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In recent years, the attitude of *fin-de-siècle* socialists to the 'Jewish question' has attracted scholarly attention. Scholars have focused on the relationship between Jews and socialist movements in German-speaking lands, with some reference to the Russian context. Robert Wistrich and Jack Jacobs¹ have illuminated the attitudes of socialist ideologists to the 'Jewish question'.² Very little attention, however, has been paid to this issue in Polish lands. Exceptions are recent studies of major ideologists in the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPiL), the PPS Proletariat, and the Polish Communist Party.³ None of these works has, however, adequately explored the position on the Jewish question of the most significant socialist leader of that era, Józef Piłsudski.

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- 1 Jack Jacobs, *On Socialists and "The Jewish Question" After Marx* (New York 1992); Robert Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews: the Dilemmas of Assimilation in Germany and Austria-Hungary* (London 1982).
- 2 Debates on the so-called Jewish question among Polish and Jewish socialists in *fin-de-siècle* imperial Russia included such issues as the slow pace of Jewish integration in Eastern Europe, the relatively large-scale participation of Jews in socialist movements, and the rise of political antisemitism. There was also discussion of the question of whether Jewish socialists should fuse with the larger Russian or Polish movements, whether a separate Jewish organization was needed to fight against the specific problem of anti-Jewish legislation, and the particular task of producing literature in Yiddish. For a concise summary of the use of the term 'The Jewish question', see Jacobs, 161.
- 3 On gaps in the literature on Polish socialism and the 'Jewish question' in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Antony Polonsky's thought-provoking introduction to *Poles, Jews, Socialists: the Failure of an Ideal*, POLIN, vol. 9 (London 1996), xvii-xxi. In particular, Michal Sliwa's pioneering study in that volume, 'The Jewish problem in Polish socialist thought', 14-31, is an excellent account of the differing responses to the issue among

This essay examines an aspect of Piłsudski's early career which is virtually ignored in Polish historiography.⁴ It will analyze the evolution of Piłsudski's position on the national question in general, and the Jewish question in particular, during his years as leader of the PPS between 1893 and 1905. Historians of East European Jewry have noted Piłsudski's doctrinaire opposition to an independent Jewish socialist party on the eve of the founding of the Bund in 1897 but have failed to elucidate the subsequent change in his views.⁵ By examining the pre-First World War period, this essay will argue that

Polish socialist thinkers from 1890s to 1939. For Rosa Luxemburg's and Leo Jogiches's views on the 'Jewish question', which includes a discussion of Piłsudski in the 1890s, see Robert Wistrich, 'Rosa Luxemburg, Leo Jogiches and the Jewish labour movement, 1893-1903' in Ada Rapoport-Albert and Steven J. Zipperstein (eds.), *Jewish History: Essays in Honour of Chimen Abramsky* (London 1988), 529-45.

- 4 Andrzej Garlicki, *Józef Piłsudski, 1867-1835* (Warsaw 1988) and Włodzimierz Suleja, *Józef Piłsudski* (Wrocław 1995) chronicle Piłsudski's rise to the leadership of the PPS between 1893 and 1908 and his struggle for social emancipation and national independence up to 1918. They give no indication, however, that Piłsudski was interested in agitating among Jewish socialists. Other postwar works have similarly tended to ignore the PPS's campaign to win over Jewish socialists—see Jan Tomicki, *Poliska Partia Socjalistyczna, 1892-1948* (The Polish Socialist Party, 1892-1948) (Warsaw 1983), 62-3; Jerzy Holzer, *Szkic dziejów PPS* (A Study of the History of the PPS) (Warsaw 1977), 20-1; and Marian Żychowski, *Poliska myśl socjalistyczna XIX i XX wieku* (Polish Socialist Thought in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries) (Warsaw 1976), 250-1. A notable exception is Jan Kancewicz's excellent *Poliska Partia Socjalistyczna w latach 1892-1896* (The Polish Socialist Party, 1892-1896) (Warsaw 1984). In interwar Polish historiography Bundists are generally condemned as 'Russifiers' who instilled anti-Polonism into the Polish Jewish community. See Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski, *Józef Piłsudski, 1864-1901. W podziemiach konspiracji* (Józef Piłsudski, 1864-1901: In Underground Conspiracies) (Warsaw 1935), 295; and Leon Wasilewski, *Zarys dziejów Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej* (An Outline History of the Polish Socialist Party) (Warsaw 1925), 58.
- 5 The Israeli historian Moshe Mishkinsky has produced the best account of relations between Polish and Jewish socialists in the 1890s. He is concerned, however, with the impact of the PPS on the evolution of the Bund's national programme up to 1901 and does not discuss the subsequent transformation of Piłsudski's views. See his 'The Jewish labour movement in Russia and the Polish socialist movement' in *Auspot* (Tel Aviv), vol. 1, no. 14, 1970, 81-131 (in Hebrew), which was reprinted as a chapter in Mishkinsky, *Reshit tnuat ha-poalim ha-yehudit be-rusya* (Tel Aviv 1981). In his chapter on the Bund in *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge 1981), 171-257, Jonathan Frankel's pioneering study also examines Piłsudski's relations with the proto-Bundist Jewish Social Democratic group in Vilna in 1893-97 and Piłsudski's ill-fated attempt to prevent the founding of an independent Jewish socialist party. Frankel is concerned with the impact of Piłsudski's views on the evolution of the Jewish socialist movement but not with the Polish side of the conflict. Moreover, the intermittent references to Piłsudski stop after 1897 so that the subsequent changes in Piłsudski's views in the period 1897-1905 are not brought to light. Similarly, Sliwa's study, while revealing the views of many important thinkers like Bolesław Limanowski, Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz and Feliks Perl, devotes a mere paragraph to Piłsudski's views in the period 1893-8, with no discussion of his evolving views—see his 'The Jewish problem in Polish socialist thought', 17-18. The one exception to the preoccupation with Piłsudski's views in the period 1893-7 is the interwar account by veteran Bundist Pinchas Shvartz, *Yuzef Piłsudski: zayn batsyung tzu der yidn-frage un zayn kampf gegen 'Bund'* (Józef Piłsudski: His Attitude to the Jewish Question and His Struggle Against the Bund) (Warsaw 1936). Although Shvartz's study stands alone in tracing Piłsudski's views on the 'Jewish question' up to 1905, it is ideologically driven. As a member of the Bund's Central Committee in 1929-40, Shvartz seeks to show the correctness of his party's historical view of Piłsudski and the PPS—that Piłsudski

he shifted from the position of a staunch assimilationist on the Jewish question in 1893 to that of a defender of Jewish national rights by 1902. Indeed, we can observe a shift in both his public and private writings from the idea of a multi-cultural nation to that of a multi-national federation.⁶

Due to his capacity as PPS leader, Piłsudski's position on the national question has been well documented by scholars. These studies suggest that Piłsudski was little concerned with the Jewish question. But research into his socialist period reveals he was preoccupied to a large degree with the problem of the Jews. Indeed, one of his primary aims before 1905 was to convince the Jews under autocratic Russian rule, who constituted the largest minority in Congress Poland and over half the urban population in Lithuania, that political emancipation could be achieved only under a democratic Polish republic.

Of Piłsudski's 196 letters preserved between 1894 and late 1903, sixty-eight concern relations with Jewish workers and the intelligentsia. Of these, thirty contain lengthy discussions on the problem of Lithuanian Jewry. Moreover, in this period Piłsudski published seven major articles on the Jewish question in the Polish socialist press in which he sought Jewish support for his party's goal of unifying nationalities in the eastern borderlands (Lithuania-Byelorussia and Ukraine) under a single organization.⁷

Polish socialists and the 'Jewish question' before the PPS

When Piłsudski returned to Vilna in June 1892 after five years of penal servitude in Siberia, much had changed at home and abroad. With the decline of the Russian radical movement in the 1880s, Polish socialist centres in Paris and London had begun to shift from an internationalist to a pro-independence platform. The principal advocate of this shift was the assimilated Warsaw Jew Stanisław Mendelson (1857-1913), publisher and editor-in-chief of the London-based *Przedświt*, in which in 1891-2 he formulated the basis for the future PPS programme. This involved new positions on the nationalities question in the western provinces and relations with Jewish socialists. On the nationalities question, the London group called for the separation of 'Polish territories' from the Russian Empire and their replacement by a

was a 'bourgeois nationalist' with antisemitic sentiments. Henryk Piasecki, in his *Zydowska Organizacja PPS* (The PPS's Jewish Organization) (Warsaw 1978), is similarly preoccupied with revealing Piłsudski's alleged antisemitism and 'bourgeois nationalism'.

⁶ I am grateful to Professor Brian Porter for his comments.

⁷ All Piłsudski's letters, preserved in the Archive of New Records (AAN) in Warsaw and the Piłsudski Institute in New York, have been published. See Andrzej Garlicki and Ryszard Świątek (eds.), *Józef Piłsudski, Pisma zbiorowe uzupełnienia* (Supplemented Collected Writings), 2 vols. (Warsaw: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza 1992-3) and Waclaw Jędrzejewicz (ed.), 'Letters of Józef Piłsudski from the period of his work in the PPS', *Niepodległość*, 11-19 (London, New York 1978-86). Five of Piłsudski's seven pieces on the 'Jewish question' were reprinted in his *Pisma zbiorowe* (Selected Writings), vols. 1-2 (Warsaw 1938). See also [Józef Piłsudski], 'The Jewish question' in *Robotnik*, no. 26, 13 February 1898 and [Józef Piłsudski], 'The question of the Jewish proletariat' in *Przedświt* (Warsaw), no. 4, April 1898.

democratic republic.⁸ This approach left open the issue of the future state's borders.⁹

The London socialists also formulated a position on relations with Jewish social democratic circles in Vilna. The establishment in late 1891 of a Russian Jewish socialist centre in Vilna linked to Russia politically and culturally provided Mendelson with the opportunity to raise a new political and cultural issue in the Polish socialist movement, that of Russification. Beginning in March 1892, *Przedświt* condemned Russian Jewish socialists as bearers of Russian culture and separatist Jewish political movements. The Russifying tendencies of the Lithuanian Jews, it warned, would create an antisemitic movement in Polish society whose strength would crush the socialist banner.¹⁰ The only path for the Jewish worker and socialist elite was that of joining the ranks of their fellow Christian workers.

The call for unification of Jewish and Christian workers was linked to the Polish socialists' territorial ambitions: 'Not only is the Jewish worker obliged to fight alongside his countrymen in the Polish Kingdom', *Przedświt* declared in August 1891, 'but in Lithuania and everywhere the Polish socialist party will struggle against reactionary Russia'.¹¹ Echoing the Polish Jewish assimilationist programme, Mendelson argued that Jewish emancipation was inseparable from the Polish struggle for freedom and the problem of the Jews was a central part of the national question facing the Polish socialists.

In November 1892, on Mendelson's initiative, Polish socialists met in Paris with the aim of unifying socialist groups at home and abroad in a single party of the Russian partition. After seven days of deliberations, the eighteen delegates agreed on a party programme. The resultant 'outline programme' of the Polish Socialist Party called for the creation of a federal republic based on 'the complete equality of nationalities entering into the composition of the republic on the basis of a voluntary federation'.¹² The boundaries of that future republic would be based on Poland's historical frontiers: 'The Polish Socialist Party . . . regards it as necessary to extend its activity to the provinces formerly united with the Polish Commonwealth'.¹³ On relations with Jewish socialists, the congress resolved to publish a proc-

8 [Stanisław Mendelson], 'The partition of Russia', *Przedświt*, no. 18, 31 October 1891; [S. Mendelson], 'The beginning of the end' in *Przedświt*, no. 32, 6 February 1892.

9 [S. Mendelson], 'The beginning of the end'.

10 [S. Mendelson], 'In the face of threatening antisemitism in Poland' in *Przedświt*, no. 39-40, 26 March, 1892. For further discussion of Mendelson and the 'Jewish question' see Moshe Mishkinsky, 'Polish socialism and the Jewish question on the eve of the establishment of the Polish Socialist Party and the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland (SDKP)' in *POLIN*, vol. 5, 1990, 250-72.

11 [Aleksander Dębski], 'Defenders of the Jews' in *Przedświt*, no. 7, 15 August 1891.

12 'Outline programme of the Polish Socialist Party' in *Przedświt*, no. 5, May 1893, reprinted in Feliks Tych (ed.), *Polskie programy socjalistyczne, 1878-1918* (Polish Socialist Programmes, 1878-1918) (Warsaw 1975), 253-4.

13 *Ibid.*, 259.

lamation 'to Russian Jewish circles in Lithuania and Ruthenia exposing their Russifying activities as contradictory both to the political interests of liberation and the interests of freedom in Russia'.¹⁴ The latter resolution was proposed by Mendelson, accepted without discussion and printed unamended.¹⁵

The congress also selected six delegates to form the Union Abroad of Polish Socialists, which was charged with establishing the Polish Socialist Party inside Russian Poland. On 17 January 1893 Mendelson crossed into Russian Poland as a Union Abroad emissary. After a stay in Warsaw, he met in Vilna the twenty-six-year-old Józef Piłsudski. Piłsudski's group in Vilna accepted the outline programme and renamed itself the Lithuanian Section of the PPS. While no accounts of the discussions between Mendelson and Piłsudski have survived, it is clear from Piłsudski's subsequent writings that Mendelson had a major influence on his early formulations on the Jewish question. One of the first issues Piłsudski addressed on his entry into the PPS was the continuation of Mendelson's struggle against Russian Jewish socialists in Vilna. Mendelson had convinced him that winning over the Russian Jewish socialist intelligentsia in Vilna to the PPS's programme was a key task. To this end, they made contact with the Jewish socialist leaders Arkady Kremer and Zerah Kopelson. According to Kopelson's memoirs, Piłsudski and Mendelson condemned the Jewish Social Democrats for holding educational circles in Russian and encouraged them to switch to Polish or Yiddish as the language of agitation among Jewish workers. They also invited the Vilna group to adopt the PPS's banner.¹⁶ The discussions broke down, however, over the question of Polish independence, which Kremer and Kopelson rejected as part of a social democratic programme.

Piłsudski's campaign against Russian Jewish socialists in Vilna, 1893-6
 Details of the initial contacts between Piłsudski and Jewish socialists are scant but the results are clear. In March 1893 the Union Abroad in London received from Piłsudski the draft of an article, which they published the following month. In his first writings on the Jewish question, Piłsudski focused on Russification: 'If, since 1863, Russification has made progress in

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Mendelson's proposal is recorded in the congress protocols. See Leon Wasilewski (ed.), 'Documents on the history of the 1892 Paris congress' in *Niepodległość*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1933, 137.

¹⁶ The two first-hand accounts of this meeting are contradictory on the language question. According to Kopelson, Piłsudski urged the Jewish Social Democratic group to switch to Polish; Piłsudski maintains he urged them to abandon Russian for Yiddish. See Z. Kopelson, 'The Jewish working movement in the late 1880s-early 1890s' in Shimen Dimanshtein (ed.), *Revolutsionnoe dvizhenie sredi evreev* (The Revolutionary Movement Among the Jews) (Moscow 1930), 72-3; and Piłsudski, London, to Władysław Gumpłowicz, Zurich, 16 January 1902 in Józef Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe uzupełnienia*, vol. 2, 92-3. See also Stanisław Wojciechowski, *Moje Wspomnienia* (Reminiscences) (Lwów, Warsaw 1938), vol. 1, 111 in which he too claims the PPS urged Kremer to adopt Yiddish as the language of agitation in early 1893. Wasilewski claims Piłsudski often referred to his relations with Jews during his visits to London in the 1890s—see his *Józef Piłsudski jakim go znałem* (Józef Piłsudski as I Knew Him) (Warsaw 1935), 29-30.

Lithuania', he wrote, 'it is precisely among the Jewish people'. The Jewish Social Democratic group's Russian orientation was reducing the feeling of solidarity among Jewish and Christian workers. 'I do not take exception to the study of Russian culture and language in and of itself', he continued. '[But] this is about denationalization and Russification in Lithuania . . . And with the current state of affairs no socialist, for whom any manifestation of oppression is loathsome . . . is entitled to hold a neutral position on the Polish question'. He concluded that a neutral stand on the national question among Jewish socialists would destroy any possibility of building a mass movement.¹⁷

Piłsudski continued to pressure the Jewish Social Democrats in the following issue of *Przedświt*, in which he published the proclamation on Russian Jewish socialists mandated by the Paris congress's 'outline programme'. Entitled 'To our Jewish socialist comrades in the occupied Polish provinces', the proclamation repeated the position taken by *Przedświt* in March 1892, before the PPS's founding. It fluctuated between threats and invitations to Jewish socialists to join the PPS. Whereas in the March piece Piłsudski wrote of the Jewish socialists' 'neutrality' on the 'Polish question', that position was characterized as 'hostile' one month later. The proclamation warned that an increasingly negative attitude towards Jews was developing among Polish people due to what he described as 'some Jews' hostile attitude to the politics of our country'. This hostile mood was being fomented by the younger generation of Russian-speaking Jews, who were 'full of false ideas and principles' about Poland which they had acquired in Russian schools.¹⁸

These Russian-speaking Jews, Piłsudski continued, were agents of Russification: 'In our country . . . the brutal violence of tsarist despotism has found expression in the politics of "unification" and Jewish socialists have begun working among the Jewish proletariat with the aim of imposing on them the Russian language as the path to culture'.¹⁹ The crux of his argument was that 'It has become increasingly clear that the Russian government is using . . . the Russified Jews as a weapon against the [Poles'] political aspirations'.²⁰ The proclamation concluded that Jewish socialists should 'take a clear and unambiguous' position on the PPS programme and struggle alongside Polish and Lithuanian workers or they would be perceived as supporting tsarism. The importance Piłsudski attached to the political and cultural orientation of Jews in Lithuania stemmed from his aim of incorporating Lithuania-Byelorussia, and the Vilna region in particular, into a future Polish state.

17 Rom [Józef Piłsudski], 'Wilno, 4 March 1893' in *Przedświt*, no. 4, April 1893, reprinted in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. 1, 25-7.

18 [Józef Piłsudski], 'To our Jewish socialist comrades in the occupied Polish provinces' in *Przedświt*, no. 5, May 1893, reprinted in *ibid.*, 9.

19 *Ibid.*, 30.

20 *Ibid.*

In July 1893 an illegal meeting attended by Piłsudski, Stanisław Wojciechowski and three others took place outside Vilna.²¹ At this first congress of the PPS, as the meeting would later be called, Piłsudski offered a critique of the 'outline programme'. Thereafter, he would rise through the ranks of the party and write a series of increasingly sophisticated articles on the nationalities question. His subsequent article outlining the congress's resolution on relations with Russian revolutionaries revealed the degree of his disdain for Russia. Leon Wasilewski, one of his closest confidants in the Union Abroad, commented that Piłsudski's 'profound disdain for Russia was one of the principal components of his political worldview': this was not solely hatred of the tsarist government but extended to Russian culture and the Russian national character.²² The connection between Piłsudski's articles on the Russian Jewish intelligentsia and his struggle against tsarism rose to the surface in this article. Indifference to the question of Russification, he wrote in July 1893 regarding Russian revolutionaries, 'we must recognize as silent support for tsarist politics': Russian revolutionaries must accept the PPS's programme and those agitating on PPS territory could do so only under the PPS's banner.²³

Piłsudski rose to leadership of the PPS over the following eighteen months. At the party's second congress, in February 1894, he was chosen as one of four members of a Central Workers' Committee (CKR) held responsible for smuggling into Russian Poland socialist literature and starting up a party organ inside the country.²⁴ Shortly after he returned to his Vilna home in spring 1894, he sent two reports to the Union Abroad in London regarding organizational activities and propaganda literature which had appeared in *Przedświt*. Although in public he had condemned the Jewish Social Democrats, in private he began to collaborate with them. So as to counter Russian cultural influence in Vilna, he began pressuring the Vilna Jewish socialists to switch to Yiddish as the language of agitation.

To aid the Jewish centre, Piłsudski arranged for the transportation of Yiddish literature into the empire. He suggested smuggling the Galician socialist organ *Der Arbeter* into Vilna for the Jewish Social Democratic group.²⁵ He then forged a link between Jewish socialists in Galicia and the Jewish Social Democrats in Vilna. From 1893 onwards, he helped facilitate the transport of Yiddish publications to Vilna from Galicia, New York and London, and became friendly with Arkady Kremer.²⁶ Largely on Piłsudski's

21 Garlicki, 42.

22 Wasilewski, *Józef Piłsudski jakim go znałem*, 60-1.

23 [Józef Piłsudski], 'Regarding Russian revolutionaries' in *Przedświt*, no. 8, August 1893, 1-2, reprinted in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. 1, 42-5.

24 Leon Wasilewski, 'Leaders of the PPS in the Russian Partition, 1893-1918' in *Niepodległość*, vol. 11, 1935, 353; Garlicki, *Józef Piłsudski*, 46-7.

25 Józef Piłsudski, *Vilna, to the Union of Polish Socialists Abroad*, London, 29 April 1894, in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe uzupełnienia*, vol. 1, 89.

26 Frantz Kursky, 'Tsukunft in underground Russia' in *Gezamelte shriftn* (Selected Writings) (New York 1952), 253.

initiative, the PPS smuggled approximately 1,000 illegal Yiddish publications into the empire in 1893-4.²⁷

The importance Piłsudski attached to his relations with the Jewish socialists in Vilna is evident from a letter he wrote in May 1894. He noted that some Jewish Social Democrats were beginning to support the PPS programme: if they eventually joined the PPS, 'that would be the greatest triumph I could imagine'.²⁸ In addition to linking Galician Jewish socialists with those in Vilna, which allowed for Yiddish brochures to be funneled into Vilna from Lwów,²⁹ Piłsudski organized the smuggling of a mimeograph machine with Hebrew type into Russian Poland, delivering it to the Jewish Social Democrats in July 1894.³⁰ Meanwhile, the CKR smuggled a printing press into the empire, and in July 1894 the first issue of the clandestine PPS organ *Robotnik* appeared.

At the end of August a wave of arrests hit the PPS. Of the four CKR members, only Piłsudski survived. The arrests elevated him to a top leadership role, as he then practically took sole charge of the party's activities. As editor of *Robotnik* and the sole surviving member of the core leadership, Piłsudski was to remain party leader in the Russian partition for the next seven years.

One of Piłsudski's first acts after the arrests was to continue his polemic with the Jewish Social Democrats in Vilna. He published an editorial deriding the Vilna centre for its antipathy to Yiddish: 'Our Jewish comrades . . . continue to draw on Russian revolutionary writings from the 1890s, 1880s and even the 1870s. What is stranger', he continued, 'is that even publications in Yiddish are looked down upon by those who see in them a turn to a 'national' viewpoint . . . and this is so despite the fact that the available quantity of socialist literature in Yiddish now equals, or perhaps surpasses, what there is in Russian'.³¹

Emboldened by his new status as party leader, in April 1895 Piłsudski printed an article in *Robotnik* fully revealing his position on the nationalities question. In a reflexion of the influence of Mendelson's writings from

27 Aleksander Malinowski (ed.), *Materiały do historii PPS i ruchu rewolucyjnego w zaborze rosyjskim od r. 1893 do 1904* (Materials on the History of the PPS and the Revolutionary Movement in the Russian Partition, 1893-1904) (Warsaw 1907), vol. 1, 46, 91, 101.

28 Józef Piłsudski, Vilna, to the Union of Polish Socialists Abroad, London, [?] May 1894, in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe uzupełnienia*, vol. 1, 93.

29 We have used place-names current at the time—hence the Russian Vilna instead of Wilno/Vilnius. However, the Polish Lwów will be used instead of Lemberg/Lviv as Galicia was under autonomous Polish control at the time. For place-names such as Warsaw and Cracow, we have used the form standard in English usage.

30 *25 yor: zamlbukh* (Twenty-Five Years: A Collection of Writings) (Warsaw: Di Velt 1922), 112. Piłsudski remarked that the mimeograph had arrived from London—see his letter from Vilna to the Union of Polish Socialists Abroad, London, [?] July 1894 in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe uzupełnienia*, vol. 1, 97.

31 *Czasowy* [Józef Piłsudski], 'Vilna in September' in *Przedświt*, no. 9, September 1894, reprinted in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. 1, 63 (cited from Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 218).

1891 and early 1892, he emphasized that the sole guarantee of political freedoms was national sovereignty. But unlike Mendelson, who avoided identifying that state with any one of the nationalities inhabiting the region, he called for 'an Independent Democratic *Polish* Republic' (emphasis added).³² Piłsudski hinted at his territorial ambition, writing of Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians and Ukrainians in the western provinces of the empire who 'by sheer force are in chains and oppressed' and, having been part of pre-partition Poland, 'have an entirely different history and different traditions'. All the inhabitants of these provinces suffered from national and religious oppression under tsarism. Therefore, 'all these conditions suggest that the force which will smash the might of tsarism will emerge precisely from them'.³³

Piłsudski proclaimed that the mission of Polish socialists was to defend the West against Eastern despotism. 'The historical role of socialism in Poland', he wrote in April 1895, 'is the defence of the West against reactionary Russia'; the Polish socialist movement intended to unite all opposition forces in Russia against the tsarist regime.³⁴ At the party's third congress in June 1895 Piłsudski assumed responsibility for relations with the nationalities of the western provinces,³⁵ when the congress adopted a resolution committing the PPS to spread separatist aspirations among the nationalities of the western provinces.³⁶

Piłsudski and the Yiddish press

Meanwhile, as the Jewish Social Democrats in Vilna began to disseminate agitational literature in Yiddish, the need for a PPS Yiddish press began to be felt. While the PPS leadership in Warsaw was unwilling to commit resources to producing Yiddish material,³⁷ the London-based Union Abroad looked to New York, where many Polish Jews sympathetic to the PPS had recently settled, for aid in producing Yiddish publications. The idea, first entertained by Union secretary Bolesław Jędrzejowski, was to ask Polish Jewish socialists in New York to produce pro-PPS material in Yiddish for transportation to Russian Poland. In February 1896, with the additional

32 [Józef Piłsudski], 'Russia' in *Robotnik jednościówka*, April 1895 in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. 1, 80.

33 *Ibid.*, 91.

34 [Józef Piłsudski], 'On guard', *Robotnik*, June 1895 in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. 1, 92-5.

35 Wojciechowski, *Moje wspomnienia*, 100-1.

36 The resolutions of the third congress are reprinted in Malinowski (ed.), *Materiały do historii PPS*, vol. 1, 144-50.

37 Anasztazy Róg (1873-1933), an assimilated Jewish banker who was a member of the party's Warsaw branch, acted as a liaison between Jewish workers in Warsaw and the party leadership in 1893-8. In 1895 he informed PPS leaders of the urgent need for Yiddish propaganda. According to a member of the party's Jewish section, the PPS leadership in Warsaw replied: '[W]e have in our midst millions of poor peasants and we're not able to organize among them yet, so how can we think about Yiddish literature?'—see Mojżesz Kaufman, 'The first activities of PPS Jews' in *Niepodległość*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1933, 340-1.

goal of making contact with Polish socialists in America, Union Abroad sent Bolesław Miklaszewski, a member of its central committee, to the USA.

In his (unpublished) memoirs Miklaszewski describes meeting in New York prominent figures of the Jewish socialist community, among them Abe Cahan, who greatly impressed him.³⁸ His most important contact among this community was with Benjamin Feigenbaum (1860-1932), a native of Warsaw who had emigrated to New York in 1891.³⁹ In a letter to the Union Abroad dated 5 April 1896, Miklaszewski reported that 'on Feigenbaum's initiative, the best and most active Jewish comrades from Warsaw have established themselves here, and have taken it upon themselves to gather funds for the creation of Yiddish literature to aid our cause'. These Polish Jewish socialists were, he continued, solid backers of the PPS programme and wanted to establish an American Jewish division of the Party. 'Let me remind you', he wrote, 'that [Feigenbaum's] group includes some of the most talented Yiddish writers'.⁴⁰ Miklaszewski described Feigenbaum as 'a first-rate Yiddish author and poet who felt strongly connected to Poland'.⁴¹

Piłsudski, then in London, responded to Miklaszewski later that month. While expressing interest in Miklaszewski's Polish Jewish contacts, in the context of the struggle then brewing inside Russian Poland with Jewish social democrats in Vilna and Warsaw, he wished to be certain that Feigenbaum's group had not been infiltrated by Lithuanian Jews. 'We well know', he wrote, 'that Lithuanian Jews, with whom we have no sympathy whatsoever, have connections in America'. Revealing his central preoccupation with regard to the Jews, Piłsudski wrote that 'it must be remembered that in regard to the Jewish question, Russia's influence on Jews . . . will always be in our way'. To establish any formal relationship Miklaszewski would have to make sure they did not have a 'gravitational tendency towards Russia' as did the Lithuanian Jews. 'In any case, we must try, and even more so, because our work among Jews is terribly deficient. We lack the literature and the people'.⁴²

38 Archive of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, Warsaw (henceforth Archiwum PAN), sygn. 61; *Pamiętniki Bolesława Miklaszewskiego* (Reminiscences of Bolesław Miklaszewski) (Warsaw 1928), 153.

39 Alicja Pacholczykowa, 'Beniamin Feigenbaum' in *Słownik biograficzny działaczy polskiego ruchu robotniczego* (Dictionary of Figures of the Polish Workers' Movement) (Warsaw 1987), vol. 2, 65-6.

40 Bolesław Miklaszewski, New York, to the Union of Polish Socialists Abroad, London, 5 April 1896, reprinted in *Niepodległość*, vol. 14, July-December 1937, 450-2. See also Pobóg-Malinowski, *Józef Piłsudski. W podziemiach konspiracji* (Józef Piłsudski in Underground Conspiracies) (Warsaw 1935), 297-8. For sources on the Polish labour movement in the USA see Danuta Piątkowska-Kozlik, *Związek Socjalistów Polskich w Ameryce* (The Union of Polish Socialists in America) (Opole 1992).

41 Archiwum PAN; *Pamiętniki Bolesława Miklaszewskiego*, 72.

42 Józef Piłsudski, London, to Bolesław Miklaszewski, New York, 24 April 1896 in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe uzupełnienia*, vol. 1, 176.

In May Piłsudski informed the central committee in Congress Poland of developments in New York.⁴³ His letter reveals he had received a reply from Miklaszewski confirming Feigenbaum's group opposed the Jewish social democrats in Vilna and Warsaw.⁴⁴ In May 1896 Piłsudski and the Union Abroad announced their intention of setting up a group in New York to produce Yiddish-language publications under the PPS banner. The new organization, under the direction of Feigenbaum, was named the Jewish Socialist Post from America to Poland.⁴⁵ Jewish Socialist Post member Maurycy Montlak said the organization had approximately fifteen members.⁴⁶

One of the first tasks of the New York organization was to produce a pro-PPS brochure for distribution among Jewish workers in Warsaw. In late May or early June, a letter was received in London by Feigenbaum outlining an idea for the Post's first publication. Piłsudski, alluding to Feigenbaum's letter, wrote that relations with the Jewish Socialist Post would not be as agreeable as Miklaszewski had suggested: 'the Jews from America replied in a rather impolite tone to my letter that only they will judge what is appropriate to publish for their comrades in Russian Poland'.⁴⁷

In private correspondence Piłsudski used such terms as *Żydy* and *Żydek* ('the little Jew') and *parchy wileńskie* ('Vilna scabs'). The word for Jew, *Żyd*, has some eighty variations in Polish. Of these, the derogatory *Żydy* and *Żydek* were among the most common in the prewar period.⁴⁸ Piłsudski did not use the word *Żydek* indiscriminately. His anger at Jewish socialists in the Pale emerged unconsciously in his letters, in which Polish Jews were referred to as *Żydzi* (simply 'Jews'), while Russian Jews were almost always characterized in a derogatory manner. As one Bundist has written, Piłsudski was never able to free himself of a Polish aristocratic tradition which looked favourably on the *żydek* as long as he behaved himself.⁴⁹ While Piłsudski was clearly no antisemite, as his contemporaries have attested,⁵⁰ his letters suggest that, when provoked by indifference to the

43 Józef Piłsudski, London, to PPS central committee, Congress Poland, 7 May 1896 in *ibid.*, 181.

44 Józef Piłsudski, London, to PPS central committee, Congress Poland, 28 May 1896 in *ibid.*, 206.

45 'From emigration in America' in *Przedświt*, May 1896, 18.

46 AAN, sygn. 305/VII/29, folder 1; Maurycy Montlak, New York, to Union of Polish Socialists Abroad, London, 27 July 1896.

47 Józef Piłsudski, London, to PPS central committee, Congress Poland, 9 June 1896 in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe uzupełnienia*, vol. 1, 223.

48 Maria Brzezina, *Polszczyzna Żydów* (The Polish Language as Spoken by Jews) (Warsaw 1986), 83-4 cited in Maria Kamińska, 'References to Polish-Jewish co-existence in the memoirs of Łódź workers: a linguistic analysis', *POLIN: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies*, vol. 6 (Oxford 1991), 208.

49 Shvartz, 89. For the only discussion in Polish historiography of Piłsudski's use of derogatory language towards Lithuanian Jews, see Kancewicz, 405.

50 Leon Wasilewski, *Józef Piłsudski jakim go znałem*, 30. Wasilewski, an activist in the PPS Foreign Committee in London in 1898-1903 who would later become a champion of minority rights in interwar Poland, noted Piłsudski's use of derogatory language in the 1890s. He insisted, however, that Piłsudski spoke of Lithuanian Jews 'facetiously' and 'without a hint of antisemitism'.

desire of Poles to be free of Russian rule, he reverted to stereotypes. But he saw the Jews as potential allies, not as enemies. In regard to Russians, in his private letters Piłsudski frequently used the terms *kacapy* and *mochy*.⁵¹ In their conflict with Piłsudski, some Bundists were prone to no less stereotypical thinking. In a 1898 brochure Vladimir Kossovsky claimed that the PPS's hostility to the Bund was 'the same hatred for Jews that was suckled from their mothers' milk'.⁵²

Piłsudski received a response from the PPS leadership in Warsaw regarding Feigenbaum's new group with recommendations on the content of any future Yiddish publications. The following day, he replied to Feigenbaum graciously: 'We learned from your letter with great pleasure that you intend sometime shortly to print an agitation brochure'. He told Feigenbaum he had received proposals from Russian Poland recommending that the language used in the brochure should be in the 'simple Yiddish' of Jewish workers. He wrote that 'many Yiddish publications [from abroad] are really written in German, only with Hebrew letters'. In addition, Feigenbaum was recommended to avoid the use of such abstract terms as 'despotism' and 'absolutism', which tended to be the norm in such publications. Such a brochure, free of the faults mentioned in the letter, Piłsudski wrote, would expand the PPS's influence among Jewish workers. He cited the letter he had received from Russian Poland: "We are very pleased that Jews [in New York] have come to an understanding with [the PPS]. We hope this will result in building a [pro-PPS] movement among Jewish workers [in Warsaw]. What we lack", they reported, "is not people, but a Yiddish-speaking intelligentsia and popular [Yiddish] publications sympathetic to our movement".⁵³

Piłsudski was more direct in a letter to Miklaszewski. Seeking to influence the Feigenbaum brochure, he outlined his views on what kind of Yiddish press the PPS should have. He urged Miklaszewski to have a further discussion with Feigenbaum so the PPS delegates in London knew exactly what to expect from him. 'Remind them', he wrote, 'of the necessity of having a set of unified political goals of the entire proletariat in Russian Poland, among which is the necessity to spread the idea of the independence of Poland among the Jewish proletariat'.

51 *Kacapy* is an untranslatable term of Ukrainian origin meaning 'contemptuous, anti-Muscovite', while *mochy* was used as a variation of the Polish word *Moskal*, a pejorative term for Russians. See Aleksander Bruckner, *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego* (Etymological Dictionary of the Polish Language) (Cracow 1927; reprint Warsaw 1985).

52 [Vladimir Kossovsky], *Di milkhome fun der poylisher sotsyalistisher partay gegn dem yidishn arbayer-bund* (The Struggle of the Polish Socialist Party Against the Jewish Workers' Bund) (n.p., July 1898), 52, in the Bund Archive, New York.

53 Al. Dębski [Józef Piłsudski], London, to the Jewish Socialist Post from America to Poland, New York, 10 June 1896 in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe uzupełnienia*, vol. 1, 227-8. Garlicki and Świętek confirm that the letter, although signed in Dębski's name, was written in Piłsudski's hand.

It was important to stress that the party had to have a certain level of control over its publications. One also had to stress, he continued, that if the Jewish Socialist Post put out brochures concerning only general principles of socialism, 'it would be no different from publications put out by the Lithuanian Jews and we would not be producing anything new': 'without full solidarity with [our political programme]', the publication project would be ineffective.⁵⁴

By late July Feigenbaum had completed the manuscript. Its cover indicated that it was the first brochure of the Jewish Socialist Post and that it was published in co-operation with the Union of Polish Socialists Abroad and the PPS.⁵⁵ For distribution in Russian Poland Feigenbaum altered the title page to elude the censors. Perhaps responding to Piłsudski's suggestion to use simple language, he came up with the colourful title 'Paradise on Earth: A Wonderful True Story about How the Road to Paradise Was Found and How We Can All Get There'.⁵⁶

In August Miklaszewski returned to London to report on his visit to America.⁵⁷ Shortly after, the Union Abroad wrote to Feigenbaum expressing gratitude for the brochure.⁵⁸ Piłsudski reported to Warsaw that the Union had received 2,000 copies of 'Paradise on Earth',⁵⁹ while *Przedświt* announced that the PPS had printed its first Yiddish brochure.⁶⁰ When Piłsudski left London for Vilna in late August he took several copies with him. But in February 1897 he revealed he was still cautious: he had given copies of the brochure to workers in Białystok and was awaiting their response before requesting further copies from London.⁶¹ Piłsudski did not give 'Paradise on Earth' immediate full distribution as it fell short of explicitly presenting the PPS's aim of national independence. Not too subtly, it attempted to show that the Jewish worker had more in common with the

54 Józef Piłsudski, London, to Bolesław Miklaszewski, New York, 24 June 1896 in *ibid.*, 231-2.

55 Benjamin Feigenbaum, *Di sotsyalistishe bevegung in Rusland un di dortige iden: a propogande-broshur, ekstra geshriben tsu fartheyln tsvishtn di idishe arbeyter in Rusland in algemeyn un in rusish-poyln bazunders* (The Socialist Movement in Russia and Its Ideas: A Propaganda Brochure Written For Distribution among Jewish Workers in Russia in General and Russian Poland in Particular) (New York: Jewish Socialist Post from America to Russia 1896).

56 Ben N. [B. Feigenbaum], *Das gan-eydn hatakhton: a vunderlikhe emese mayse, vi men is dergangen dem veg tsum gan-eydn oyf der velt, un vi menshen foren ahin* (Warsaw 1875). The year 1875 as date of publication was given to elude the censors even though it was published in New York in 1896. According to one source, the PPS provided the funds for the printing of Feigenbaum's brochure. See A. Cherkover, 'The beginnings of the illegal press in Yiddish' in *Historishe Sbriftn*, vol. 3 (Vilna 1939), 599.

57 Archiwum PAN; *Pamiętniki Bolesława Miklaszewskiego*, 153.

58 AAN, sygn. 305/II/22, vol. 8, folio 468; Aleksander Dębski, London, to Jewish Socialist Post c/o B. Feigenbaum, New York, 21 August 1896.

59 Piłsudski, London, to PPS central committee, Warsaw, 4 August 1896 in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe uzupełnienia*, vol. 1, 254.

60 *Przedświt*, no. 8, August 1896, 18.

61 Piłsudski, Vilna, to the Union of Polish Socialists Abroad, London, 12 February 1897 in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe uzupełnienia*, vol. 1, 292.

Christian worker than with the Jewish bourgeoisie. 'Only the workers in Russia and Poland alone', the brochure said, 'can achieve freedom, fairness, truth, equality and brotherhood'.⁶² Socialism, the new Garden of Eden, had created 'a new religion' and its most sacred holiday was the May Day celebration. The brochure attempted to allay Jews' traditional distrust of gentiles: 'To you, poor Jewish artisans, workers from Poland and Russia, your brother, the local Christian worker, . . . asks you to understand that he is rebelling not against you . . . but against the rich capitalist thieves, whether Polish, Russian, German or Jewish'.⁶³ The Jewish worker should join the PPS: 'O brothers! Come, let us be one with them! Let us help them bring forth salvation from hardship and suffering!'⁶⁴

Frantz Kursky, born in 1874 in the Pale, settled in Warsaw in 1893, where he became active in Jewish and Polish social democratic circles, and later joined the Bund in Warsaw.⁶⁵ He recalled that when the Feigenbaum brochure reached Russian Poland in 1896, neither the Jewish nor Polish social democrats gave it much attention: 'In comparison with other illegal brochures from Vilna ['Paradise on Earth'] was simply ridiculed. We called it American watered-down literature'.⁶⁶

Decline of the PPS

Between 1892 and 1896 the PPS was the first modern underground political party in Russian Poland. This situation changed in 1896-7 when the Lithuanian and Jewish radical elite formed independent socialist parties. First, in 1896 the Lithuanian Social Democrats (LSD) emerged in Vilna. The latter party, however, possessed a Polonized leadership and printed its first organ in Polish (*Robotnik Litewski*). At its first meeting, the LSD endorsed the PPS's programme, calling for the formation of a democratic federal republic of Poland, Latvia, White Russia and Ruthenia.⁶⁷ The events of 1897, however, sent shock waves throughout the Polish socialist world. In October the Jewish socialists in Vilna formed the General Jewish Labour Union in Poland and Russia—the Bund. At its founding congress, the Bund declared itself in favour of unification with the Union of Russian Social Democrats Abroad and claimed to be the sole representative of Jewish workers in the entire Russian Empire, including Congress Poland. Mishkinsky and Frankel have convincingly argued that the evolution of the Jewish Social Democrats in Vilna—from Russian Jewish *intelligenty* in 1891-2 seeking to prepare the Yiddish-speaking workers for entry into the general Russian movement to

62 Feigenbaum, *Dos gan-eydn*, 14-5.

63 *Ibid.*, 27.

64 *Ibid.*, 31.

65 Abram Menes, 'The life of Frantz Kursky' in Frantz Kursky, *Gezamelte Shriftn* (Selected Writings) (New York 1952), 4-7.

66 Kursky, 'Tzukunft in . . . Russia', 254-5.

67 Michał Römer, *Litwa: studjum o odrodzeniu narodu litewskiego* (Lithuania: A Study on the Revival of the Lithuanian Nation) (Lwów 1908), 273.

an independent *Jewish* socialist party by 1897—came about in large part in its struggle against the PPS. The PPS's insistence that Jewish socialists choose between a 'Russian' and 'Polish' orientation—between the separation of Poland and Lithuania or the achievement of a Russian constitution—had the unintended consequence of crystallizing a 'Jewish orientation' in the Russian Jewish socialist camp. And after the Bund incorporated this new 'Jewish orientation' as an organizational expression in the period 1894-7, Mishkinsky maintains, the PPS 'rose against it with all the strength and power of a revolutionary party, perhaps the strongest in the Russian Empire at that time'.⁶⁸

The PPS's response to the events of October 1897 confirms Mishkinsky's view. Piłsudski acted swiftly at the PPS's fourth congress in November 1897. High on the agenda was a resolution on the new Jewish labour party. In *Robotnik* in the following year, the congress accused the Bund of 'renouncing solidarity with the Polish and Lithuanian working class in the struggle for liberation from tsarist occupation'. It re-affirmed the PPS's traditional stand on relations with Jewish workers: 'We resolve that the Jewish proletariat can have common goals only with the proletariat of the nation in which it lives'.⁶⁹ At the same time, it raised the issue of agitating in Yiddish. Soon after, the PPS decided to establish its first Yiddish-language newspaper—*Der Arbeter*, which was published in London. The first issue of *Der Arbeter* came out in December 1898 with a circulation of 1,500.⁷⁰ Following the founding congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in March 1898, which the Bund entered as an autonomous member, the PPS stepped up its attacks on the Bund. In April 1898 *Przedświt* accused it of 'building an artificial wall between the Jewish and Christian proletariat of one country'. The independent Jewish organization linked with Russia, the PPS concluded, would provoke an antisemitic reaction in Polish society.⁷¹ The head of the Bund's division in Warsaw, John Mill, counter-attacked:

What can the Jewish proletariat expect from the separation of Poland? Can it expect that persecution against it *as Jews* will cease? Will it really receive *national equality*? This is the question. Nobody can prove to us that we will really gain national rights. We will be the minority in a free Poland and the future Polish regime can persecute us just as much as the present Russian regime (emphasis added).⁷²

68 Mishkinsky, *Reshit tnuat ha-poalim ha-yehudit be-rusya*, 260-1.

69 [Józef Piłsudski], 'The fourth congress of our party' in *Robotnik*, 13 February 1898 in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. 1, 201.

70 Zanna Kormanowa, *Materiały do bibliografii druków socjalistycznych na ziemiach polskich w latach 1866-1918* (Materials for a Bibliography of Socialist Publications on Polish Lands, 1866-1918), 2nd. ed. (Warsaw 1949), 1.

71 'The question of the Jewish proletariat' in *Przedświt*, no. 4, April 1898.

72 [John Mill], 'Der Arbeter number 1' in *Der Yidisher Arbeyter* (Geneva), no. 6, March 1899 (cited in Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 217-8).

The transformation of Piłsudski's position on the Jewish question

The polemic between Piłsudski and the Bund came to an abrupt end in February 1900 when Piłsudski was arrested in Łódź. In the next fourteen months, Piłsudski was imprisoned in Łódź, Warsaw and St Petersburg. After escaping in May 1901 he crossed the border into Austrian Galicia and, in November, he arrived in London's Victoria Station, where he was greeted by Bolesław Jędrzejowski and Leon Wasilewski.

At the time Bund leader Arkady Kremer was also in London. Despite the bitter polemics that had passed between them before Piłsudski's arrest, Kremer invited him to his home shortly after he arrived. According to Wasilewski, Piłsudski and Kremer were on 'very friendly' terms in London. In fact, Kremer invited Piłsudski to speak at a Bund gathering, which Piłsudski did.⁷³ It was perhaps through Kremer that Piłsudski learned of the Bund's crucial fourth congress. In Białystok in May 1901, the fourth congress committed the Bund to the idea of Jewish national autonomy. Moreover, the congress recognized the Jews as a nation, and declared it would henceforth work to spread national consciousness among the Jewish working class.⁷⁴

While there are no accounts of the discussion between the two most significant figures in the Bund and PPS, Piłsudski's letters show that they discussed the possibility of co-operation. Piłsudski began a correspondence both with the PPS division in Zurich, and Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz in Vienna, on how to word a resolution on the Bund for the forthcoming congress. The tone of Piłsudski's letters in January and February 1902 reveals he had begun to soften his position. His new, conciliatory position contained two substantive changes—he acknowledged that the PPS's campaign against the Bund had been ineffective and he recognized the Jews as a nationality.

In London, Piłsudski responded to several letters on the implications of the Bund's new national programme for relations with the PPS. On 9 January 1902 he received a letter from Władysław Gumpłowicz requesting suggestions on an official response to the Bund's new programme. His response revealed the extent to which he viewed the Bund in the context of a Russo-Polish struggle over control of the western, and particularly north-western, provinces. The PPS believed the Russian social democrats would use the Bund as a pretext for territorial claims in Lithuania and even Congress Poland. This 'open war' had left deep resentment between the two groups. Addressing Gumpłowicz's suggestion that the PPS propose recognizing the Bund's independence in exchange for its recognition of the PPS's programme, Piłsudski objected to the term 'independence': a PPS-Bund partnership had to be based on 'party and programme unity' and 'full autonomy' for the Bund.⁷⁵ In another letter, Piłsudski acknowledged that the

⁷³ Wasilewski, 65.

⁷⁴ Frankel, 220.

⁷⁵ Józef Piłsudski, London, to Władysław Gumpłowicz, Zurich, 16 January 1902 in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe uzupełnienia*, vol. 2, 93-4.

PPS's old tactics of condemnations and threats had achieved little success.⁷⁶

Meanwhile, the PPS's Foreign Committee in London received an enquiry from Kelles-Krauz about the possibility of a rapprochement with the Bund through the Galician Jewish PPS supporter Max Zetterbaum. Although Zetterbaum was an assimilationist, he proposed that for tactical reasons the PPS should recognize the Bund's organizational autonomy and the right of Jews to 'regard themselves as a nationality (even though, in reality, they are not)'. In exchange for the Bund's recognition of the PPS's independence platform, it would be granted 'autonomy in Jewish affairs within PPS territory'.⁷⁷ Several days later Piłsudski told Kelles-Krauz he had discussed a range of issues with the Bund in London, although without concrete results: influencing the Bund would have to be done in stages, first by personal contacts. He reflected that the PPS's official stand had been wrong. He proposed the wording for a resolution on the Jews at the future party congress—in a future Poland they would have the right to remain Jews if they so wished, and 'we would defend their rights *as a nationality*' (emphasis added).⁷⁸ Henceforth both Piłsudski and Kelles-Krauz would recognize the Jews as a nationality.

On the same day, Piłsudski sent an equally revealing letter to Gumpłowicz on the Bund. He formulated his earliest conception of the modern multi-national state. The Bund had to be convinced that in a future Polish state 'the Jews would not be denied independence in their own internal affairs', Piłsudski wrote, 'for those are "the rights of national minorities" . . . which Poland will . . . grant to the Jews'.⁷⁹ Second, he offered a critique of the PPS's rhetoric on the Bund, writing that the PPS programme 'lacks a guarantee of the rights of Jews *as a group*' (emphasis added). This marked Piłsudski's first concession to the Bund on the question of Jewish national autonomy.⁸⁰ Anxious to rebuild the organization inside the empire, Piłsudski left London in April 1902 and crossed the border into Congress Poland that same month.⁸¹ There he set out to organize the party's sixth congress, which took place in June of that year, and to start a new organ to be published in Vilna.

76 Józef Piłsudski, London, to Witold Jodko-Narkiewicz, Lwów, 12 February 1902 in *ibid.*, 105.

77 Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, Vienna, to PPS Foreign Committee, London, 12 February 1902 in Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, *Listy (Letters)* (ed. F. Tych) (Wrocław 1984), vol. 2, 601-2. By April 1902 Kelles-Krauz had become an anomaly in the PPS when, partly under the influence of Piłsudski's new position on the Jews, he praised Zionism as the symbol of modern Jewish nationhood—see 'Polish socialism and Jewish nationality: the views of Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz', *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1990, 47-55 and Timothy Snyder, 'Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz (1872-1905): A Political and Intellectual Biography' (Ph.D. diss., Oxford: Balliol College 1995), 212-26.

78 Józef Piłsudski, London, to Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, Vienna, 17 February 1902 in *Niepodległość*, vol. 13 (New York 1980), 9-10.

79 Józef Piłsudski, London, to Władysław Gumpłowicz, Zurich, 17 February 1902 in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe uzupełnienia*, vol. 2, 108.

80 *Ibid.*, 108-9.

81 Waclaw Jędrzejewicz, *Piłsudski: A Life For Poland* (New York 1982), 32.

Although the sixth congress's resolution repeated its opposition to the Bund's Russian orientation, it attempted to lure Jewish socialists to the PPS's position with more conciliatory language. 'The demand for independence and a democratic republic', stated the resolution (which Pilsudski probably wrote himself), 'is in the interest of the Jewish proletariat not only as workers, *but as Jews*. A democratic republic would secure equality for Jewish citizens and give them the possibility freely to develop and exert a formidable influence on public affairs'.⁸² The sixth congress also created a Jewish Committee responsible for producing and distributing Yiddish-language material. In the year following the congress, relations between the Bund and the RSDLP began to break down over the question of autonomy. The conflict between Lenin's Iskra faction and the Bund came to a head at the RSDLP's second congress in July 1903, when the Bund withdrew from the party.

To the PPS, the Bund's disillusionment with the RSDLP re-affirmed that true freedom could be achieved only by severing the western provinces from Russian rule. Thus, in the second half of 1903 the PPS urged the Bund to join with the Lithuanian and Polish socialist parties. In an article on the Austrian social democrats' programme in July and August 1903, Kelles-Krauz appealed to the Bund, arguing that, unlike the Russian revolutionaries, the PPS was ready to grant the Bund full autonomy. Consistent with the PPS's sixth congress resolution, Kelles-Krauz wrote, 'those Jews who so desire would have full rights to create Jewish schools and other cultural institutions in the whole territory of a free Poland'. He concluded that thus having the assurance of full national rights and corporate autonomy in independent Poland, the Bund should at last depart from its absurd 'reflections' on such a political question as the independence of Poland and embrace the aspirations of the proletariat of the country in which the vast majority of Jews lived.⁸³

Meanwhile, Pilsudski went about gathering PPS members in Vilna to aid in the production of *Walka*, the PPS's new organ in Lithuania. In August 1903 Pilsudski continued his reflections on the Bund and the Jewish question: 'The existence of the Bund', he wrote,

is closely connected with an important issue, the Jewish question, which . . . complicates all our political evaluations and all social relations, particularly when we take into account that the Bund's main area of influence lies both in Lithuania, where our relations up to now have been weak, and Byelorussia, where we have no influence whatsoever.⁸⁴

82 'The PPS's sixth congress' in *Przedświt*, no. 8, August 1902, 282.

83 M. Luśnia (Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz), 'The nationalities programme of Austrian Social Democracy and the PPS programme' in *Przedświt*, no. 8, August 1903, 340-1.

84 Józef Pilsudski, Rytyro, to London, 14 August 1903 in *Niepodległość*, vol. 12 (New York 1979), 24.

In the third issue of *Walka*, which appeared in November 1903, Piłsudski published his final articles on PPS relations with Jewish socialists. For the first time, he praised the Bund's success in spreading anti-tsarist sentiments among Jewish workers. 'Although we cannot agree with the Bund on some of their positions we must recognize that their activities have developed into a strong revolutionary movement in Lithuanian cities, and have created civic-mindedness among those in Lithuania who had previously been wholly separated from political life'.⁸⁵ In a letter to London in that same month, he reflected on the transformed situation in Russian Poland. Above all, he wrote, several political parties had evolved in the previous years. In particular, the National Democrats and the Bund had begun to organize workers and distribute illegal literature on a mass scale comparable to the PPS. The party had to recognize, he wrote, that 'the Bund puts out better and livelier writings than we, the literature in Russian, Yiddish and Polish is plentiful, they organize demonstrations and disturbances everywhere in the empire and even their use of terror is sufficiently effective'. The second most important development, he maintained, had been the spread of national consciousness in the eastern borderlands. In addition to the growth of the Polish right and the Jewish socialist left the Ruthenians—not to mention the Caucasians, Finns and Lithuanians—were 'becoming visible'.⁸⁶ Consequently, 'we must [act] in a spirit of compromise, not of control, and not of conquest'.⁸⁷ Also in 1903, Piłsudski wrote that 'So far, only the Jewish organization "Bund" has followed the PPS's example and succeeded in setting up a secret mechanism for producing books in the country'.⁸⁸

In the same issue of *Walka*, Piłsudski wrote two articles on historical Lithuania and the Jews, each linked to a wider context. He stated that an alliance of socialist forces in the territory of historical Lithuania was central to the realization of political freedom. The Bund's error was its faith in a non-territorial solution to the national question in general and to the Jewish question in particular: any comprehensive solution had to take into account the national aspirations of the Poles and Lithuanians. 'This is not about fusing socialist organizations in Lithuania under the control of the PPS. It is about the creation of a powerful union of all socialist parties in the territories of historic Lithuania. Without this, victory cannot be achieved'. To allay their fears of territorial conquest, he stated that it would be premature to discuss whether the result would be three separate states or one federal republic.⁸⁹

85 [Józef Piłsudski], 'Wilna, October 1903' in *Walka*, no. 3, November 1903 in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. 2, 217.

86 Józef Piłsudski, Rytro, to London, 14 November 1903 in *Niepodległość*, vol. 19 (New York 1986), 47-8.

87 *Ibid.*, 54.

88 Joseph Piłsudski, *The Memoirs of a Polish Revolutionary and Soldier* (New York 1977), 80.

89 [Józef Piłsudski], 'Our position on Lithuania' in *Walka*, no. 3, November 1903 in Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. 2, 219-23.

Pilsudski followed the article on Lithuania with an emotional plea to the Bund in his final article on the Jewish question during his socialist period. He castigated the Bund's refusal to join an alliance with the Lithuanian and Polish socialist parties. 'The Bund, which is the main representative of the workers' movement among Jews in Lithuania', he wrote, 'does not want to take into consideration the aspirations and needs of the Polish and Lithuanian people, nor does it regard it necessary even to acquaint the Jewish working masses with the life, history, pains and hopes of its Polish and Lithuanian comrades'. He implored the Bund to consider improving relations with the Polish and Lithuanian socialists. 'Without the Christian proletariat', he concluded, 'The Jewish worker is powerless in the face of the tsarist state'.⁹⁰

The 1904 Russo-Japanese war and the revolutionary events of 1905 saw the crystallization of Polish political formations both right and left. The explosive rise of the Russian working class led to a deep division within Polish socialist circles over the national question, with the so-called 'young' faction calling for the suspension of the PPS's independence platform and an alliance with the Russian movement for the abolition of autocracy. In the wake of constitutional reform after October 1905, the left-wing fraction's platform was adopted by a large majority at the eighth congress in February 1906. Pilsudski's minority 'old' faction withdrew from the party to form the PPS's Revolutionary Fraction, while the 'young' faction changed its name to PPS Left. Since the PPS Left's core leadership was largely composed of socialists of Jewish background, Pilsudski found himself having to deflect the National Democratic charge that the PPS was an anti-Polish Jewish-dominated organization, while the PPS Left's anti-independence platform exacerbated his conflict with Jews on the left.

From 1908 Pilsudski settled in Cracow where he began his transformation from socialist agitator to military commander and state-builder. He was no longer concerned with hair-splitting ideological debates between party fractions and focused his energies on forming a Polish army in anticipation of an Austro-Russian conflict. His transformation from socialist to liberal nationalist in 1908-18 is well reflected in his alleged statement that 'I boarded the train called "socialism" and got off at the stop "independence".'

Conclusion

Pilsudski's writings during the period under examination show the degree to which he viewed the problem of Jewish socialists through the lens of his profoundly anti-Russian politics. It would be wrong, however, to attribute his interest in the Jewish question to cold political calculation alone, as one

⁹⁰ [Józef Pilsudski], 'The Jewish question in Lithuania', *Walka*, no. 3, November 1903 in *ibid.*, 226.

historian has recently done.⁹¹ In the course of a decade, Piłsudski developed a particular sensitivity to the problem of the Jews. In his private reflections, he emphasized the humiliating effects of popular and government-sponsored antisemitism and drew a link between Jewish emancipation and the transition to liberal constitutional government on Polish lands. In a 1899 letter criticising a draft of a proposed Party brochure, 'Under a common yoke: on nationalities oppressed under the tsar', Piłsudski cautioned that when writing of the nationalities problem in the Russian Empire, one had to give a great deal of attention to the Jews: 'The question of the Jews is a delicate matter. Discuss them in the following way—that they are oppressed more than any other group but that . . . they should fight for the freedom of their country through a common struggle with their Christian brethren.'⁹²

91 This was recently alleged by Jan Kancewicz in his 'The Polish Socialist Party in polemics with the Bund, 1902-3 (with particular reference to the role played in it by Józef Piłsudski)', unpublished article, Warsaw 1995.

92 Józef Piłsudski, Vilna, to Leon Wasilewski, 19 February 1899, reprinted in Waclaw Jędrzejewicz (ed.), 'Letter of Piłsudski . . .' in *Niepodległość*, no. 17 (New York 1985), 14.