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Searching for the better city.

An urban discourse during the Revolution of 1905 in the Kingdom of Poland

The main argument of this paper states that the Revolution of 1905, which established the era of modern politics in Central and Eastern Europe, was also an important landmark for the cities in the Kingdom of Poland. The rapid urbanisation and industrialisation of the Kingdom of Poland after the January Uprising brought irreversible change to the country's social structure. New agents like the proletariat and the intelligentsia appeared in the urban space.

As a result, urban contexts during the Revolution of 1905 were much more important in Russian Poland than in the Interior of the Russian Empire. A conflict arose between groups supporting different visions for the cities: traditional, moderately progressive and radical. Actually, the urban discourse of 1905 was a dispute about the scope of urban democracy. With reference to manifestos or projects for legal acts, as well as articles or reports from Warsaw's national journals and the local press from Lodz, I examine changes in the Kingdom's urban discourse from criticism of the existing administration (the so-called *Magistrats*) to demands for introducing the modern system

of self-governance. Urban discourse tells us a lot about the Polish middle-class and its ideological attitudes. During the Revolution, the initial democratic enthusiasm was soon replaced by the logic of exclusion. Established by the bourgeoisie as a consequence of the revolutionary exposure of class antagonism, it took measures to limit the influence of the working class and its political position in the future urban self-governance.

**Keywords:** The 1905 Revolution, discourse, urbanism, self-governance, Kingdom of Poland

## Introduction

A traditionally, political-oriented historiography considers the Revolution of 1905 to be a class struggle occurring under the command of the main parties and their political ideologies (Kalabiński and Tych 1976).<sup>1</sup> Only the studies of the Revolution in the two biggest cities of the Kingdom of Poland, Warsaw and Lodz, were described in a broader sense (Kiepuska 1974; Karwacki 1975). However, over the past few years an important turn has been observed. Recent works, under the influence of Robert Blobaum and his study (Blobaum 1995), stress that the complexity of the Revolution of 1905 is a great social phenomenon (Przeniosło and Wiech 2005; Żarnowska et al. 2007; Marzec and Piskała 2013a). In particular, the social changes, which happened during and after the Revolution are the focus of researchers' attention. For example, Scott Ury, who describes it from the point of view of Warsaw's Jewry, examined how rapid urbanisation in the Kingdom enabled the rise of the public sphere and – as a consequence – the public will in 1905–1907 Warsaw (Ury 2012). Nowadays, the Revolution of 1905 in the Kingdom of Poland is increasingly defined as a radical entry into a political modernity, with all its far-reaching consequences (Marzec 2013a).

In fact, the Revolution of 1905 was the first time in Polish history that the focus of political events moved from villages to cities. Undoubtedly, it was possible due to the scale of social changes in Russian Poland after the collapse of the January Insurrection in 1863. Fast urbanisation and industrialisation brought irreversible change to the country's social structure (Nietysza 1986). While the rate of urbanisation was rising, new agents like the proletariat and the intelligentsia appeared in the urban space. As a result of higher level of industrialisation and urbanisation alongside the terrifying social-economic conditions of the Kingdom's cities, urban contexts during the Revolution of 1905 were much more important in Russian Poland than in the Interior of the Russian Empire. Manuel Castells identified three corresponding features of the 1871 Commune of Paris (considered to be the first true *urban* revolution in Europe), which made it "urban": its opposition to traditional, especially rural society, its municipal character which radically transformed the political institutions that represented local society, and, finally, the establishment of new political institutions, based on municipality alongside popular participation (Castells 1983, 24–25). Without any doubt

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the Revolution of 1905 in the Kingdom of Poland involved either the radical democratisation of urban society and institutions, or the rise of the urban public sphere. From this point of view, the East European movement sequel to of the Commune of Paris in 1871, which it has been compared (Harison 2007), satisfied the criteria for the urban revolution in all its complexity.

In connection with this, in a reflection on the social history of urbanism in modern Poland, I will examine the role of cities in the revolutionary discourse concerning the Kingdom of 1905–1907. However, my understanding of it is as statements about the condition and future of Polish cities within social – and political discussions, rather than as bloody and violent images of cities in revolt. Therefore, I will focus on manifestos or projects for legal acts, as well as articles or reports from Warsaw's national journals and the local press from Lodz. In view of the fact that historically, discourses are specific systems of meaning which establish the identities of subject and object, David Howarth concludes that the construction of discourses involves the structuring of the relations between different social agents (Howarth 2000, 9). Unsurprisingly, urban discourse during the Revolution of 1905 concerned to the right of different groups of urban inhabitants to governing the city. It represented the conflict arising from between different visions of city: traditional, moderate progressive and radical. While the first of these was typical for the majority of the upper bourgeoisie and the Russian administration, the second was presented by the urban intelligentsia and the third by the proletariat. Actually, the urban discourse of 1905 was a dispute about the scope of urban democracy.

It is worth pointing out that the urban discourse during the Revolution was created mainly by progressive liberal intellectuals, acting as an elite of Polish the intelligentsia (Janowski 2004). As is widely known, an awareness of the importance of the intelligentsia is necessary in order to understand the social history of Poland, not to mention all Central and Eastern Europe (Żarnowski 2003) This region was characterized by provincial development, causing the domination of agriculture and weakness of the towns. In the reality of the weakness and ethnic alienation of the middle-class, the intelligentsia, formed by professionals, intellectuals and artists, aspired to become the bourgeoisie, or at least to represent it outwardly (Janowski 2008; Jedlicki 2008; Micińska 2008). The typically urban groups of population, the industrial bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, the *petit* bourgeoisie (Kowalska-Glikman 1987) (the so called “drobnomieszczactwo”, consisting of small businesses, craftsmen and other members) and – finally, the – proletariat – were all children of urbanisation. Relations between them had to be a starting point for the first urban

revolution in this part of Europe. As a consequence, urban discourse between 1905 and 1907 created by the literate elites of urban population was part of a traditional, bourgeois public sphere in its Habermasian meaning while the workers' vision of city was created in a proletarian counter-public sphere, understood after Negt and Kluge as an alternative form of public life (Negt and Kluge 1993; Marzec and Piskala 2013b, 83–84).

The most important ideology of Polish intelligentsia in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a progressive liberalism – as Robert Nisbet noted, a “natural” social philosophy of the literate elites of the Western World between 1789 and 1914 (Nisbet 1980, 171). As Immanuel Wallerstein argues:

Liberals believed, however, that progress, even though it was inevitable, could not be achieved without some human effort, without a political programme. Liberal ideology was thus a belief that, in order for history to follow its natural course, it was necessary to engage in conscious, continual, intelligent reformism in full awareness that “time was the universal friend, which would inevitably bring greater happiness to ever greater numbers” (Wallerstein 2011, 6).

Hence, the idea of progress had a decisive impact on their perception of the social contrasts caused by classical capitalism and on their methods for reducing them. Although at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, younger generations of intelligentsia were giving up liberalism for new vital ideologies, such as socialism or modern nationalism, ultimately they all still trusted in education as a remedy for social problems. As Denis Sdvizkov argued, the belief in education and an attachment to individualism were indeed a basis for the liberal worldview throughout Europe (Sdvizkov 2011, 269–270). This had important significance in the reality of revolution, polarising all ideas, remodelling existing structures of thinking and forcing all groups to define their views distinctly. In the urban discourse of the Revolution of 1905, the moderate bourgeois vision of remodelling municipal problems, represented by the intelligentsia and based on institutions typical of the traditional public sphere, was faced both with the ultra-conservative *ancien regime* and with the anti-systemic proletarian radicalism with its own, counter-public, foundations.

The urban question before 1905 – the social-economic condition and public imagination

The situation of urban areas in the Kingdom of Poland before the Revolution of 1905 was quite complicated. The biggest of them

– Warsaw, Lodz and Dabrowa Basin – were growing dynamically. In 1900, Warsaw reached 750,000 inhabitants while Lodz had a population of 314,000. Despite this, the Kingdom's cities lagged behind West European metropolises. Some spheres especially, such as urban infrastructure, education and public services remained dramatically underdeveloped (Blobaum 1995, 22–28). The worst situation was in Lodz – an industrial centre without the other functions of a large city. Lodz was considered by Warsaw's intellectuals to be a “disgusting collection of storehouses and industrial buildings” and was commonly perceived in the public imagination as a dystopia of the modern city (Śmiechowski 2012). The hygiene conditions in Lodz were appalling and the mortality rate of infectious diseases was record-breaking in Europe (Fijałek and Indulski 1990, 88–257).

The miserable condition of the cities was a consequence of an archaic system of urban governance, based on laws originating from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Kingdom of Poland was almost the only place in Europe where there were no elected councils or any form of urban self-governance. Towns were ruled by *Magistrats* – mayors, chairmen and auxiliary staff, nominated by the central government. They were, indeed, just officials with limited powers and temperate ambitions – all important problems including urban investments or expenditures had to be approved in Saint Petersburg! Actually, it was a certain form of withdrawal on the part of the state which made the cities “weak”, while retaining the strong coercive apparatus supported mainly by a military structure of administrative oppression but ignoring social provisions. As a result, almost every new hospital, school or cultural institution was funded not by local authorities but by the communities themselves of Warsaw, Lodz or the other towns. Despite many proposals for reorganising the system of urban administration, the situation did not change for 50 years, eventually becoming something of an oddity (Bouffał 1899, 149–152). Theodore R. Weeks rightly noted:

The reasons for this were many, but the most important was general bureaucratic lethargy, exacerbated by the lingering suspicion that Polish-dominated city governments would complicate the lives of Russian administrators in the region. Furthermore, the general conditions in Warsaw were superior to those of nearly any city in the interior of the Empire, so local Russian officials failed to perceive any pressing need for reform. Then as later, Russian administrators compared the Polish situation favourably with conditions at home in the central Russian provinces, while Poles compared the situation unfavourably with conditions in Vienna, Berlin or Paris (Weeks 1994, 27).

However, the position of the cities in Polish public opinion was determined by culture as well as by its social-economic conditions. A significant part of the Polish elites was influenced by anti-urbanism, which made urban discourse strongly ambivalent. Although the rapid urbanisation and industrialisation enabled the possibility of the emergence for new social classes in Poland after 1863, a traditional imagination, created by the *szlachta*, was – and in modernized form is still now – an important feature of Polishness (Pobłocki 2010; Sowa 2011; Czaplinski 2011). Many authentic intellectuals believed that Poland should remain a rural country. They were afraid of Western civilization and its negative impact on a partitioned nation and considered cities only as an addition to the country's agricultural landmark (Jedlicki 1999). Even Warsaw Positivists, who wanted to make Poland “bourgeois and secular” (Jaszczuk 1986, 8), were closely dependent on their noble genealogy (Kopczyńska-Jaworska 1993, 103–104). It is enough to mention that honouring famous writers or poets by buying them a village house with a demesne was a common form of the highest acknowledgment in Poland!

Obviously, all the discourse remained in a strong relationship with the European *fin de siècle* and its social pessimism. Lodz, often referred as the “Polish Manchester” deserved this term in the sense that the “real” Manchester was also “The Shock City” for many noble gentlemen (Pobłocki 2013, 242–249). Jerzy Jedlicki described the motif of anti-urbanism in 19<sup>th</sup> century Poland and its connections with European culture as “The trial against the city” (Jedlicki 2000). Charges against cities became even more serious in the epoch of Young Poland – the modernist period in Polish fine arts between 1890 and 1918. Only a few writers such as Stanisław Przybyszewski or Tadeusz Miciński were apologists of urbanism in a time of socially engaged literature, condemning hunger, poverty and the crimes of Warsaw's and Lodz's dark alleys (Gutowski 1993, 189–211).

This ambivalence was strengthened by the social structure of Russian Poland. Only Warsaw, despite repeated Diaspora, was a great Polish beyond question. Still considered to be capital, Warsaw was home to most of Polish elites and opinion makers. However, in Lodz and the Dabrowa Basin the situation was completely different. Poles were mostly unskilled workers, while most of the capital was owned by Germans and Jews (Puś 1987). Even worse, the process of acclimatisation to urban lifestyle was slowed down by the conservative, rural worldview of workers, arriving in industrial centres from the villages (Żarnowska 1993, 72–74). Everywhere except Warsaw, the upper bourgeoisie was closed and had no interest in approaching the Polish elite (Żarnowska 2004). As a result,

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Lodz's intelligentsia described themselves as weak and poor (Iwańska 2010, 267–271). The *petit* bourgeoisie, representing about one-fifth of the urban population was generally shadowy, but had the potential to tip the balance in the country's politics. Finally, smaller towns located in the provinces were actually dominated by traditional Jewish communities and had "lost" their Polishness (Zieliński 2010, 27–30).

As a result, although the feeling of crisis in respect of capitalistic modernity was common to all groups of urban inhabitants in the Kingdom, despite their nationality, each group considered the urban problems to be specific to them. This was the main reason why urban discourses in the Polish, Jewish and German press were very similar, even if the interactions with them was limited by language and cultural barriers (Ury 2012, 47–48).

Against such a backdrop, the Revolution of 1905, initiated by the proletariat and supported by the intelligentsia, can be described not only as the political debut of the masses (Blobaum 1995, 188–190), but also as the political initiation of the Polish radical intelligentsia, as they attempted to replace both the traditional elite of the country and the existing bourgeoisie of German or Jewish ancestry. From this point of view, the intelligentsia can be understood not as a separate social group, but as a small elite section of the educated and progressive middle-class, sharing a concept of social order (Sdvizkov 2011, 150–154).

Obviously, a great deal had been written about the differences between various groups of urban society in 19<sup>th</sup> century Poland. Historians have examined both the reasons for an alliance between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the initial stage of the Revolution, and the conflicts of interest among them. The political success of the *Endecja*, a right-wing nationalistic movement supported by the *petit* bourgeoisie, has been described as evidence of the movement of the political sympathies from the left to the right during and after 1905. As a result, political representation of the nationalistic middle-class became the real winner of the Revolution, while progressive liberal and workers' parties were put on the defensive (Karwacki 1975, 106; Szwarc 2007, 14–16). In terms of urban discourse this transition meant the willingness of separate social agents to take responsibility for the cities and their futures. It was necessary to determine, who should be a holder of the "right to the city." I use this Lefebvrian term intentionally, because class conflict, which played a major role in Henri Lefebvre's concept (Lefebvre 1996), also occupied a key position in the urban discourse of the Revolution of 1905.

## The Revolution's impact on urban discourse

Although in the pre-Revolutionary period criticism of social relations in the Kingdom's cities was possible, the censorship was preoccupied with the image of urban administration as being blameless for all existing problems. The system of prior censorship was oriented to maintain a social order. In particular, the dissemination of any radicalism from the intelligentsia to the masses was considered to be a very dangerous for a Tsarist regime (Kmiecik 1980, 5–11; Szreter 1992; Bałabuch 2001, 51–54). As a consequence, all the social discourse in the Polish press before 1905 was unaddressed. The burden of solving of social problems or conflicts had to be shouldered by society itself, as an act of traditional philanthropy.

However, during a great economic crisis in both Russia and Poland caused by the Russo-Japanese War, some elemental changes became noticeable. For instance, a Lodz's newspaper dared to demand the organisation of public works as an essential aid for starving, unemployed workers. But a few months later no one was entreating the *Magistrats* to do their duties. During the Revolution the system of censorship became inefficient, and was finally abandoned under the October Manifesto; the maintaining of social divides was no longer possible. Former taboos became the leading topics (Śmiechowski 2013); a very wide emancipation of the masses raised the readership to an unprecedented level (Marzec 2013b); newspapers, previously read by a small group of subscribers, started to be sold on streets; criticism of the *Magistrats* in the Kingdom's press suddenly became widespread and characteristic. For instance, *Kurier Łódzki* wrote:

The Magistrat, avoiding any contact with the inhabitants of the city for a long time and uninterested in learning and meeting their needs, is now fenced in by barricades and guarded by soldiers. (...) Even if the Magistrat is doing something, he is also trying to keep it secret. (...) However, this happens very rarely, because here in Lodz literally nothing at all is done except collecting taxes and spending them on improper goals, contrary to the welfare of the city and without any public control (*Kurier Łódzki* 1906).

In a similar way a provincial newspaper was quoted in the Warsaw magazine, convinced that:

Anyone, who lives in our city for any length of time, has to perceive for himself the sad condition of our urban economy. In the last decade literally nothing has

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been done to improve the city's sanitary condition or standard of living. The only result has been thousands of sheets of paper were written after numerous meetings of the Magistrat and various committees (*Prawda: tygodnik polityczny, społeczny i literacki* 1907b, 29)

*Prawda*, a leading opinion-making magazine published by Aleksander Świętochowski since 1881 scoffed, that “today's municipalities” were just “funny caricatures of modern local governments” and “even Mark Twain could not create” such an irrational way of nominating of mayors and chairmen (*Prawda: tygodnik polityczny, społeczny i literacki* 1905c, 492).

The articles about the administrative condition of the Kingdom's cities were often economical studies, trying to show the scale of problems using large amounts of statistical data. One of them was published by a leftist magazine, *Ogniwo*. In the opinion of an unknown author, in the year 1905, when “all states, classes, organisations and corporations were submitting their requests,” that was the best moment for considering “if we have the right to claim a modern urban administration in the Kingdom of Poland and what should be done to improve the present situation” (*Ogniwo. Tygodnik naukowy, społeczny, literacki i polityczny* 1905, 258) The author found the existing administrative system to be responsible for the situation, in which *Magistrats* could not do anything in areas such as social care, healthcare, education or the fight with poverty. Moreover, he stated that “Magistrats do nothing at all, because they are dependent on the government” (*Ogniwo* 1905, 259). It was stated in conclusion that “this situation has to be changed” (*Ogniwo* 1905, 280).

After martial law was introduced at the turn of 1905 and 1906, the publishing of newspapers became a risky job. Under the threat of trials and seizures, parallel to the post-Revolution reaction in Russia, the number of critical articles started to decline. Nevertheless, the development of the press was permanent along with the criticism of the existing administration of cities'. The negative criticism was so common, that after 1905 the determined for the introduction of an elected and wide-powered urban self-governance in the Kingdom of Poland became a regular topic in the Polish press. In the autumn of 1905 Lodz's newspaper stated that:

The establishment of urban autonomy is necessary after 40 years, but the self-governance should be put only into the hands of society' and the local inhabitants'. Who, if not a local population, would refurbish their own towns more seriously? Who would be more determined in lobbying for the building of new schools if not the people themselves? (*Goniec Łódzki* 1905b).

This opinion was embraced by almost all Polish political parties. What was important – urban self-governance, as well as the Polonization of schools and courts – considered to be just things to do, realisable within the reform of Russia's political system (Tych 1990, 22). The lifelong dream of the Kingdom's middle-class slowly became feasible.

### Illusion of self-governance: things to do

Hence, when it was announced in the June of 1905 that the General Governor of Warsaw would be obliged to initiate a project for future urban self-governance in the Kingdom, newspapers started to suggest which problems, which should be discussed by elected councilors as a first step. Expectations were huge. For instance, *Goniec Łódzki* noted that “in all great industrial centres the building of cheap and hygienic houses for workers, or the refurbishment of existing, unhealthy and uncomfortable tenements is founded to be an urgent need.” The newspaper considered it to be an “actual topic, because the solving of that problem will probably be one of the first activities of our future city council” (*Goniec Łódzki* 1905c).

In an article about illiteracy in Poland, *Prawda's* columnist noted: “today, when everyone is talking about self-governance from his own point of view, it is high time to issue a reminder of the condition of primary education.” After analysing the dramatic levels of illiteracy in Warsaw and Lodz, he concluded: “if self-governance is not to be just an empty slogan, but something which allows society to make decisions about people's most important needs, then education must be one of the central themes” (*Prawda: tygodnik polityczny, społeczny i literacki* 1905a).

A few weeks later the same magazine published an article about the conditions of hospitals in the Kingdom. This problem was also analysed with reference to planned self-governance. In the conclusion we can read:

First of all, society must be allowed to take part in running the hospitals, which should be focused on public health. (...) Our intelligentsia should understand that it is a high time to take social duties seriously. Before we start talking about self-governance, we should examine local needs including the condition of hospitals. Only a wide knowledge of reality can be a basis for serious activities. Otherwise, it will just be an illusion (*Prawda: tygodnik polityczny, społeczny i literacki* 1905b, 211).

Despite the scale of the problems in so many aspects of urban existence, urban self-governance was widely seen as the only way of modernising Polish cities. The lobbying for introduction of self-governance was actually a serious political demand of the urban opinion-makers, articulated with the ideas of both the Kingdom's autonomy and the Polonization of schools. They had no doubts that the right to the city should belong to them in their own political interests as well as in the interests of the improvement of the living conditions of the urban lower classes'. In this way, the intelligentsia acquired its traditional ethos of helping other groups of society (Zahorska 1978, 186–189; Iwańska 2010).

In December 1905 the appeal of the city's intelligentsia for a fight against the illiteracy of workers was published in Lodz. In a reaction, the editing board of *Goniec Łódzki* commented:

We all have to fight with illiteracy, regardless of our differences of political sympathies or religions. Schools and colleges whose opening is called for in the appeal will not be affiliated to any political party. They will not impose beliefs, but enable a whole mass of illiterate people to read about the society's goals and choose a way to achieve one (*Goniec Łódzki* 1905d).

Although the dominant role of the intelligentsia was dominant in providing an axiom for the planned self-governance, the question of the social composition of future councils was still unanswered.

### The theoretical foundations

The idea of self-governance played an important role in Polish political philosophy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the reality of the partitions, all forms of political organisation reduce the role of the central government and strengthen society. It was believed that the Polish nation should achieve an "internal independence", enabling it to rise in spite of increasing Russification in Russian Poland and Germanisation in Prussia. For historian Aleksander Rembowski, an author of the first Polish theory of administration, a rational political system had to be based on the active participation of society in the process of governance. In his opinion, the organisation of local government was the most effective in the United Kingdom and the United States, where central and local governments were considered equal forms of the state's authority (Markiewicz 2010, 127–129). Indeed, most 19<sup>th</sup> century Polish intellectuals were anglophiles.

Very similar beliefs were presented in 1907, when an extensive study about autonomy and self-governance was published by *Prawda*. As it was pointed out, the understanding of self-governance as “a resignation of some part of the state’s sovereignty to society in order to be closer to it for democratic reasons” was invalid. Actually, “a state like England could not exist outside society”, so “the reality is completely different. Society itself, acting as a state, is creating some functions or duties and realising them – depending on their character – in one centre or many different places”. As a result, an Englishman does not use the word “self-governance”, because all central and local authorities are known as a “government” (*Prawda: tygodnik polityczny, społeczny i literacki* 1907c). This was the opposite of Russian reality, where, as *Goniec Łódzki* wrote after *Novoye Vremya*:

Although there was no rational reason for conflict between society and the bureaucracy, yet in Russia’s historical reality, the bureaucracy was stronger than society, considered it to be their natural enemy and was doing almost anything to deprive it of all independence and activity. (...) Actually, it led to the underlying tension in society and enabled the spread of radicalism through all social classes (*Goniec Łódzki* 1905a).

According to this logic, self-governance, focused on the elementary needs of the city’s inhabitants, was also an instrument for reducing social tensions. It was believed that the risk of revolution was much lower when society could participate in the administration. Very similar views were presented by positivist lawyer Adolf Suligowski (Pol 2007), a member of the Governor’s committee for urban self-governance and the main author of the final draft.

Suligowski, called by an influential economist Stanisław Koszutski, “the tireless campaigner for our cities’ self-governance” (Koszutski 1915, 3), was a type of a democratic idealist. He was convinced that the situation when “the population cannot take part in the urban administration and does not have any impact on urban politics” is the only reason for social discontent or failures of infrastructure. In his opinion, the existing system led to austerity, carelessness, formalism and mismanagement. Moreover, Suligowski maintained that the system of urban administration was also responsible for serious social problems:

Education and literacy are not the only factors in people’s level of morality (...) But undoubtedly, as a result of invalid organisation and the exclusion of society from these activities, the appropriate powers for disseminating education cannot develop here. There is no properly organised and socially controlled educational

system. And it is a source of evil. A deprivation of society's right to cooperate in such an important question must have a harmful impact on the culture and lifestyle of the masses. Culture is never random, but an effect of the widespread application of hard work as well as capital. It needs the strong determination of social powers, which is absent here. Moreover, efforts to oppose them are still paralysed or stopped by the administration. As a result, ignorance, with its all consequences, can develop freely in our current condition (Suligowski 1915, 50).

Suligowski was influenced by a theory of cultural work, which was considered in 19<sup>th</sup> century Poland to be the opposite of politics (Mencwel 2009). This distinction was intended to legitimise the intelligentsia in their possession (unlike the egoistic bourgeoisie and disoriented proletariat) of a coherent, progressive vision of social relations. Suligowski's dream of self-governance was, therefore, an instrument for social stabilisation, minimising the risk of revolution:

When talking about the problems of urban inhabitants, it is necessary to point out another result of the existing system. Living in the large cities exposes all social contrasts or differences in all their nakedness and creates the breeding-ground for social conflict. However, solicitude for poor people's needs supported by social institutions leads to the alleviation of the fate of underprivileged classes, reduces contrasts, evokes sympathy and brings peace to human relations (Suligowski 1915, 51).

It is difficult not to notice that Suligowski's description of the workers was very patronising. On the other hand, it was hardly surprising in the revolutionary reality of 1905–1907, when relations between the middle classes and the proletariat were becoming worse.

### Logic of exclusion

In the opinion of the bourgeoisie, neither strikes nor mass manifestations were the most frightening episodes of the first stage of the Revolution. Actually, a series of attacks on brothels with public shaming of "pimps" and their "guests" was the most shocking. As well as denouncing bourgeois prudery, it also broke all the rules of politics typical of the public sphere. *Prawda's* columnist noticed:

A new agent of the nation's life has entered the historical path. This new wave is providing new concepts, new terms, new actions and new aspects of cultural life. Once, two cultures – the noble one, full of tradition and respect for the past,

believing in romanticism or merits, and the bourgeois one, going under the banner of self-help, progress, sobriety and the struggle for existence – were fighting each other. Today, the middle-class, occupying the former position of the bankrupt nobility, already having become sluggish in prosperity, must face up to a new ideology, new concepts and new people (*Prawda: tygodnik polityczny, społeczny i literacki* 1907d, 317).

The entry of the working class into public life was as much a surprise as a serious challenge for the intelligentsia, which considered itself to be predestined to lead the social progress. However, in 1905 the workers took only symbolic control over the cities by controlling the urban space. The people, behind their barricades, had a sense of being the hosts of their cities even if they did not have any chance in the struggle with the Cossacks. It was another aspect in which the similarity between the workers and the Parisian *communards*, who seemed to declare “society is us” in opposition to Louis XIV’s “the state is me”, was noticeable (Castells 1983, 20). Nonetheless, workers relied on spontaneous forms of self-organization rather than institutions legitimizing bourgeois democracy including parliament, judiciary, self-governance or even upper-class trade unions. As Kluge and Negt noticed: “at this historical stage of the proletarian public sphere, its prime function is to protect individuals from the direct influence of bourgeois interests and ideologies” (Negt and Kluge 1993, 61). From the workers’ point of view, revolutionary terror was indeed not a form of blind violence, but the manifestation of the new, popular justice which would ultimately lead to the “camp mentality” (Negt and Kluge 1993, 63). So, during the Revolution of 1905, despite initial mutual understanding in the first days of the movement, a long-term alliance between bourgeoisie and proletariat was actually impossible.

This process was observed in many different sources, including literature, the press and personal memoirs. For instance, the frightening, post-revolution Lodz was portrayed by Zygmunt Bartkiewicz in the novel titled *Złe miasto (Bad city)*. He characterized Lodz as a place without any social or economic rules, and immersed in chaos. In his opinion, all agents appearing in the urban space of Lodz, from the upper bourgeoisie to the proletariat, became practically degenerate (Bartkiewicz 1911).

The bourgeoisie’s shock at the Revolution reached its peak in 1907, when a group of Lodz’s biggest industrialists hiding in Berlin initiated the great lockout in the final fight with the workers. An unknown author, shocked by the 150,000 unemployed people, noticed in *Prawda*:

The entry of the working class into public life was as much a surprise as a serious challenge for the intelligentsia, which considered itself to be predestined to lead the social progress. However, in 1905 the workers took only symbolic control over the cities by controlling the urban space. The people, behind their barricades, had a sense of being the hosts of their cities even if they did not have any chance in the struggle with the Cossacks.

(...) Two hostile hordes are facing a death fight: numbers of satiated tycoons and masses of beings, deprived of their humanity. Ranks of dull, fattened capitalists and ranks of workers, also dull in their fanaticism and class fury. Or rather, ranks of agitators, leading the blind legions of workers to the real economic slaughter. They are both affected by fanaticism, a state of mind similar to complete barbarity. (...) The defeat is deeper than we can visualize. All aspects of our country's life suffers as well as the still unborn future of our social-economic relations. And as is known, the injured and blooded mother can bear a blooded child, a moron forced into the eternal struggle between signs of consciousness and the curse of idiocy (*Prawda: tygodnik polityczny, społeczny i literacki* 1907a).

The escalation of revolutionary terror and economic struggles strengthened the belief of the middle-class in the necessity of the limitation of workers' public rights. The proletariat was considered too immature to make its own decisions and too vulnerable to agitation. In the bourgeoisie's opinion, workers should fulfil some threshold conditions before they would be allowed to participate in the governing of the city. Moreover, workers came to be regarded as the "masses", which – as Stefan Johnson pointed out – could be understood rather as an allegory of everyone who threatened the ideals of political life than as individuals fighting for public representation (Jonsson 2013, 248–255). In bourgeois public discourse, the masses were reduced to the "sad symptom of these days", which would lose its dangerous character when social progress reached its climax. The final result was that the idea of urban self-governance evolved from being an instrument for urban democratisation to an institution for maintaining social exclusion.

This turn in thought was visible in Suligowski's draft, announced in 1906. Weeks described it as "modest, conservative, but essentially Polish" and added: "clearly, this was no radically democratic project" (Weeks 1994, 31). The level of education was to be the most important factor, enabling the city's inhabitants to exercise their right of voting. Every man who was at least 25 years old, could read and write and had been living in the city for two years had to be authorized. In addition, women who had an estate or ran a business could vote in their own right. The rest of literate women had to be represented by their male relations (one person could have no more than two votes). Moreover, all voters were to be divided into two curiae. The first consisted of the city's honorary citizens, estate owners, all people with higher and secondary education, clerics and finally, educational, charitable and social institutions. In Warsaw and Lodz, bigger industrialists and traders were also counted in the first circle of voters. These were all authorized to elect half

of the councillors. The rest of the voters, forming the second circle, could elect the second half of the future council („Projekt ustawy miejskiej dla miast Królestwa Polskiego” 1915, 144–146).

The number of inhabitants allowed to vote was limited radically. But in Suligowski's logic, this exclusion was planned for the proletariat's own good. In the bourgeois image of urban social relations, the right to the city was strictly related to one's level of education and one's position in the social hierarchy. The limitation was automatic, but not irreversible. Liberal intellectuals strongly believed that the right to the city would broaden over the course of time, in parallel with the rate of social progress and the spread of literacy. The educated worker, as well as the emancipated woman, would become a partner in the process of the city's governance. What was offered, according to this logical argument of the urban intelligentsia, was very significant: it was planned that, acting as a true elite, it would guarantee the rationality and harmony of urban democratisation. Under its command the Kingdom's cities would enter on a path to the permanent progress – the utopian counterweight to the current revolutionary chaos (Stegner 2005).

### Counterattack of contraries

As I noted above, the bourgeoisie's vision of the city was based on a strong belief in the totality of society, which is, indeed, a known feature of the public sphere (Negt and Kluge 1993, 56). Disputes between various groups of urban inhabitants were considered irrational. However, during and after the Revolution of 1905 they became more and more distinct. In some ways, they became the power of modern politics. For instance, despite the fact that ethnic divisions were considered to be a red herring by progressive intellectuals, they were felt by large groups of urban inhabitants to be much more real than class solidarity or local patriotism. Moreover, the *Endecja's* nationalism was, without any doubt, a very modern response to the phenomenon of modernization. It was also a strong response to the modern crisis of identity, which, as I mentioned above, was such an important feature of the Revolution (Marzec 2014, 4).

As a result, the capital easily won the struggle with the working class, while the Polish *petit* bourgeoisie intensified its fight with the Jews, now even more racist rather than economical (Weeks 1998; Blobaum 2001; Cała 2012, 292–297). The intelligentsia, as so often happened, again proved to be an illegitimate child of undeveloped society, rather than an opinion-making elite (Sdvizkov 2011, 278–279). Adolf Suligowski

had to learn the hard way when his draft was rejected by the government and also the *Endecja*. For them, the complicated ethnic and social structure of Polish cities was a reality requiring a reaction (Weeks 1994, 33). In the 1910 final draft prepared by the government, the number of Jewish councillors was planned to be reduced to 10% of the total. Only in places where Jews represented more than half of the population were they allowed to vote in 20% of councillors who were Jewish. Suligowski was confused by *the Endecja's* support for this proposition, not to mention Russian liberal or progressive parties represented in *the Duma*. Nevertheless, the draft was still “too democratic” for Russian nationalists, who would become more and more powerful in the next phases of parliament. They threw the Polish language out from the planned urban self-governance as a first step and then blocked its entry for several years (Weeks 1994, 36–41). In the end, urban self-governance in the Kingdom of Poland did not come into force before World War I (Radomski 2009, 82–83).

It also shows the extent of the contrast between the agents participating in urban life—between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat at the very beginning of modern politics in the Kingdom of Poland—and confirms the special role of the intelligentsia, that unspecified group of the urban intellectual elite, typical of the peripheral, undeveloped version of capitalism in Central and Eastern Europe.

## Conclusion

The 1905–1907 urban discourse tells us a lot about the Polish middle-class and its ideological attitudes. It confirms all the objections which were raised against the urban social groups by the political left as well as radical artists from the *Boheme*: a tendency to class negation, an attachment to security and self-restraint (Ossowska 1985, 28–43, 52–74). It also shows the extent of the contrast between the agents participating in urban life – between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat at the very beginning of modern politics in the Kingdom of Poland – and confirms the special role of the intelligentsia, that unspecified group of the urban intellectual elite, typical of the peripheral, undeveloped version of capitalism in Central and Eastern Europe.

But despite this, during the Revolution of 1905 something had changed. In 1907 *Wielkie miasta, ich wzrost i przyszłość*, Edward Chwalewik's brochure, was published in Warsaw. The author, a former socialist, took on board the task of the rehabilitation of great cities, so unpopular in 19<sup>th</sup> century culture. He was aware of the urban class antagonisms but convinced that:

The most creative powers are concentrated in large cities. Under their command the former period of dogma and dignity is progressively changing into a libertarian era, based on more and more democratic ideas (...). Large cities were always a birthplace of libertarian ideas and now (...) are centres of radicalism

and the democratisation of society. (...) Under a wider and wider self-governance, based on truly democratic rules, the excessive number of poor people in the large cities will disappear. Today's tenements and malodorous districts will become a thing of the past, replaced by numerous gardens, parks and green areas. The great city will become the temple of national monuments, the centre of education, the arts and other creative activities, as well as of administration and social work, trades and legislature. It will be the pulse of the nation's life in the full sense of the word. (...) The great city of today, as a place of voluntary work, is a higher form of social life. It contributes a deeper sense of right, justice and beauty to its citizens. It is truly a pioneer of cultural progress (Chwalewik 1907, 73–74).

Important changes were not only seen in popular brochures, written by Warsaw's intellectuals. In 1911 a liberal newspaper from Lodz wrote:

Lodz, as a relatively new city, has neither an intriguing history nor interesting monuments. But it can have all that one day. It will be created by future generations. So we should not give them any reason to accuse us, in many years' time, that we were living without a tomorrow, without higher aspirations. So, perhaps, it would be a good idea to create an institution for taking care of Lodz's future, which is considered to be very promising, in spite of the Society of Historic Preservation. Today's hectic development, chaotic and planless, should have some rules applied to slow this ubiquitous development, which has no regard for any sense of aesthetics (*Nowy Kurier Łódzki* 1912).

Without a doubt, modernisation was evident. The city, previously considered to be a foreign tumour on the country's healthy, rural tissues, slowly became the place that provided development opportunities for all classes. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Polish urban culture flourished at a significant rate (Biskupski 2013). The new generation of activists, artists and politicians that arose during the Revolution was not tempted by the promise of a village house given as a reward for achieving merit in life. They wanted to be citizens and to live as citizens. Hence, despite the existing class conflicts and the social problems connected with the discordant nature of urbanization, the future of Poland became urban.

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**Tytuł:** *W poszukiwaniu lepszego miasta – dyskurs o mieście w okresie rewolucji 1905 roku w Królestwie Polskim*

**Abstrakt:**

Główna hipoteza artykułu głosi, że rewolucja 1905 roku, która stanowiła początek nowoczesnej polityczności w tej części Europy, była także punktem zwrotnym w dziejach miast Królestwa Polskiego. Szybka urbanizacja i industrializacja Królestwa po upadku powstania styczniowego spowodowała nieodwracalne zmiany struktury społecznej. W miejskich realiach pojawili się nowi aktorzy społeczni w postaci

proletariatu i inteligencji. W wyniku tych zmian w trakcie rewolucji 1905 roku tematyka miejska odgrywała w Królestwie znacznie poważniejszą rolę niż w głębi Cesarstwa. Dyskurs o mieście odzwierciedlał narastający konflikt pomiędzy różnymi wizjami miasta: konserwatywną, postępową i radykalną. W istocie, dyskurs ów był dyskusją na temat zakresu miejskiej demokracji. Ukazuje on również skalę kontrastów występujących pomiędzy aktorami społecznymi biorącymi udział w miejskim życiu publicznym, a zwłaszcza pomiędzy burżuazją a proletariatem, już na tym bardzo początkowym etapie nowoczesnej polityczności w Królestwie Polskim. W trakcie rewolucji, początkowy demokratyczny entuzjazm ustąpił wkrótce miejsca logice ekskluzji. Ustanowiona przez mieszczaństwo w odpowiedzi na narastające w trakcie rewolucji wyostrenie antagonizmów klasowych, prowadziła ona do ograniczenia znaczenia klasy pracującej i jej pozycji politycznej w planowanym samorządzie miejskim.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Rewolucja 1905, dyskurs, miejskość, samorząd, Królestwo Polskie

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