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SENATOR STANISŁAW SIEDLECKI. YOUTH AND THE BEGINNINGS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY (1877–1918). CONTRIBUTION TO A BIOGRAPHY

The aim of this article is to present the biography and the political activity of Stanisław Siedlecki (1877–1939). A chemical engineer, independence and socialist activist, conspirator, specialist in printing technology and emissary, publicist, politician and social activist, Stanisław Siedlecki had outstanding abilities in every field of his activity. This article focuses on the initial period of Siedlecki's political activity, setting the final turning point for the year of regaining independence. It was in this period that the future senator of the Republic of Poland shaped his worldview, acquired the necessary political experience and entered the pages of history as one of the leading activists of the Polish independence left. The article utilizes a wide ranging analysis of the literature to verify arguments made in journals and studies, as well as presenting the results from an analysis of source documentation and research conducted on previously unknown hypotheses. The publication fills another gap in Polish historiography and is an introduction to a broader research undertaking, i.e., the full biography of Senator Stanisław Siedlecki.

Keywords: Stanisław Siedlecki, Polish Socialist Party, Polish-Ukrainian relations, Polish Legions, World War I.

1. INTRODUCTION

On September 17, 2019, eighty years had passed since the tragic death of Stanisław Siedlecki³. The figure of Senator Siedlecki, apart from a relatively narrow circle of specialists – researchers of the recent political history of Poland – is little known⁴.

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³ Stanisław Siedlecki in the face of the Soviet aggression on September 17, 1939, committed suicide in Krzemieniec in Wołyń. Information on the place, cause of death, date and place of burial was included in the records of baptisms and deaths of the Krzemieniec parish (from January 1, 1936, item no. 62, Regional State Archives in Tarnopol, Record book of the Roman Catholic Parish in Krzemieniec (from 1936), microfilm reference number F4260.1D.150 - 19.

⁴ Stanisław Siedlecki (1877–1939), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (hereinafter PSB), Vol. XXXVI, Warsaw 1995, pp. 555-558.

Contemporary historiography assigns Siedlecki the role of a promoter of the Promethean movement and he is most often perceived in the context of activities for the revival of enslaved nations (Maj, 2007)⁵. It is impossible to depict the hero's life without analyzing the events that took place in his youth. The experiences of the adolescence period permanently shaped Siedlecki's life attitude and political beliefs. It is from them that the future senator will draw strength in the years filled with the struggle for an independent and just Poland.

2. FAMILY, UPBRINGING AND THE FIRST CONSPIRACY

Stanisław Siedlecki (pseud.: Grzymała, Eustachy) was born on February 19, 1877 in the town of Sima, located in central Russia in the province of Volodymyr⁶. The Siedlecki family, descended from the farm nobility, who settled in Podolia, sealed with the coat of arms of Grzymała (Niesiecki, 1839–1845). His father, also Stanisław, for taking part in the January Uprising, was sentenced to forced labor and settlement in the Kostroma province (Przybysz, 2013; Siedlecki, 1928; Siedlecki, 1933; Siedlecki, 1937)⁷. His mother, Józefa née Przedpełski, came from a landed gentry family in which the memory of national liberation struggles had been cultivated for generations. The grandfather of the future senator – Aleksander Przedpełski, an officer of the Polish army, participant in subsequent uprisings, paid for his political activity with a hard labor. When characterizing the family environment of the senator from his mother's line, it is impossible to ignore the close relatives who sacrificed their life on the altar of the Homeland during the uprising. And so, a tragic fate also befell Uncle Gotfryd Przedpełski – a student who promoted freedom ideals,

⁵ Among the first organizational measures for the rebirth of enslaved nations initiated by Siedlecki, one should mention the magazine *Przymierze*, the Association for the Approximation of the Reborn Nations and, above all, the Eastern Institute in Warsaw, of which he was the founder and president.

⁶ Sima, a village situated on the Simka River in the Yuryevo-Polish region, in the Volodymyr Oblast, about 200 km east of Moscow. From the 18th century, the village belonged to the Golitsyn family. In the second half of the 19th century, it had over 1,500 inhabitants. It housed an Orthodox church, a school, a hospital, a post office, a market and a factory. *Библиографическое описание. Списки населенных мест Российской империи, составленные и издаваемые Центральным статистическим комитетом Министерства внутренних дел.* - СПб. изд. Центр. стат. ком. Мин. внутр. дел, 1861-1885. [Вып. 6]: *Владимирская губерния: ... по сведениям 1859 года / обраб. ст. ред. М. Раевским.* - 1863. - ЛIII, 283 с., 1 л. к., с. 234. Cf.: <http://elib.shpl.ru/ru/nodes/16016-vyp-6-vladimirskaya-guberniya-po-svedeniyam-1859-goda-1863#mode/inspect/page/290/zoom/6>.

⁷ Stanisław Siedlecki (1844–1928) – the senator's father was born in Podolia, in Wachnowka. According to Stanisław Siedlecki Jr.'s account: "Father was sent for attempting to join the insurgent party in Podolia", while his mother acted as "a courier and delivery agent for the orders of the National Government". The niece of Senator Siedlecki – Ludwika Wlochowa, née Siedlecka – recalled that Grandfather in the January Uprising served as a courier liaison. In the 1920s, the Senator's parents lived in Brwinów near Warsaw. Their graves are located in the local cemetery. The application for the award of the Order of Polonia Restituta for Stanisław Siedlecki, born on November 19, 1844 for participation in the organization of the 1863 uprising and exile to the Kostroma province probably concerns the senator's father. Cf.: Military Historical Office in Warsaw, Collection of Personnel and Decoration Files (hereinafter: WBH KAPiO), File reference number OOP 27-317 (Stanisław Siedlecki), sheet 1.

who was murdered by Ukrainian peasants in 1863 near Sołowiówka (Jarnecki, 2004; Dutka, 2012)⁸. The remaining members of the Przedpeński family, including Józefa, were relocated deep into Russia after the fall of the uprising. As Ludwik Siedlecki, Stanisław's brother recalled:

“They both came from Ukraine – father from Lipowiecki, mother from Zwinogradzki powiat in the Kiev region. Deported in almost boyhood years (Father was 19, Mother 18) to the far north, having heroically survived all the miseries of political prisoners chased to Siberia and yearning with all their pure and noble souls to their distant motherland” (Siedlecki Grzymała, 1938).

Stanisław's parents got married in exile. Siedlecki spent his early childhood in the province of Volodymyr and Samara. Near Samara, his father was appointed manager of the estate of Prince Lev Golitsyn. As he recalled that time, “I had the opportunity to come into contact with the peoples conquered by Russia: Tatars, Bashkirs, Kyrgyz, Chuvash, Mordwin and Ukrainians, forced deportees from Ukraine in the 18th century” (Siedlecki, 1937). It was then that Siedlecki's national interests began to arise. Understanding the independence aspirations of the peoples of the East, identical to the fate of Poles, aroused sympathy and a sense of solidarity. This experience will leave a permanent mark on Stanisław's life and will later turn into a passion that made Siedlecki one of the most outstanding representatives of the Promethean movement.

The Siedlecki family came to Ukraine in 1888. They lived between Złotopol (Hulajpol) and Nowomirgorod in a leased farm, which was later called “futorek”⁹. Six siblings were brought up in the modest Siedlecki manor. Stanisław, his older brother Godfryd (Bednarek,

⁸ The event took place on May 10, 1863, when the local population, probably incited by tsarist officials, attacked a group of noble youth led by Antoni Jurewicz. The insurgents intended to announce to Ukrainian peasants the provisions of the decree on expropriation, known as the Golden Hramota. According to various sources, from 12 to 15 insurgents were murdered. The death of Godfryd Przedpeński was part of the collective image of Polish martyrs who lay down their lives “for our freedom and yours.” These tragic events were described in the then Polish-language press. Cf: *Korespondencja Czasu*, “Czas”, No. 126, Krakow, June 6, 1863, p. 1.

⁹ Złotopol (until 1787 Hulajpol), currently a district of the Ukrainian city of Novomyrhorod, located north of the city center, on the right bank of the Great Wysia river. The town was described in the Geographical Dictionary published at the end of the 19th century: *Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich*, edited by B. Chlebowski, J. Krzywicki, F. Sulimierski, Volume XIV, Warsaw 1895, p. 642-642; Cf.: http://dir.icm.edu.pl/pl/Sloownik_geograficzny/. We can also find here an explanation of the term ‘futor’: “Futor or chutor, in Ukraine and Podolia this is the name of a small farm, usually established in a secluded place, far from the village. The founders of futors were usually in previous centuries, well-deserved soldiers, both from noble banners and from the chosen or foreign infantry, to whom the hetman gave a piece of steppe land as a reward for merit. While settling here, they did not abandon their military duties and, on occasion, usually stood under banners, W. Pol in *Mohotr* (Wincenty Pol, *Mohotr. Rapsod rycerski z podania* – authors' note) presented the type of such a knight-farmer”. The Siedlecki farm was about 150 ha. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 425.

2008)¹⁰ and younger Ludwik (Uziębło, 1958)¹¹ were accompanied by three sisters: Wanda, Józefa and Jadwiga (Przybysz, 2013)¹². Stanisław's mother had the greatest influence on his worldview. He recalled her as “an ardent patriot who puts the struggle for Polish independence above all else”. His brother Ludwik left an emotionally charged account of his parents: “They poured into our children's hearts all the flame of love and dedication, all the impulse to heroically fight the invader, all enthusiasm and reverence for fortitude and truth, all contempt for lies and cowardice, all these feelings were direct and knew no compromises” (Siedlecki Grzymała, 1938).

The seniors of the family also played an undivided role in raising children. Grandfather Przedpełski popularized among his grandchildren the traditions of the great French revolution, and uncle Walery Przedpełski, a “writer, philosopher and realist” – then common in Polish society, ideas of organic work. It should be mentioned that the favorite novelist of Stanisław Siedlecki was Teodor Tomasz Jeż: “With him I learned to respect and honor all nations fighting for independence” (Siedlecki Grzymała, 1938)¹³.

He started his political activity in a junior high school in Złotów. Facing Russification, he organized a secret Polish student library at school and initiated Polish language courses. In 1894, together with his brother Ludwik, he found himself in a group of 15 students expelled from the junior high school without the possibility of continuing education due to the dissemination of forbidden Polish poetry among his peers. Stanisław was recognized as “the organizer of a self-education and patriotic circle and for Polish-revolutionary activity”

¹⁰ Gotfryd Siedlecki, born on in 1871 in Romancewo, a naturalist, graduated from the Agricultural Academy in Puławy. He and his family moved to Biała Cerkiew. Gottfried's son and Stanisław Siedlecki's nephew was Jerzy Siedlecki (1907-1996), a member of the Communist Party of Western Ukraine, a colonel in the Ministry of Public Security, the ambassador of the Polish People's Republic in Pyongyang.

¹¹ Ludwik Siedlecki (Sidlečkyj), pseud. Grzymalita, Sawa Kryłacz (1878-1943). Activist of the Ukrainian socialist and conservative movement. PSB, Vol. XXXVI, Warsaw 1995, pp. 549-550. Ludwik Siedlecki was recalled by Adam Uziębło: “So Poles are setting out to Ukraine. There are also those who will accept Ukrainian nationality. Among others, Ludwik Siedlecki set off from Lviv. He will soon become famous as Sawa Kryłacz. A really beautiful figure. In love with Ukraine as the land that fed him, he sets out, as he used to say, to Zaporizhia to serve it. He spent hours talking with Jodka. He used to come to him - big, black, in Cossack pants, in an embroidered shirt. In the Kiev region, he met those who were walking there under the influence of Piłsudski. They created an independence organization. People realized the program.

¹² Wanda Siedlecka – medical doctor. A graduate of the Medical Academy in Zurich. She married Mikołaj Stroński. Józefa Siedlecka – a teacher. For two years she studied nature at the University of Lviv. Jadwiga Siedlecka - married to Marian Wieleżyński.

¹³ More information on this subject was provided by Ludwik Siedlecki: “Raised in the traditions of the heroic fights of the Polish Uprisings, on the novels of Maurycy Jokay and T.T. Jeż, describing the equally heroic and victorious struggle for the independence of the Balkan and Hungarian nations, we understood that such a fight was not” a wild goose chase” or “a pernicious utopia” as the elders we met at our parents' home sometimes claimed, who, terrified of the recent defeat of 1863, preached organic work and eagerly warned us against “dangerous fantasies that lose the flower of the nation and are a crime against the Motherland”. We knew – it was rather full of healthy instinct that we felt that they were saying it “out of fear” and that they were wrong, because we knew the history of Marathon, Thermopylae, Ordon Reduta, Bem, Haji Dumitra, Skanderberg, Miłosz Obrenowicz, Garibaldi ... so we loved those heroes and we were preparing for such a fight”.

he was placed under police supervision. He passed his final exams and Matura exams in extramural studies in Bila Tserkva (Siedlecki, 1937; Siedlecki Grzymała, 1938)¹⁴.

At that time, the first copies of *Robotnik* and socialist brochures arrived at the Siedlecki home. Futorek has become the “center of the radical-patriotic youth movement”. As he recalled: “Orienting from 1898 clearly in the spirit of the Polish Socialist Party program, I easily fought against national-democratic or conciliatory tendencies, appearing from time to time in youth clubs on futorek” (Grzymała Siedlecki, 1938)¹⁵. However, as Stanisław Siedlecki emphasized, “parents made sure that (futorek – the authors' note) remained the mainstay of Polishness” (Siedlecki, 1933)¹⁶. These words are confirmed in the memories of friends of the Siedlecki family. Marian Wieleżyński talked about the home of his in-laws as “a wonderful corner of the world, where he was welcomed like a son, where he realized that the most powerful source of creative power in the world was that spirit of family and human love, which he did not meet in his early youth” (Wieleżyński, 1985).

3. STUDIES, AT THE EDITORIAL OFFICE OF *PROMIEŃ* AND THE BEGINNINGS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY

The end of the 19th century turned out to be a breakthrough in the biography of Stanisław Siedlecki. As was the case in many Polish homes, the decision to continue education abroad by young people was a derivative of the policy of the Russian authorities. And in this case, the tsarist repressions prevented Siedlecki from being admitted as a student at the universities in Dorpat, then in Kazan. With the consent of his parents, Stanisław chose Lviv, which enjoyed cultural and political freedom.

In 1897, he began studies at the Faculty of Chemistry at the Lviv Polytechnic. As an activist of the socialist academic association “Zjednoczenie” and “Bratnia Pomoc” for students, he became closer to the group of independence and socialist youth (Siedlecki, 1937)¹⁷. At that time, in Poland, mass political and social movements were activated, around which Polish youth organizations were formed. In 1898, Siedlecki joined the secret foreign section of the Polish Socialist Party (hereinafter: PPS) of the Russian partition, introduced to the organization by Bolesław Miklaszewski¹⁸. It was then that he took the pseudonym of Eustachy. Soon, with a group of his closest associates, he founded the journal “Promień” (Nowicki, 1936; Siedlecki, 1933; Weinfeld, 1938; Zaczyński, 1984)¹⁹, which became an

¹⁴ WBH KAPiO, ref. No. June 15, 1932, KN (Stanisław Siedlecki), sheet 9.

¹⁵ These words are confirmed in the memoirs of Ludwik Siedlecki: “The information of our parents was no longer sufficient for us. They looked at national matters through the prism of tradition, when the “nation” was still the “noble nation”, while the people were only an addition to this nation and an addition without any political significance. We saw clearly that that epoch was gone forever and that the people begin to stand out as a national factor”.

¹⁶ As Siedlecki recalled years later: “A worker who has been leaving without a break for several years has been close to our hearts for his boldness, for the direct approach to working-class life”.

¹⁷ As he recalled years later: “Feliks Perl, Kazimierz Mokłowski, Dr. Kazimierz Górczycki, Stanisław Kachnikiewicz, Wacław Studnicki, Andrzej Galica, Adolf Macierza – this was the environment in which I lived and shaped my social worldview”.

¹⁸ Bolesław Grzegorz Miklaszewski (1871–1941) chemist, activist of the Foreign Union of Polish Socialists, organizer and rector of the Warsaw School of Economics, minister of education, senator. PSB, Vol. XXI. Wrocław 1976, p. 58-61.

¹⁹ As Siedlecki recalled: “The idea of establishing an independence magazine for young people arose during the evenings of the literary club, which was established in November 1898 at the Brotherly

important tool for the Galician socialists to influence the young generation of “rebellious” (Siedlecki, 1937)²⁰. Intellectuals gathered around the periodical, referred to as ‘Promieniści’, contributed to the future elite of the Polish independence left.

In 1900, Siedlecki meets Józef Piłsudski personally. The meeting took place during a secret visit of young PPS activists and supporters of the independence movement in Brzuchowice, not far from Lviv. The meeting with Piłsudski was organized by his companion from the period of exile, Bronisław Szwarce²¹. Siedlecki, a young PPS activist at the time, was greatly impressed by the personality of the Marshal: “As for us – as he wrote – we, young people, did not know how to approach him, although he would certainly talk to each of us as easily and cordially as when he lived already with his family in Brzuchowice and when we played chess on his simple Spartan bed” (Siedlecki, 1933).

Apart from their journalistic activity, the ‘radiant’ youth initiated anti-Russian protests. The pretext was the consecutive anniversaries of the January Uprising. In 1902, one of such demonstrations was also led by Stanisław Siedlecki (Weinfeld, 1938). As he recalled years later: “If it were not for *Promień* and its many years of work, I do not know if Józef Piłsudski would have been able to find several thousand young people in Galicia in 1910–1914 for his rifle units” (Siedlecki, 1933.04).

The Lviv period also changed the personal life of the future senator. In 1903, he gained in his wife, Felicja née Iwanowska, “a companion and support in the work for independence”. Felicja Siedlecka practically did not leave her husband, combining the role of a home carer with the hardships of working in the underground. Often, thanks to her vigilance and devotion, the printing house was saved “from being turned in” and her husband did not share the fate of many of his companions imprisoned and sent to Siberia (Siedlecki, 1933.04; Siedlecki, 1937; Siedlecki, 1938; Wołyniak, 1994)²².

Help of the Lviv Polytechnic. The title of the magazine was proposed by Feliks Perl”. Among the founders were also Wacław Wolski, Aleksander Wielzyński, Ludwik Siedlecki, A. Galica and Leon Weinfeld.

²⁰ “My parents, who were always a little wry about socialism, welcomed *Promień*, although definitely socialist, with kind hearts, read, supported and distributed”.

²¹ Bronisław Antoni Szwarce (1834–1904) – engineer and independence activist, member of the Central National Committee (1862), prisoner, among others of the Warsaw Citadel and Szlisselburg, an exile, member of the Polish League, journalist, translator of Russian literature. PSB, Vol. XLIX, Warsaw 2013, pp. 443–446.

²² Felicja Maria née Iwanowska Siedlecka pseud. Irena, daughter of Ernest and Leopoldyna Kamińska, born on November 21, 1882 in Konstanyńów in the Kiev province, died in 1944 in Bombay. On May 21, 1903, she married Stanisław Siedlecki in the parish of St. Mary Magdalene in Lviv. The Siedlecki family had two daughters: Maria (in 1939 she married Lieutenant Zdzisław Dąbski) and Irena (Wołyniak). The eldest son died in childhood in 1905. Felicja Iwanowska met her future husband at the home of her in-laws called “Futerek”, where she stayed with her sister Jadwiga in a boarding house. Aunt Emeryka Grodzicka (a friend of Eliza Orzeszkowa) placed her in the Siedlecki house. She attended the girls' junior high school in Złotopol. She belonged to the “Promieniści” organization affiliated with the socialist youth magazine *Promień*. In 1905, she joined the PPS, then the PPS-Revolutionary Fraction. In the years 1905-1908 in Warsaw she conducted underground activities in publishing technology. Together with her husband, she worked in secret PPS printing houses. In 1908, she hid Józef Piłsudski in the apartment at Piękna Street. During the meeting with Piłsudski, she was offered to join the PPS Combat Organization. In the years 1913-1914, while in Boryslaw, she helped members of the ZWC and PPS activists. In the years 1915-1917 she worked at the Legionnaires' Inn in Vienna functioning at the NKN. There,

In 1900, Siedlecki interrupted his studies and started apprenticeships in the Uładówka sugar factories in Podolia, the Żuczka-Czerniowce in Bukovina and farms²³. The experience of the living and working conditions of workers strengthened his political views. As he recalled: “it was really only after I went to the factory and tried the 18-hour working day (after changing the 12-hour night shift to the day shift at the sugar factory) that I understood what exploitation was and I felt not only an independentist, but also a socialist” (Siedlecki, 1937).

In the summer of 1904, he initiated political activities “to stimulate the independence movement in Ukraine among Ukrainians”. The Siedlecki family then lived in Władysławka near Kaniów, where they prepared the texts of the appeals, which were then printed on hectographs and were handed over to the local population²⁴. Devotion to the cause of the nations enslaved by Russia, especially the Ukrainians, grew in Siedlecki's mind already in his childhood. As his brother Ludwik reported: “After a long reflection, we came to the conclusion that the people living in the country that my parents called the Homeland are not primarily Polish, because they do not understand the Polish language, nor are they Russian (...). The people themselves called themselves „Christians” or simply „people” (...). Local Russians (...) claimed that it is a Russian nation. All this did not put us off. We knew that it was so often the case that the conquered nations, if they lose their knightly class, often lose their national and state traditions, and even their national name (...). We finally established that the people were Ukrainians, but we saw with sadness that they themselves did not know about it and the question seemed to be of no interest to them. But that didn't put us off. We started to work out this question” (Grzymała Siedlecki; 1938).

she dealt with material support for soldiers, organization of cultural activities, and helped families find prisoners (information section). In 1918, in Kalusz, together with her husband, she hid from the Ukrainians a POW member named Orzechowski, who was sentenced to death (perhaps it was Second Lieutenant Marian Witalis Orzechowski aka Marian Burkacki). In 1932, she was awarded the Independence Cross. In September 1939, after leaving Warsaw, suffering from illness (typhus), she left with her family for Wołyń. She stayed in Łuck, under the care of her family. On the news of her husband's tragic death and after the end of the fighting, she managed to get to Włodzimierz to obtain the consent of the repatriation commission to return to the General Government. On June 28, 1940, she and her daughters were arrested by the NKWD and deported to a labor camp in Siberia (the village of Asino near Tomsk in the Novosibirsk region). Under the amnesty in 1941, she got to Uzbekistan. She was there in the cities of Fergana, Tashkent and Shahrizabz, where the 6th Infantry Division of General Anders' Army was formed. Due to poor health, she was placed in a Polish field hospital. Her daughters served in the Women's Auxiliary Service. In August 1942, the Siedlecki family was evacuated from Krasnowoek across the Caspian Sea to Pahlevi in Iran. Felicja and her daughter Irena stayed in the hospital and then in a refugee camp in Tehran. At the invitation of Countess Ewa Dzieduszycka and her daughter Aniela, Felicja and her daughters came to India. She died of cancer at the Red Cross Hospital in Bombay. In 1950, her daughters emigrated to Australia.

Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, Group No. 301 - Record books of the Roman Catholic denomination from the Archdiocese of Lviv from 1604–1945, Parish of St. Mary Magdalene in Lviv, Liber Copulatorum 55/1903, pp. 118-119; Application for the award of Felicja Siedlecka (biography). WBH KAPiO, ref. No. June 15, 1932, KN (Felicja Siedlecka née Iwanowscy), sheet 8.

²³ WBH KAPiO, ref. No. June 15, 1932, KN (Stanisław Siedlecki), sheet 9.

²⁴ WBH KAPiO, ref. No. June 15, 1932, KN (Stanisław Siedlecki), sheet 9.

In December 1904, Siedlecki resumed his studies at the Lviv Polytechnic, so that “after doing the practical course of producing nitroglycerine and mercury fulminate, he put himself at the disposal of the party for secret work in the Kingdom”. For this purpose, he contacted Bolesław Czarkowski, who was staying in Lviv at the time²⁵. By the decision of the Central Committee of the PPS, Eustachy was sent to the Russian partition as a technical employee of a combat organization (Nowicki, 1936; Pająk, 1985).

4. CONSPIRACY AND SECRET PRINTING HOUSES OF THE PPS

Shortly before the outbreak of the revolution, in the spring of 1905, the Siedlecki family moved to Warsaw. On the spot, it was decided to assign a different task to the newly arrived comrades from Galicia. As Siedlecki wrote: “Contrary to my demand, we were devoted not to combat technology, but to party technology, i.e. to secret printing. Our fate was then decided by three people: Walery Sławek²⁶, Bolesław Czarkowski and Ludwik Wernyhora (Siedlecki, 1938; Wasilewski 1933)²⁷ (*Kapral*)”²⁸.

Under the watchful eye of PPS activist Mateusz Józef Uziembło, Eustachy learned the secrets of the art of printing in an underground party printing house. He began his first work, in the publishing technology field designated by the party, in 1905 in a secret printing house run by Uziembło at 4 Komitetowa Street. As Adam Uziembło recalled: “In less than a year, three people made 1,300,000 prints on a press! The following persons worked in the printing house: Józef Uziembło, Stanisław Siedlecki and Felicja née Iwanowska Siedlecka. After receiving the millionth copy, the printing house sent a report with attachments to Hr. Witte, the Russian prime minister for St. Petersburg. As a confirmation of his words that it is impossible to fight the secret press, because it mobilizes unexpected forces” (Uziembło 1936; Uziembło 1958).

In the years 1905–1908, the secret printing houses of the PPS Revolutionary Fraction were located in the apartments of the Siedlecki family, one by one at 37 Złota Street (Burkot, 1933), 59 Nowy Świat and 64 Piękna Street. At that time, Siedlecki was the manager of a small printing house that copied PPS's appeals, then a typesetter that carried out orders for the main PPS printing house, located at 18 Foksal Street. After the split in the PPS, he joined the printing house at Piękna Street to the PPS Revolutionary Fraction. His activity for the workers' movement was appreciated in 1907, when, as a delegate representing publishing technology, he took part in the 10th PPS Congress in Vienna (Ładyka, 1972).

²⁵ Bolesław Czarkowski (1873 – around 1937), a socialist and independence activist, belonged to the PPS leadership, then to the PPS Revolutionary Fraction, one of Józef Piłsudski's closest associates, member of the Provisional Council of State, head of the Ministry of Justice – he reformed the prison system, supporter of the Sanation, president of the Association of former PPS political prisoners of the Revolutionary Fraction. *Słownik Biograficzny Działaczy Polskiego Ruchu Robotniczego*, Vol. I, Warsaw 1985, p. 465–466.

²⁶ Sławek Walery Jan (1879–1939), socialist and political activist, colonel of the Polish Army, parliamentarian, prime minister. PSB, Vol. XXXVIII, Warsaw 1998, p. 586–595.

²⁷ Ludwik Wernyhora (1867–1919), ps. Kapral, Zieliński, socialist activist, party printer, arrested in 1894, exiled to Siberia, from 1901 in exile in Great Britain, worked in the PPS printing house in London (Lingwood – name of the house where the typesetting room and printing house were located), then he returned to Poland, where, until August 1906, he was the head of the printing technique of the Polish Socialist Party. WBH KAPiO, ref. No. 19/12/1930, KN (Ludwik Wernyhora). *Listy Józefa Piłsudskiego*, Ibid., Vol. XV, Warsaw 1937, p. 117–118;

²⁸ Quoted after: WBH KAPiO, ref. No. June 15, 1932, KN (Stanisław Siedlecki), sheet 9.

While preparing subsequent issues of *Robotnik*, a number of other titles and brochures, he met Leon Wasilewski, responsible for the publishing policy, and Aleksander Sulkiewicz, the technical manager. The Siedlecki family also hosted Józef Piłsudski for a few days in the apartment at Piękna Street (Siedlecki, 1938)²⁹. In 1908, while spending their vacation in Ukraine, the Siedleccy learned about the discovery of “buda”³⁰. After the tsarist security discovered the printing house at 18 Foksal Street, Siedlecki took over, in place of Sulkiewicz, the management of the publishing activity of the PPS (Ładyka, 1972). The new seat of the printing house and typesetting room was initially located near Wawer, in the working class settlement of Kaczy Dół (later Wiśniowa Góra near Miłosna) (Filipowicz, 1938)³¹. After it was exposed in 1909, Siedlecki undertook to edit *Robotnik*, which was folded and printed in Kiev at Dmytrowska Street, and then distributed to the territory of the Russian partition (Siedlecki, 1920; Siedlecki, 1922)³². As he recalled: “It was in November 1909. The PPS printing house was located in Kiev at that time, and I was the manager of technology of the party, which in practice meant that, having collected the manuscripts for the issue, I went to Kiev, where, together with my comrades Wiktor and Jadwiga, we prepared the issue, we printed it, and then with Wiktor we put it into our suitcases and left” (Kunicka, 1923; Siedlecki, 1920). The termination of the printing house is associated with a conflict within the party. The printing house was finally closed in December 1910 by the decision of the Central Workers' Committee of the PPS.

Siedlecki's party work was not limited to managing a secret printing house. He also coordinated the operation of securing the money obtained during the action of the Combat Organization of the PPS Revolutionary Fraction for the postal van near Turek in 1911 (Krzesławski, 1935)³³. In his memoirs, Jan Krzesławski draws a picture of Siedlecki as a deeply secretive representative of the PPS leadership: “Comrade Eustachy was the most conspiratorial of all comrades that I have ever met, and the conspiracy, about which we

²⁹ Piłsudski came to Warsaw in February 1908 for a combat conference. Before that, for three days he stayed with the Siedlecki family at Piękna Street.

³⁰ “Buda” was the seat of a secret printing house in the PPS underground dictionary.

³¹ The Kaczy Dół colony (currently Międzyzlesie - Wiśniowa Góra) was inhabited by workers from the metal products factory “Wawer”. As Tytus Filipowicz recalled at that time: “The farmhouse, housing the machine and typesetting room, was occupied by the typesetter Wiktor Jasiński, registered under a false name together with his passport wife Jadwiga. The whole house was served by maid Wikcia, the perfect type of servant, devoted to her work, full of appreciation for the printing work, which she watched eagerly around the house and listened to the machine's noise as Eustachy printed *Robotnik* or the appeals at night. Two dromedaries took ready-made copies: grandma Golińska and her assistant Hanka (later wife of Kazimierz Dobrowolski). And the most problematic was delivering blank paper and carrying fonts for replacement, in which for some time at the end of 1908 Eustachy was assisted by T. Długoszewski, who was practicing in the printing house.” The reason for closing the printing house in Wiśniowa Góra was a break-in into the working rooms, and thus the disclosure of party activity. WBH KAPiO, ref. No. June 15, 1932, KN (Stanisław Siedlecki), sheet 9.

³² The secret printing house managed by Siedlecki was used by: Wiktor Jasiński (“Wiktor”), Jadwiga Zaborowska (“Jadwiga”), Wiktoria Zygmunt (“Wikcia”), Zofia Kunicka and Bolesław Zahorski (“Zygmunt Ból”). Stanisław's wife, Felicja, was then with relatives in Biała Cerkiew.

³³ As Jan Krzesławski recalled: “(...) thanks to Eustachy's orders, the successfully started work was completed. The money reached Krakow, where, as we know, the issue of its division deepened the conflict between the Central Committee of the Republic of Poland and the Combat Department, a conflict that, after a year and a half, would lead to a split and the formation of a new party.

often told each other cheerful anecdotes, was explained not only by the properties of his character, but responsible work that lay on his shoulders (party printing house). In the party spheres that I encountered in Warsaw, it was heard more than once that there was a comrade called Eustachy, but no one had ever seen him. The more skeptical people said he might not exist, but PPS executives deliberately said it was to prove that there were more of them. Eustachy became therefore legendary, like General Maj from a famous novel" (Krzyszewski, 1928).

5. IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PPS

In 1909, Siedlecki became a member of the Central Workers' Committee of the PPS (hereinafter: CKR PPS), then he represented the party leadership at the 11th Congress of the PPS Revolutionary Fraction in Vienna. In 1910, he headed the Organizational Department of the PPS, which together with the Combat Department created the left-wing and independence fraction of the PPS (Ładyka, 1972; Siedlecki 1922)³⁴.

At that time, there was a sharp dispute within the party over Piłsudski's new concept, the aim of which was to focus the PPS's organizational work on military preparation and expansion of the Active Combat Union. Siedlecki, in contrast to the right-wing party (CKR and the Foreign Department of the PPS), did not support Piłsudski's military plans (Ładyka, 1972; Krzyszewski, 1935)³⁵.

The conflict within the party escalated during the Fourth Party Council in January 1911 in Kraków, in which Siedlecki was a participant. The victory of the 'militarists' led to his resignation from the PPS leadership. In the content of the confidential circular of the 'opposition', to which he was a signatory, it was argued that the party was „deviating from the socialist path, and the leaders who set the tone became more and more indifferent to the obligations imposed on them by the socialist character.” Pursuant to the resolution of the 5th Party Council of June 1911, Siedlecki was among the members excluded from the organization for a year (Ładyka, 1972; Siedlecki 1922)³⁶. “From 1911 to 1914 – as he wrote – as an opponent of the transfer of revolutionary labor from the country to abroad (from the Russian partition to Galicia), I belonged to the so-called Opposition that was liquidated only

³⁴ Siedlecki was present at the opening of the Congress. Upon hearing of the disclosure of a printing press in Kiev, he was forced to interrupt his stay in Vienna. The CKR PPS also included: Tomasz Arciszewski, Tytus Filipowicz, Józef Froelich and A. Sulkiewicz.

³⁵ The right-wing of the PPS was accused of: “one-sidedness of combat-military training, neglecting socialist work and the current needs of combat operations”. The secession of the leftists was also deepened by the conflict over the distribution of funds (including from the operation in Turek) obtained for combat and military activity.

³⁶ As Siedlecki described that time: “We, the few natives, defended the remnants of our nationality against the policy of emigrants and the old. And here were two groups in the P.P.S. Party Council, in which, apart from program differences (searched for ad hoc very carefully), the struggle to concentrate work in the country or behind the cordon was frenzied. It was clear that the natives must succumb if they did not want to create a new party, because the entire political situation and the increasingly widespread reaction were against them, and their intellectual superiority was behind the emigrants ... and also the quiet walls of Krakow and Zakopane, shrouded in snow, hugging at the foot of the Tatra Mountains. The struggle between the young and the old had been going on since the summer of 1910. However, the decisive fight took place at the end of 1911. It lasted at the Party Council for about two weeks and (...) it was clear that the emigrants had an overwhelming majority against us”.

with the outbreak of the world war". Siedlecki's activity in the authorities of the new formation was small. His name was not included in the leadership of the PPS Opposition. From the current activities of the organization, it is worth noting the commitment he showed for the party's intellectual group of the Opposition in Warsaw (Wasilewski, 1925; Zaremba, 1983)³⁷.

Siedlecki explained the distancing from party work in the years 1912–1914 by dedicating himself to work in the oil and gas industry. Material considerations were not without significance here. They prompted him to take up employment in Borysław in a mining enterprise³⁸ founded by Marian Wieleżyński (Wieleżyński, 1985; Tołwiński, 1937)³⁹ – Jadwiga Siedlecka's husband. He came there with Tomasz Arciszewski⁴⁰. It should be mentioned that from 1909 there was a training center for the military personnel of the Active Combat Union (further ZWC) in Borysław, and membership of the PPS Opposition did not formally restrict activity in the structures of military rifle unions (Ładyka, 1972). Although no information has survived that would link Siedlecki with cooperation with the ZWC, however, in view of the support that Felicja Siedlecka provided to the members of the Riflemen's Association in Borysław, her husband's active role is clearly evident⁴¹. After two years of working in the oil industry, the group of friends T. Arciszewski and Aleksander Wieleżyński, made a decision to join the Legions⁴².

6. LEGIONNAIRE, COMMISSIONER AND EMISSARY

On August 4, 1914, Siedlecki contacted Walery Sławek in Kraków and the next day he officially joined the rifle army to join the ranks of the 1st Infantry Regiment of the 1st Brigade of the Polish Legions. He used the skills acquired in the underground in his agitation work. He collaborated in this field with Leon Wasilewski, to whom the Commander assigned the task of organizing a printing house next to shooting units.

³⁷ In the Warsaw structures of the Opposition PPS, he collaborated with Jan Libkind, Kazimierz Gromadzki, W. Straszewski, Mieczysław Baumgart and Jan Maurycy Borski.

³⁸ Zakład Gazu Ziemnego Inż. Marian Wieleżyński Sp. z o.o. in Hubicze (near Borysław). *Wspólna praca wspólny plan 1912-1937. W dwudziestopięciolecie SA Gazolina 1912-1937*, Lviv 1937, p. 9.

³⁹ Marian Wieleżyński (1879–1945) Piłsudski follower, chemical engineer, founder of the Polish gas industry, precursor of shareholding. He was friends with the Siedlecki brothers. The plant in Borysław he created at that time built the first gasoline factory in Europe. In 1920, the factory was transformed into a joint-stock company "Gazolina".

⁴⁰ Tomasz Arciszewski (1877–1955) – a socialist activist, politician of the Polish Socialist Party, a longtime member of the Polish Parliament. During World War II, he headed the underground Polish Socialist Party - Freedom Equality Independence (PPS-WRN), member of the Council for National Unity, Prime Minister of the Polish Government in Exile. *Słownik biograficzny działaczy polskiego ruchu robotniczego*, Vol. 1, Warsaw 1978, p. 75–77.

⁴¹ WBH KAPiO, ref. No. June 15, 1932, KN (Felicja Siedlecka née Iwanowska), sheet 8.

⁴² Stanisław Siedlecki, along with Tomasz Arciszewski and Aleksander Wieleżyński were included among the first employees of Zakład Gazu Ziemnego. Inż. Marian Wieleżyński Sp. z o.o. They probably contributed to the transfer of a donation in the amount of 2 thousand crowns for the 1st Brigade of the Polish Legions. Confirmation of receipt of the amount and acknowledgment signed by Józef Piłsudski on behalf of the Headquarters of the 1st Brigade of the Polish Legions. Field mail 118, on May 24, 1916, No.P.464. A copy of the document included in the guest book. Cf.: *Wspólna praca...*, p. 5.

Siedlecki was to be a typesetter in the printing house (Pelczarski, 1939; Wasilewski, 1935)⁴³. He was also assigned a special task. On behalf of Józef Piłsudski, he supervised the execution of the seal for the Commander-in-Chief and the National Government (Pobóg-Malinowski, 1990; Wasilewski, 1935)⁴⁴. On August 7, assigned to the department of T. Arciszewski, he left for Miechów. After a few days in Miechów, from August 14, he started cooperation with the Commissioner of the Polish Army in Jędrzejów, Emil Bobrowski (Pelczarski, 1939)⁴⁵. Siedlecki was responsible for ensuring food supplies for the army.

Worth emphasizing in his biography is the initiative of support he gave to Władysław Belina-Prażmowski⁴⁶, contributing to the increase of the number of the famous ‘Belina Seven’ and to transform the platoon into a squadron of lancers of the Polish Legions. Formed in Ostrowiec from a volatile reconnaissance group, a unit of 14 horsemen joined the Belina group in Kielce on August 21, 1914 (Hubiak, 2003; Majchrowski, 2014)⁴⁷.

On August 23, Siedlecki, at the request of Józef Piłsudski, was assigned to the office of the Polish Army Commissioner in Kielce, Michał Sokolnicki⁴⁸. In Kielce, he was the head

⁴³ In the memoirs of Leon Wasilewski, we read: “When we got to Miechów, it turned out that our printing house was completely redundant in view of the existence of printing houses in all poviats of the Kingdom, where it was possible to easily print the proclamations, which we also took full advantage of organizing agitation”.

⁴⁴ The source message related to the history of the seal's creation is not coherent: “The appeal was written and approved by the Commander, and then printed conspiratorially in the People's Printing House on specially selected paper. The stamp was made overnight by comrade Stanisław Siedlecki (“Eustachy”) – the future senator of the Republic of Poland, who indeed, using an ordinary pocket knife, carved a neat eagle with an appropriate inscription in a soft stone. This is how Siedlecki relates these events: “On August 4, 1914, I found myself at the disposal of W. Sławek in Krakow. Here I was instructed, in the highest secrecy, to order 2 stamps with the words: 1) “Chief Commander” and 2) “National Government”. I went to see Maciejewski (at one time he belonged to the employees of the secret printing house at Foksal Street), who made these stamps. I gave them either to A. Sulkiwicz or W. Sławek”. WBH KAPiO, ref. No. June 15, 1932, KN (Stanisław Siedlecki), sheet 9.

⁴⁵ Emil Zygmunt Wiktor Bobrowski (1876-1938), colonel physician of the Polish Army, socialist activist: Polish Social Democratic Party, then Polish Socialist Party; Commissioner of the Polish National Organization, member of the Supreme National Committee and the Polish Liquidation Commission; from 1930, an activist of the Independent Block of Cooperation with the Government, senator. *Słownik biograficzny oficerów Legionów Polskich*. Warsaw 1992, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁶ Prażmowski (Belina-Prażmowski) Władysław Zygmunt (1888–1938), founder and commander of the legionary cavalry, colonel of the Polish Army, president of Krakow, voivode of Lviv. PSB, vol. XXVIII, Warsaw 1985, pp. 393-395.

⁴⁷ As Siedlecki recalled: “From the stables I chose 14 horses suitable for the saddle (...). After selecting 14 volunteers, I sent them to Kielce, to Belina. Back then, when all of Belina's cavalry consisted of a dozen or so men, it was a big thing. (...) On August 21 (the day of the solar eclipse) I followed the unit on horseback (...). The next day I went to the cavalry barracks where Belina was doing a survey of “my cavalry”. After the inspection – he took the horses, and he sent almost all the people away, rightly claiming that he had a lot of real cavalrymen, only horses were missing.” WBH KAPiO, ref. No. June 15, 1932, KN (Stanisław Siedlecki), sheet 10.

⁴⁸ Sokolnicki Michał Hubert (1880–1967), independence activist, diplomat, historian, close associate of Józef Piłsudski. PSB, Vol. XL, Warsaw 2001, p. 80-87.

of the city commissariat until the end of August (Pelczarski, 1939; Sokolnicki, 1961)⁴⁹. Siedlecki, having extensive experience in the profession of typesetter, played an important – not previously recorded in literature – role in recreating the symbolism of the Polish national emblem. In addition to placing the image of the eagle on the seal of the National Government, he prepared a die in Kielce for striking shooting eagles. As he recalled: “At that time, I ordered a die for the second edition of the shooting eagle from the local Kielce foremen (it was in agreement with J. Moraczewski, the commanding officer of the shooting forces)”⁵⁰.

From August 30 – on the nomination of Sokolnicki – for several days he was the temporary Polish Army Commissar of the National Government in the Ostrow Basin – in Starachowice and Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski (Pelczarski, 1939)⁵¹. Earlier, he commanded a seven-man reconnaissance unit of riflemen that reached Ostrowiec. The city was located near the frontline and Commissioner “Grzymała” was to come across “a particularly unfavorable atmosphere”. He outlines it in his report to Sokolnicki: “On September 1, I stopped in Ostrowiec and as far as I know, the mood among the workers is not as good as it was first assumed. The search for weapons was unsuccessful and the volunteers were reluctant. In the municipality of Ostrowiec, there are great debates on what to do and how to respond to change”. The quoted document contains information about the approval by Stanisław Siedlecki – the first death sentence issued on behalf of the Polish authorities, i.e. by Michał Sokolnicki (Pelczarski, 1939; Sokolnicki, 1961; Urbankowski, 1997)⁵². The authority of the commissioner was to be weakened by rumors about the approaching Russian troops and the involvement of the Austrian authorities in this matter. As reported by Siedlecki: “After two days of quite turbulent office as a commissioner, I had to withdraw

⁴⁹ As Sokolnicki mentioned: “On August 23, he (J. Piłsudski) from Jędrzejów sent me to help *Osarz* – Leon Wasilewski, Michał – Aleksander Sulkiewicz, *Eustachy* – Stanisław Siedlecki, Iza Moszczeńska, Haecker (editor of *Naprzodu*) to work among Jews and known to me participant of the Combat Organization, Aleksandra Szczerbińska”.

⁵⁰ In 1914, the rifle troops adopted the eagle as the emblem of the soldiers of the Kingdom of Poland. General Czesław Jarnuszkiewicz is considered the author of the design of the shooting eagle. The shooting eagle was smaller in size, adapted to the *maciejówka* [a type of cap] and without the crown, which was to take place during the preparation of the pattern, emphasizing the democratic, civic and republican ideas that followed the shooting community. It is worth noting that the legionary units derived from the rifle, remained faithful to the left-wing tradition, also referring to the tradition of the January Uprising. *Wspomnienia gen. Czesława Jarnuszkiewicza. Od Sybiru do Łubianki*, Warsaw 1996, p. 8–10.

⁵¹ Sokolnicki's report to Piłsudski of August 29, 1914: “In Ostrowiec and Starachowice, I took over the local offices and appointed Grzymała as my temporary commissioner for Zagłębie Ostrowieckie”.

⁵² Abraham Racimora, a resident of Ostrowiec of Jewish origin, was accused of spying for Russia. Contrary to the information contained in the studies, the decision to execute him was made by Sokolnicki himself: “Soon Eustachy gave me a long report: a city patrol brought a spy. It was a Jew, Rabinowicz, as far as I remember, and various documents found on him testified to Russian contacts, obvious evidence in the form of codes and encrypted correspondence. I asked what the unit's instructions in these cases are. He replied that spies caught red-handed were shot at the place of capture. So I ordered Eustachy to check the documents found on the spy once more and shoot him if they prove to be unquestionable. Half an hour later, the execution took place on a hill outside the city”.

from Starachowice-Ostrowiec due to the defeat of the Austrians in the Battle of Kraśnik and the withdrawal of the front there”⁵³.

At the beginning of September 1914 – for health reasons – Siedlecki left for Zakopane. There, during conversations “among legionary factors” he met the writer Stefan Żeromski, with whom he traveled – described in his memoirs – to the seat of the Polish National Organization in Piotrków Trybunalski (Siedlecki, October 1933.1)⁵⁴. The same month, he actively joined the organization of the structures of the Polish National Organization (hereinafter: PON) (Kochanowski 1987; Pająk 1996)⁵⁵ on the territory of the Russian partition. As a commissioner for the city of Ostrowiec, he designated – as a member of the PON Council – the main directions of the organization's work (Pająk, 1996)⁵⁶.

From December 1914 to the end of 1915, first as an emissary of the PON, then the Military Department of the Supreme National Committee (hereinafter: DW NKN), he conducted an agitation and recruitment campaign and collected funds for the Legions in the Prussian partition. Siedlecki's candidacy was approved by Władysław Sikorski, the head of the Military Department of the NKN in Krakow. He received a formal nomination for the NKN commissioner in Piotrków from the authorities of the Polish National Organization (Przeniosło, 2014; Srokowski 1923). Having reached the Polish colonies in Dresden, Leipzig, Wrocław and Poznań, he conducted his agitation in the company of the legionaries of the 2nd Brigade: Wincenty Gorzycki⁵⁷ and Wiktor Stachowiak (Dolata, 2014)⁵⁸. As

⁵³ WBH KAPiO, ref. no. June 15, 1932, KN (Stanisław Siedlecki), sheet 10.

⁵⁴ Siedlecki met Żeromski in Zakopane at the turn of September and October 1914. They participated in a meeting organized by Tytus Czaka and Zofia Prauss. Stefan Żeromski then proposed Siedlecki as a candidate for the post of an emissary “for the Prussian partition for agitation for the Legions and for collecting funds”. After obtaining the consent of the NKN Department in Krakow, he set off by train to the PON headquarters in Piotrków. In Krakow, Siedlecki met Żeromski again, this time in a legionnaire's uniform. The joint trip to Piotrków did not reach the destination. After the train stopped in Szczakowa, Siedlecki and Żeromski returned to Kraków.

⁵⁵ Polish National Organization – an organization established on the initiative of Józef Piłsudski in September 1914. Piłsudski entrusted the task of expanding the PON structures to Michał Sokolnicki and Witold Jodko-Narkiewicz. The aim of PON was to promote the program of state independence and to create a political base for the anti-Russian camp in the Kingdom. Thanks to it, Józef Piłsudski sought to become independent from the Supreme National Committee (NKN). The previously existing Military Commissariats of the National Government were transformed into PON Commissariats. The establishment of the PON was, on the one hand, an attempt to continue the hitherto activities of military commissariats, and on the other hand, a specific response to the establishment of the NKN. Under an agreement concluded with Germany, PON could recruit to the Legions and agitate in the areas of German occupation. PON also conducted anti-Russian intelligence activities. Due to the reluctance of the inhabitants of Congress Poland towards the Germans, the effects of PON's propaganda activity were small. Despite this, it should be emphasized that the activity of PON emissaries influenced the awakening of the political awareness of Poles in the Russian partition. In November 1914, PON was incorporated into the Supreme National Committee.

⁵⁶ Siedlecki was a participant of the PON congress, which took place on November 29-30, 1914 in Vienna, where it was decided that PON would join the NKN.

⁵⁷ Wincenty Gorzycki (1893–1923), (pseud.: Zygmunt Narski); Polish historian, teacher, independence activist. *Historians and socialism*, ed. J. Kolbuszewska, M. Sikorska-Kowalska, Łódź 2014, p. 211–2017.

⁵⁸ Wiktor Stachowiak (1889–1964), independence activist, member of the Legionnaires' Union, historian-regionalist, museum curator, patron of the Museum of the Nadnotecka Land in Trzcianka.

Siedlecki recalled, "We had a great moral success in Dresden and Wrocław. We started to work in Poznań from scratch (...). There has been no financial success so far". As a result of the intervention of the German authorities, Siedlecki was forced to leave Poznań first, then Wrocław, to return to Vienna after a month-long stay in Germany⁵⁹.

From March 1915 – on the nomination of W. Sikorski – Siedlecki performed the duties of the NKN emissary in the Sieradz district. In Sieradz, Kalisz, Warta and in the surrounding villages, he spread „legionary and independence ideas” among the population⁶⁰. At that time, his reluctant attitude towards Sikorski grew in him. As he wrote: „(...) already knowing the disloyalty of Wł. Sikorski in relation to Commander Piłsudski, I have previously consulted with the PPS authorities in Dąbrowa Górnicza and R. Jaworowski, the intelligence chief of the 1st Brigade, declaring that while working in the Military Department of the NKN, I would follow the instructions of the Commander and possibly I would sabotage Sikorski's orders inconsistent with the above indications. (Mainly it was about not recruiting a volunteer back then)”⁶¹.

In the face of the ban introduced by the German authorities on the agitation activity of legionary emissaries, Siedlecki took the position of a delegate of the DW NKN in Łódź. He recalled that: "The task was very difficult. It was also one of the main reasons that I, an old conspirator, was sent to Łódź. Of course, I had to work in secret here. Before leaving, I communicated with Tytus Filipowicz. (...) he did not want to give me any instructions, claiming that I myself know how to proceed”⁶². From May 1915, Siedlecki developed independence activities in Łódź. As a representative of NKN, he gathered patriotic organizations, initiating and co-creating an inter-party institution – the National Committee of the City of Łódź (hereinafter: KNmŁ)⁶³. He developed the action of repolonization by organizing the so-called city polonization section. These activities were aimed at encouraging the inhabitants of Łódź to boycott shops and institutions, including schools, on the buildings of which there were Russian and German-language signs. In the absence of a response to the statements of the KNmŁ, fighters of the PPS and the National Workers' Union (NZR) removed or painted the signs without the owners' knowledge (Karwacki,

⁵⁹ Siedlecki recalls the arrest of Gorzycki and Stachowiak in Wrocław: "The German authorities were dissatisfied mainly with how they communicated to us with disarming frankness that I did not write letters to my authorities in Kraków and Piotrków". WBH KAPiO, ref. No. June 15, 1932, KN (Stanisław Siedlecki), sheet 10.

⁶⁰ "Going from village to village and giving a series of lectures (one in Kalisz) about the necessity for Poland to create army cadres, which are the Legions. The director of the hospital in Warta, Dr. Łuniewski, helped me a lot in this work". Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ The National Committee was composed of the following groups: represented by the National Workers' Union, the Polish Socialist Party, the Union of Polish Youth Organizations, the Women's League, the Peasants' Union, and the National Peasants' Union. WBH KAPiO, ref. No. June 15, 1932, KN (Stanisław Siedlecki), sheet 10. From this period, there are forms of appeals addressed to the inhabitants of Łódź: Odezwa Zjednoczonej Młodzieży Niepodległościowej, Łódź, sierpień 1914 roku; Odezwa informująca o powstającym Rządzie Narodowym, wzywająca do walki przeciw Rosji z maja 1915 r. Department of Social Life Documents of the National Library in Warsaw (hereinafter: BN), reference number DŹS IA 5/73 Cim, reference number DŹS IA 5/804 Cim.

1984; Pająk, 2003; Siedlecki, 1923; Stawiszyńska, 2016)⁶⁴. Having exposed himself to the German authorities, to avoid being arrested he first hid and then, under cover of night, got to Piotrków.

The end of Siedlecki's cooperation with NKN coincides with the genesis of the "dismissal crisis" which was a consequence of the occupation of Warsaw by the Germans in August 1915 (Pobóg-Malinowski, 1990). The political goal of the war that had been common to NKN and Piłsudski so far, that is to "merge Galicia and the Kingdom as part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy" became incompatible with the second postulate – the maximum independence of the Legions and their subordination to Piłsudski's command. Facing the dilemma of choosing between the „Austro-Polish program” of the NKN, endorsed by W. Sikorski, and the „updated independence postulates” of J. Piłsudski, Siedlecki chooses the political orientation of the Piłsudski camp. Soon, he joins the group of trusted legionnaires transferred to the civil life, who, in place of their previous form – Legions – join the secret Polish Military Organization (hereinafter: POW) (Pobóg-Malinowski, 1990; Sokolnicki, 1961). Siedlecki is still considering taking up front service with the 1st Brigade, but his poor health prevents him from implementing these plans. In April 1916 he was super-arbitrated⁶⁵, then declared fit for service without weapons. Eventually, for health reasons, he was released from the Legions on November 25, 1916⁶⁶.

At the urging of Marian Wieleżyński, the Siedlecki family returned to Borysław. In the nearby Kałusz in 1916–1919, Stanisław was the director of the Natural Gas Plant⁶⁷. He combined his professional work with political activity. Through Jędrzej Moraczewski, he maintained contacts with the Polish Military Organization, and finally took over the leadership of "independence organizations" in the Borysław-Kałusz region, effectively preventing the formation of National Democratic organizations. Among the events that should be highlighted in his biography, one should mention his accession to the secret A-Organization Convention in 1917 (Malczewska-Pawelec, 1999). In agreement with the secret management of the Piłsudski camp, he prepared a conspiratorial apartment near Kałusz "in case Commandant Piłsudski escaped from the fortress and had to go into hiding"⁶⁸. *In 1918, the Siedlecki family gave shelter to a POW member called Orzechowski, sentenced to death by Ukrainians⁶⁹. Siedlecki's relations to the decision-making factors of the West Ukrainian People's Republic were quite tense. As he recalled: "Despite my well-known Ukrainian sympathies, my relations with the Galician-Ukrainian factors were*

⁶⁴ Appeal L4 / 15 pt. *Citizens Merchants and Industrialists*, National Committee of the City of Łódź, City Polonization Section, Łódź September 8, 1915, National Museum in Krakow, sign. 113698 III akc 270/04/311 p. 1–2; Announcement about the award for the recovery of the portrait of Tsar Nicholas II stolen from the School of Economics in Łódź, signed by director Waclaw Kloss, Łódź, May 1915, in fact issued by the National Committee of the City of Łódź. BN, ref. DŻS IA 5/354 Cim.

⁶⁵ Super-arbitrated – a soldier dismissed from military service due to illness or wounds.

⁶⁶ Military Historical Office, Polish Legions Team and Polish Auxiliary Corps 1914–1918, sign. I.120.63.103; Oss. manuscript 15813 / IV; Cf.: <https://zolnierze-niepodleglosci.pl/zołnierz/221248/>

⁶⁷ The Natural Gas Plant in Kałusz belonged to the joint stock company "Gazolina".

⁶⁸ The place was made available by the parish priest in Dołha Wojniłoska. Siedlecki was assigned this task by Jędrzej Moraczewski. WBH KAPiO, ref. No. June 15, 1932, KN (Stanisław Siedlecki), sheet 10.

⁶⁹ *Perhaps it is about Second Lt. Marian Witalis Orzechowski pseud. Marian Burkacki. Ibid.*

merely correct. Besides, my loyalty to the Stanisławowski government was not 100%". Siedlecki, who was the director of the credit union in Katusz, after obtaining the approval of the Krakow management of POW, granted loans to Poles „for the account of future salaries in the Polish state”. After disclosure of the abuses in this institution, the Ukrainian authorities decided to intern Siedlecki to Kolomyia. However, there has been no arrest since the intervention in the case of Siedlecki was undertaken by representatives of the local elite – ‘Ukrainian friends’⁷⁰.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The youth of Stanisław Siedlecki was marked by the reign of three partitioning powers over Poland. When he was forty, a new Poland was born out of the fumes of blood and the fire of the ‘great war’. These events were not only the background of Siedlecki's life. Belonging to the generation that was fortunate enough to see an independent homeland again, he could at the same time have the satisfaction that, also through his struggle and sacrifice, Poland rose to live.

From an early age, Siedlecki began to engage in independence activities. Its beginnings were connected with a rebellion against tsarism, and consequently against social relations, which was the pillar of this system. He was influenced by socialist slogans already in junior high school. At that time, he saw socialism as an imperative of active struggle, but above all of the struggle for independence. With time, he approved the PPS program of the Revolutionary Faction, emphasizing the need for armed struggle against the Russian invader for Poland's independence. At the same time, he was influenced by the personality of Józef Piłsudski. Siedlecki's political views were deeply influenced by the thought of the Piłsudski camp, which ordered to see Russia as Poland's main enemy. Hence the belief that only breaking Russia “along national seams” and creating national states will ensure the security of the Polish state. Distrust and hostility towards tsarist Russia Siedlecki transferred onto the USSR. These beliefs made him a federalist and a supporter of the Promethean concept, to which he will devote his further life.

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⁷⁰ Siedlecki mentions a Ukrainian named “Łeszczysz senior”. Ibid.

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