be allowed to force yourselves into Polish politics with your treacherous piggish snouts. Hitler and his envoys are promising you for it a good pay but I suggest you should be rewarded for it with the order "prostitutiti" because selling out one's country is a blatant political prostitution".⁴² And generally speaking, members of the national-socialist parties are "mere social drags with their minds poisoned with megalomania". So he did not mince his words in this polemic recalling those moments in the lifetimes of particular activists which they would rather forget and stressing both their intellectual and moral "qualities". In the same vein the "Śląskie Echo Tygodnia" evaluated the organizers of the PPNS "Warta", that is without going into the ideological-doctrinal differences (this did not matter apparently). And so for instance the leader of "Warta"—wrote Paprocki—the party "which after painstaking searches managed to find a few members, is Mr. Pawelski ill-famed for many criminal cases, who has little liking for the penal code and whose contributors can write equally well against the Jews as in their favour. Proof of it is that the journalists who used to write philosemitic articles in "Echo Tygodnia" now have changed the front".⁴³ The police evaluation of the two activists was identical with the epithets advanced against them by their party colleagues, the terms were more moderate—they were described as people of "low moral qualities".⁴⁴

⁴² "Śląskie Echo Tygodnia", No. 15—16, 4 Nov., 1933.

⁴³ "Śląskie Echo Tygodnia", No. 18, 26 Oct., 1933.

⁴⁴ WAP in Katowice. Letter of the Head of the Department of Public Security to the MSW. on 9 Nov., 1933, Dyrekcja Policji w Chorzowie, vol. 58. *ibidem* also a characteristic of Pawelski.

The party ceased its activities in the early 1934. It was a typical cabinet party and it had not played even locally any part, the reason for it being probably no doctrinal foundation and a mere readiness to act on the spur of the moment.

In summing up these considerations we can conclude that owing to the small membership of these parties and to their being inwardly split they had no real political significance, they did not formulate theories re-evaluating the existing system, nor did they produce major leaders although such was their ambition, they did not leave any mark on the parliamentary debates and what they practically did achieve was the marches of small squades, wearing coloured shirts, along the side-streets of some cities and small towns.

(Translated by Ludwik Wiewiórkowski)