

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION IN POLAND: A HISTORY OF ANTI-COMMUNIST REPRESSION

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Abstract: The paper supports the following thesis: the October Revolution influenced the constituency of the Polish independent state in 1918 as well as the structure of class struggles in Poland. The history of this impact is absolutely ignored or even denied in contemporary Polish anti-communist ruling historical discourse. The centenary of the Russian Revolution triggered debates presenting this event as “a demonic source of the 20th century totalitarianism”, without mentioning the enthusiasm the Revolution provoked in Polish people (who were both actively participating in it and inspired by it). The nationalist historical policy, which idealizes Poles at any cost, attempts to erase Polish engagement in “Red October” or belittle it as an insignificant episode. For this reason, by analyzing the dominant narrative about the Bolshevik Revolution in Poland *via* the example of Mateusz Staroń’s book *Traitors: Poles the allies of Lenin*, I will show how anti-communist discourse reshapes the past to serve its own ideological purposes and present an alternative narrative about the Russian Revolution in a Polish context, against these dominant anti-communist clichés, concerning 3 issues:

1. Polish participation in the October Revolution,
2. The Revolution’s influence on Poland’s independence,
3. The Polish workers’ council movement as a direct response to the Russian Revolution.

In the context of the above, the aim of this paper is not limited to providing an alternative to the ruling discourse, being just another exercise in political and historical imagination, or attempting to bring to light repressed aspects of Polish history. Rather, it is to show the logic and structure of the anti-communist narrative as such.

Keywords: Russian Revolution, Polish independence, anti-communism, historical discourse, rightist ideology, worker’s councils

The October Revolution influenced both the constitution of the Polish independent state in 1918 and the structure of class struggles in Poland. However, the history of this impact is absolutely ignored or even denied in contemporary Polish hegemonic historical discourse. The centenary of the Russian Revolution triggered debates – in national television and mainstream newspapers – presenting this event as “the demonic source of twentieth-century totalitarianism”, or as “a terrible crime without punishment”. Virtually no one mentioned the enthusiasm which the 1917 Revolution generated in Polish people (who actively participated in it and were inspired by it). Partisans of nationalist historical policy made massive efforts to erase any narration about Polish engagement in “Red October”, or at least to belittle its significance.

In this article, I discuss Polish anti-communist discourse about the Bolshevik Revolution in contemporary Poland via the example of Mateusz Staroń’s book *Traitors: Poles the allies of Lenin*¹. The rightist journalist argues that Bolsheviks of Polish descent who actively participated in struggles during the October days, and thereafter in the building of the Soviet state, were *traitors of the nation*. As Staroń states, “The bond of Polish communists with their native country was paranoid – regardless of their motives, acts and words, many of them remained national traitors” (Staroń 2018, 14).

Such a plea is of crucial importance in the frameworks of this discourse. Following this logic, these Poles committed a double crime: firstly, they contributed to the establishment of the “most genocidal communist system”; secondly, they betrayed their nation, acting *de facto* to the benefit of the foreign country. They were treated as Soviet agents, who placed their imagined class identity above their allegedly natural national identity. Actually, apologists of anti-communist discourse accuse Polish revolutionaries not only of their presumed or real crimes, but also of their perverse decision to deny their Polishness.

It is important to recognize how the concept of national identity is perceived in this context. Belonging to a nation becomes naturalized; people inherit a genetic nationality that predisposes them to act in a specific way, i.e. to realize traditional patriotic values through placing nation as the highest value (worth dying for its cause). In that light, a decision, made by Polish communists, to replace their national identity with a class one meant moral corruption, or an evil act against nature itself. Submitting to the communist ideal, they betrayed not only their nation, but also most of all themselves. How could Polish-speaking representatives of the patriotic intelligentsia become communists? According to Staroń and other rightist historians, it is the biggest, almost metaphysical mystery, something lying beyond

¹ Staroń’s book is the only popular publication (printed in Bellona publishing house – known for the popularization of history) about Polish engagement in Soviet Russia published on the centenary of the October events. The author also runs famous historical blog (<http://blog.surgepolonia.pl/>) and patriotic clothes company Surge Polonia.

any logical explanation, a pure aberration of mind, a kind of *sacrifizio dell'intelletto* to the fake god. As Staroń claimed: “Indeed, it is beyond simple logical explanation why these prominent and intelligent persons chose communism as their way of life. (...) We could only suspect what in fact were their motives. Unfortunately, they took their secrets to the grave” (Staroń 2018, 291, 293–294). Therefore, Staroń’s position resembles the famous anti-communist idea by Francois Furet: for him communist ideology is a dangerous mental illness, an intellectual virus, which inflicted the most prominent minds of the twentieth-century intelligentsia (Furet 1999, vii–xii).

This narrative goes even further and suggests that Polish communists paid the highest price for loyalty to Bolshevism – as we know most of them died in Stalinist purges. For this nationalistic historiosophy, this tragic end of their communist engagement was a fair punishment for the sin against nature, for their betrayal of the nation. The fact that Poles did such horrible things as turning against their own national roots was so shameful that their history deserved to be totally forgotten, or at best to serve as a warning for the next generations.

These anti-communist contentions exert a strong influence upon the ongoing processes of delegitimization of communism in contemporary Poland, because the very idea of internationalism – so the very core of communist identity – is reduced to a mental disease resulting in hate, hypocrisy, lies and mass murders (see Staroń 2018, 15)². The history of Polish Bolsheviks within this frame functions as an argument for the causal relation between concept (utopian internationalism) and its necessary practical outcome (totalitarian nightmare). This perspective is based on the so-called “totalitarian model” of interpretation of Soviet history, which is dominant in Polish historiography (Malia 1994, 8–12). The main Polish authors with international renown who represent the totalitarian school are Leszek Kołakowski and Andrzej Walicki, recognized in Poland as the key experts in this field; even the originator of this model was a Pole, Zbigniew Brzeziński, who for the first time used this term in the mid-1950s (see Suny 2017, 74). For Domenico Losurdo this totalitarian approach is an example of influential historical revisionism³, which aims at the erasure of the revolutionary tradition as such; its most

² Staroń’s main source about the real views and activities of Polish communists was Jan Alfred Reguła’s (Józef Mützenmacher) book “History of CPP in the light of facts and documents”. The author was a former member of the party, who in the mid-1930s became a Polish police informer (he was probably also a Gestapo agent during the Nazi occupation of Poland). It is hard to imagine a more biased historical source than police denunciation; that should give us a hint about Staroń’s methodological reliability. Besides Reguła’s publication, Staroń most often recalls studies written by contemporary Polish anti-communist historians like Miodowski (2017) and Zieliński (2013), whereas from international historiography he refers to the so-called conspiracy interpretation of Bolsheviks funded by western capitalists (see McMeekin 2009).

³ However, it is important to distinguish between the *revisionist tradition* within western Sovietology (represented by leftist and Marxist historians such as Isaac Deutscher or Moshe Lewin, who *revised* the dominant ‘totalitarian model’) from Losurdo’s notion of *revisionist historiography*. The latter, similarly to Eduard Bernstein’s original ‘revisionism’, attempts to expunge the Jacobin-Blanquist legacy, which in the twentieth century manifested itself in Bolshevik practice (Losurdo 2015, 5).

eminent representatives were, among others, Ernst Nolte, Francois Furet and Richard Pipes: “The main theme of this comprehensive reinterpretation of the contemporary world thus becomes even clearer: it involves the liquidation of the revolutionary tradition from 1789 to the present” (Losurdo 2015, 5).

According to this mode of interpretation the Bolshevik revolution was just a political *coup d'état* without any democratic legitimization, without the people's support – the ultimate aim of Bolsheviks was to seize the power and retain it at all costs⁴. Hence, for totalitarian Sovietologists, there was a direct continuity between Lenin and Stalin: the latter stemmed from the former and the seeds of the Stalinists' horror were sown from the very first days of October 1917. From the philosophical viewpoint, this perspective is profoundly *idealistic*, that is to say it neglects certain social conditions and focuses only on abstract and hypnotic ideas (the revolutionary utopia) which political fanatics want to impose on people:

The concrete agenda of this book [Maila's *Soviet Tragedy* – BW], therefore, is to reassert the primacy of ideology and politics over social and economic forces in understanding the Soviet phenomenon. It is rehabilitating history “from above” at the expense of history “from below” as the motive force of Soviet development. Finally, it is to resurrect the totalitarian perspective (...); for it was the all-encompassing pretensions of the Soviet utopia that furnished what can only be called “the genetic code” of the tragedy. (Malia 1994, 16).

Utopianism in this idealistic and totalitarian perspective⁵ is understood in a traditional conservative manner. At least from Edmund Burke's critique of the French Revolution, utopian ideas are perceived as dangerous illusions. Even if they are grounded on noble and humanistic premises (justice and equality), their realization leads directly to monstrous consequences – terror and genocide – because human nature is ultimately evil and irreparable.

⁴ Losurdo argues that the thesis of the Bolshevik *coup d'état* functions as a main argument for the total delegitimization of communist revolution: “The starting point of the catastrophe of the twentieth century is Bolshevism, an extension and paroxysmal intensification of Jacobinism. It might be said that ideological intoxication is present in the pure state, this time, since October 1917 was not even a revolution, but a mere coup d'état – one that felled not the *ancient regime* or its residues, but democracy” (Losurdo 2015, 76). For Losurdo's brilliant polemics with self-contradicted coup d'état thesis see: Losurdo 2015, 76–81.

⁵ The most comprehensive philosophical theory of totalitarianism is provided by Hannah Arendt. She recognized the very source of totalitarian monstrous aberrations in the very ideology that stands behind the Stalinist as well as the Nazi system. Ideology is understood there as a kind of logical blanket that individuals impose on their thoughts – simplistic and aspiring to a totality world-view, an abstract and messianic idea, whose actualization necessarily leads to the outburst of terror. Slavoj Žižek deconstructs this totalitarian concept of ideology, exposing its inability to analyze the complex dialectic of Stalinism. The internal dynamics of the Stalinist semiotic universe could be demonstrated by the phenomena of “ultra-orthodoxy” (overidentification with the core of the official ideology): the official façade (communist phraseology) is not a mere illusion hiding the brutal reality of terror (Gulag). Because the ideological façade and terror as its supplement hinge together, both moments are necessary for the existence of the Stalinist system. (Žižek 2004, 196, 262).

For this reason, the very concept of “utopia” became for Sovietologist revisionists synonymous with Stalinist social engineering, radical transformation of the world, not counting the human and social costs of the process. In other words, communist utopia was a sinful attempt to create heaven on earth, as Kolakowski and Walicki like to emphasize (Kolakowski 1978; Walicki 1995). In consequence, people for “totalitarians” are rather passive instruments than active agents in the events, because the only revolutionary subject is a party elite full of utopian schemes. No wonder this historical approach provides the theoretical matrix for the anti-communist narratives about the USSR. Staroń and other Polish rightist historians interpret the Soviet experiment as a totalitarian embodiment of unrealistic and delusive ideas (like international solidarity of the oppressed, common property, or equality of the people). And the only acceptable idea, for them, is the idea of nation. References to “totalitarianism” function today as, to quote Slavoj Žižek’s felicitous claim, *denkenverbot* (the prohibition of thinking) – “the moment one shows the slightest inclination to engage in political projects that aim seriously to challenge the existing order, the answer is immediately: ‘Benevolent as it is, this will necessarily end in a new Gulag!’” (Žižek 2002, 3–4). So, at stake here in confrontation with anti-communist historiography is not only the narrative about the past, but most of all the prospect of the future.

On the contrary to these revisionist contentions, my aim is to propose an alternative, materialist and revisionist interpretation of the Russian Revolution within the Polish context. To challenge prevailing anti-communist clichés, I discuss below three areas:

1. Despite the allegations of the rightist propaganda, many Poles actively participated in the 1917 revolution, among both field and rank militants, as well as Bolshevik elites;
2. The revolution had a profound and beneficial influence on the dramatic Polish political situation at that time, contributing to resolving the burning issue of independence.
3. “Red October” empowered Polish proletarians to engage in class struggle and inspired them to organize their workers’ councils (Polish Soviets) from the bottom up.

1. Polish Red October

Imperial Russia in 1917 was a multinational state with one hundred and eighty million inhabitants, including approximately four million ethnic Poles (i.e. those who identified themselves with the Polish nation and used the Polish language – because Poland as a country did not exist at the time). Most of them were civilians, but there were also six hundred thousand Poles – mostly peasants – in tsarist uniforms (Toporowicz 1988). In the aftermath of subsequent Russian defeats on the Eastern Front, they were becoming more and more radical and willing to rebel. These soldiers, together with workers from factories in Petrograd and

Moscow⁶ (which were moved from Congress Poland during wartime), were the main Polish force in the Russian Revolutions: both February and October. Poles (including Polish Jews) were – besides Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians – one of the most active national groups engaged in these events, especially in the Bolshevik uprising. The Party program of distribution of land to poor peasants and immediate peace were attractive for former serfs and soldiers exhausted by war disaster. The exact number of Poles participating in the October Revolution, however, is the subject of ongoing controversy among historians. The Marxist researcher suggests that it was at least one hundred thousand people, and two hundred thousand more joined the Reds during the civil war against the Whites (Toporowicz 1988, 8). On the other hand, right-wing authors, like Staroń, try to underestimate the size of Polish involvement in the revolution as about eight thousand participants (Staroń 2018, 79), doing so, nevertheless, without any convincing sources. The exact number is almost impossible to verify, but within these numbers one can detect the ideological and methodological differences between both perspectives. Staroń does not count the popular support for the revolution, i.e. the engagement of common folk – peasants and workers – who were not members of any political organization, because, like the rest of rightist Sovietologists, he considers the party activists as the only active subject of the events. Ideas and great personalities are what matters in history for totalitarian anti-communists, not the masses and their grassroots activities. The main difference between left and right-wing historians could be reduced to this simple question: who is the subjective agent of history, the people or individuals?

If the scale of the Polish masses' approval of the Bolsheviks is still ambiguous, the support of Polish professional revolutionaries for socialist transformation in Russia is unquestionable. The two main Polish radical leftist political parties in Russia, the Polish Socialist Party – Left (the internationalist, Marxist faction of the Polish Socialist Party⁷) and the

⁶ For example, in Putilov Mill in Petrograd, which was famous for the revolutionary activities of its workers, there were several hundred Polish proletarians (Toporowicz 1988, 22). For a complete list of factories transferred from the Kingdom of Poland to Russia see: Najdus 1967, 8–24.

⁷ The crucial difference between the right and left factions of the Polish Socialist Party was related to the dilemma “revolution or independence”: the leftist internationalists did not accept the demand to build an independent state, unlike the rightist patriots, who acknowledged an independent Polish state as a necessary precondition for the socialist transformation. There were also internal divisions in the two parties that merged in the Communist Party, to quote Isaac Deutscher's observation: “Each of these two parties had its own traditions. The Social-Democratic Party grew in opposition to the nationalism and patriotism of the Polish nobility, harking back to the insurrectionist romanticism of the nineteenth century, and placed its main emphasis on proletarian internationalism. The Left Socialist Party had at first adhered to the patriotic-insurgent tradition, and the restoration of Poland's independence had occupied a central place in its programme, but later on it came closer to the internationalist attitude of the Luxemburgist party. The Left Socialist Party had its affinities with the Left Mensheviks; only under the influence of the October Revolution did it move closer to Bolshevism. The Social-Democratic Party adopted – as the proceedings of its Sixth Congress show – an attitude very close to that of Trotsky, remaining independent of both the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks. At the time of the revolution, the Luxemburgist party – again like Trotsky – identified itself with Bolshevism. Here we must take note of the differences within the party between adherents of the party's official leaders (Rosa Luxemburg, Marchlewski, Jogiches) and the so-called “Splitters” (Dzierżyński, Radek, Unszlicht). This was, however, a discord, not a genuine split. The “splitters” represented a certain opposition to the centralism of the Executive Committee, which

Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (the former party of Rosa Luxemburg, which represented her hard-line Marxist internationalism), fully supported the October Revolution and their members actively participated in it. For example, they formed the 1st Polish Revolutionary Regiment and in the summer of 1918 had begun the organization of the largest Polish revolutionary formation – the Western Rifle Division, embryo of the Polish Red Army⁸. The Polish regiment was not only formed by Polish militants, because it has an internationalist character – Russians, Ukrainians, Koreans, Chinese, Latvians and Germans fought hand in hand with Poles in the division (see Wrzosek 1969; Miodowski 2011, 235). Staroń's prejudice against the idea of internationalism as a kind of aberration leads him to the bizarre thesis that Russians were so suspicious of Poles that they did not allow them to form a fully Polish division (Staroń 2018, 203; Miodowski 2011, 241–242). For him, internationalism only concealed Russians' hatred of the Poles, their Anti-Polonism. The hypothesis of Russian communist distrust towards Polish activists because of their inherent – even if repressed – patriotism plays an important role in the rightist narrative. We can see how Polish anti-communism is organically combined with Russophobia.

In 1917, the SDKPiL even gained official access to the Bolshevik Party. During the next year at least four thousand Polish communists got the Bolshevik party card (Toporowicz 1988, 61). The direct influence of socialist revolution from 1917 on the Polish radical left was the unification of those two parties into one Communist Workers' Party of Poland on 16 December 1918. It was the very first communist organization in the newly reborn Polish state, and its agenda focused on two main issues: supporting the Bolsheviks in the hopes of instigating workers' upheaval in Poland and, for the same cause, supporting the proletarian revolution in Germany. What is interesting is that the centrist, social democratic and patriotic Polish Socialist Party (the former party of Józef Piłsudski, also known as the Old Faction or Revolutionary Faction) initially showed moderate enthusiasm about the October Revolution (some of its members even fought in the Red Guard in those days; Najdus 1971, 94–95) because their activists presumed that the Bolsheviks could support Polish independence, according to their agenda on national self-determination (Toporowicz 1988, 62).

operated from abroad. Furthermore, they were somewhat closer to the Bolsheviks. In the Polish Communist Party, the SDKPiL tradition was predominant from the beginning. Nevertheless, the importance of these differences should not be exaggerated. They were in actual fact restrained and even obliterated by the real unity of the newly-founded party and the conviction of its members that the old divisions were a matter of the past. The party's ranks were further united by a sharp awareness of their common and unyielding opposition to the nationalist and reformist Poland, to the Poland of the landlords and petty nobility" (Deutscher 1958).

⁸ However, the very idea of a Polish Red Army and ethnicity-based military revolutionary formations in general provoked controversy among Polish communists. For example, the "luxemburgists" – very influential in the milieu of Polish communists in Soviet Russia – were skeptical about organizing national regiments that only preserved the reactionary ethnic differences within the proletariat. Due to their opposition, as well as other factors, the project of establishment of Polish formations ultimately failed (Miodowski 2011, 213–230).

The most influential Polish Bolsheviks⁹ from the revolutionary period were:

- Karl Radek¹⁰, the charismatic agitator and publicist, polyglot and one of the main Bolshevik theoreticians from that period, who in 1917 became Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs (Trotsky's deputy);
- Feliks Kon, the old Polish socialist who was fighting in Kharkov during the upheaval, and became a member of the CC of The Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine;
- Stanisław Pestkowski, member of the CC of the Bolshevik Party in 1917, Stalin's deputy commissar (in the People's Commissar for Nationality Affairs) and temporary central bank governor;
- Józef Unszlicht, member of the Petrograd Military-Revolutionary Council, one of the organizers of the Red Army and Soviet power in Belorussia.

Unszlicht was a founding father of the Soviet secret police (Cheka and then GPU), along with two other famous ethnic Poles in revolutionary Russia, namely Felix Dzierżyński (director of Cheka) and Władysław Mienżyński (its first deputy)¹¹. Mienżyński, one of the most mysterious members of the Soviet nomenklatura, spoke twelve languages, played the piano well, and was called “my decadent neurotic” by Lenin.

Dzierżyński, “The Iron Felix”, was born in 1877 near Minsk in the borderlands of Lithuania-Belorussia in a family of landowners of the Polish nobility. After losing his parents, he began studies for the Catholic priesthood. In the Wilno gymnasium, he converted to Marxism and was expelled two months before graduation. Thus he developed into a socialist agitator in SDKPiL and became one of its founders. Yet he ended up spending eleven years in tsarist prisons, in internal exile, and at hard labor in penal colonies, and he became consumptive.

⁹ There were two most important institutions of Polish communists in the newly born Soviet state: the Commissary for Polish Affairs (one of sixteen national sections of Stalin's Commissary for Nationality Affairs) run by Julian Leszczyński-Leński (a member of the SDKiPL leadership) and the Polish Bureau of CC RCP(b), the so-called *Polbiuro*, constituted in 1919 with Julian Marchlewski as a chair.

¹⁰ Almost none of the numerous historical works about Polish involvement in the Russian Revolution and the Soviet state in general published after 1945 mention Radek, because he was censored by the official narrative as a Trotskyist. The Communist Party of the USSR exonerated him in 1988.

¹¹ After the Bolshevik revolution, five Polish communists became members of the VTsIK: Dzierżyński, Jakow Dolecki, Bernard Zaks, Franciszek Grzelszczak and Ignacy Gintowt-Dziewaltowski. However, the CC of RCP(b) included Dzierżyński, Pestkowski and Bronisław Wesolowski (who was for a while chairman of the Revolutionary Tribunal) (for a detailed history of Polish Bolsheviks in Soviet Russia see: Najdus 1967). The fact that Polish communists occupied such important positions in the newly constituted Soviet power provides a strong argument against Staron's suspicion of Bolsheviks' distrust of Poles.

His eyes certainly looked as if they were bathed in tears of eternal sorrow, but his mouth smiled an indulgent kindness,” observed the British sculptor Clare Sheridan, who in 1920 made a bust of him. Dzierżyński had a certain political vulnerability, having joined the Bolsheviks only in April 1917 and then opposed Lenin over Brest-Litovsk (1918) and workers’ opposition (1921), but he won plaudits as the scourge of counterrevolutionaries and for living like a revolutionary ascetic, sleeping in his unheated office on an iron bed, subsisting on tea and crusts of bread. He reported to Lenin personally and once Lenin became incapacitated, got still closer to Stalin (Kotkin 2015, 459).

Although many current authors picture him as a Stalinist *avant la lettre* and the embodiment of communist evil, it is far from the truth. Polish journalist Sylwia Frołow in her well-balanced biography of Dzierżyński provides strong arguments against these simplified judgments (Frołow 2014), and her book is one of the few examples of non-anti-communist publications about Bolsheviks in Poland. It is worth mentioning that Frołow is a liberal journalist and her book was printed in the famous anti-communist and Catholic publishing house “Znak”.

Interestingly, despite Staroń’s anti-communism, he appreciates Dzierżyński’s role in early Soviet Russia as the most powerful Bolshevik beside Lenin at that time, especially when citing the symptomatic thesis of another rightist publicist: “Only two Poles had a significant impact on the Twentieth Century. The first one might have been the priest Felix Dzierżyński and the second one was Karol Wojtyła – the future pope” (Staroń 2018, 63). In nationalistic discourse, emphasizing Polish ethnicity is an obsession. Even if Dzierżyński was a hardline internationalist who did not declare himself as a Pole, in the light of the genetic concept of naturally determined national identity his Polish origins were more important than his worldview. Dzierżyński serves also as evidence that Poles influenced world history, which expresses an inferiority complex of Polish nationalists. For Staroń, one’s political identity (being an internationalist communist or a rightist patriot) is secondary to one’s inherited ethnicity, which is at stake here. It means that the true antagonism is not between classes but between nations, in this context Russians versus Poles.

This is a perfect example of the ideology of Polonophobia, constitutive for right-wing historiography. According to this attitude, Polish spiritual and material integrity is in permanent danger because of foreign hostility – Russians, Germans, and Jews (the main nations accused of racial prejudice against Poles) are recognized as an extreme threat for Poland. Within the paranoid structure of this ideology, the Polish nation is the greatest victim in world history, surrounded by enemies, who want to discriminate against, suppress, or even exterminate Poles. So the anti-Semitism or Russophobia of Polish nationalists is reflected – in a purely ideological way – in their concept of the anti-Polonism of Jews or Russians: the antipathy toward the Other is justified and rationalized as a protection from the Other’s alleged enmity towards Poles.

Following that argument, it indicates that Soviet Russia, from the very beginning, intended to destroy Poland as a country as well as Polish national-cultural heritage – using Polish communists to realize this aim. On the one hand the rightist nationalist looks for potential enemies of the fragile Polish nation, but on the other hand, they praise every historical achievement made by “great Poles”.

This paradoxical logic leads Staroń to the almost perverse statement that the Polish traitors – an incarnation of evil and moral decline for the author – were the true heroes of the revolution and without their full commitment in the October days the Bolsheviks would even have lost their power. For example, when he writes about revolutionary combat in Petrograd and Moscow, he notes that Pestkowski and Juliusz Leszczyński organized the successful acquisition of Petrograd’s Post Office (Staroń 2018, 69), Stanisław Budzyński and Stanisław Bobiński were the true heroes of the Moscow fights, and other Polish Bolsheviks led the assault on the Kremlin (Staroń 2018, 72–78). The story goes as follows: the revolution was made by Russians, but without Polish support – from Dzierżyński, Pestkowski, *et consortes* – it would have failed¹². Between the lines we can read great regret that such disciplined and dedicated militias were fighting for world communism, not for the Polish independent bourgeois state.

2. Bolsheviks and Polish independence

The influence of the October Revolution on Poland mostly concerns the issue of Poland’s independence. In 1913, Lenin had already written in “Theses on the National Question”:

From this point of view the following circumstance must be given special attention. There are two nations in Russia that are more civilized and more isolated by virtue of a number of historical and social conditions and that could most easily and most “naturally” put into effect their right to secession. They are the peoples of Finland and Poland (Lenin 1913).

Four watchwords had accompanied Red October in 1917: peace, land, and bread, but also national self-determination; the latter notion had been part and parcel of the Bolshevik program since 1903. It was not an ungrounded declaration, because on 8 November 1917 Lenin proposed and signed the famous “Decree on Peace”, which outlined measures for Russia’s withdrawal from the First World War without “payment of indemnities or annexations”¹³. This

¹² To present the whole complexity of this paranoid nationalist anti-communist logic we should state as follows: Russians organize revolution in order to destroy Poland (and other nations), and without Polish involvement the revolution would not succeed. From this perspective it became obvious why Staroń called the Polish revolutionaries *the nation-traitors*...

¹³ It is worth mentioning that the first document during the Russian Revolution concerning the issue of Polish independence was a Petrograd Soviet proclamation “To the Polish People” from 27 March 1917, in which Poland

idea of just and democratic peace was received by all, not only revolutionary, democratic forces in Poland – the official announcement of Pilsudski's PPS about the peace treaty was similar to the Bolsheviks' decree (Jabłoński 1962, 66). It is well known in Poland that the internationalization of the issue of Polish independence – i.e. the alliance's recognition of a Polish independent and autonomous state as a condition for the peace in Europe – was a result of Woodrow Wilson's memorable "Fourteen Points" (the 13th concerned Poland) of January 1918, but hardly anyone admits that his speech was a direct response to Lenin's decree. Anti-communist historians try to depreciate this fact because their arguments are based on an oversimplified assumption that no one could treat what disingenuous Bolsheviks had said seriously¹⁴.

In contrast to their prejudices, the new Russian government did not stop at empty promises, and on 16 November promulgated "The Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia", which proclaimed the equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia and their right to self-determination, including secession and formation of a separate state. Certain historians treated this document as one of the main bases for the liberation of Central European states, including Poland. It was the fulfilment of Lenin's statement that "there will be no free Poland without free Russia" (Jabłoński 1962, 57). However, it must be noted that Poland was on the other side of the Eastern Front – not under Soviet jurisdiction – and, for that reason, the Bolsheviks' policy could affect it only symbolically. But there is no doubt that one of the consequences of the October Revolution was the full internationalization of Polish affairs. In this case, the Entente countries accepted the idea of the self-determination of the Polish nation partially owing to the Soviet standpoint (both Lloyd George and Wilson; Jabłoński 1962, 60–61). To quote Juliusz Górecki, a Polish right-wing journalist from that time, certainly not a Bolshevik supporter: "the Russian revolution was the first to decidedly and unreservedly recognize the right of the Polish nation to independence" (Jabłoński 1967, 47).

Nonetheless, maybe the most important aspect of the 1917 revolution for the future Polish state was the peace negotiations in Brest-Litovsk at the turn of 1917–1918. There was great hope at the beginning that the Soviet side would realize the concept of peace without annexations – which could guarantee independence for Poland – but the ultimate result of the negotiations came as a huge disappointment. The Bolsheviks' tactic was to drag out the peace talks for as long as possible and play for time in the hope that the peace campaign might spark a revolution in the West. With the Ukrainians detached from the Russians at the beginning of 1918, the Germans greatly strengthened their position at the Brest-Litovsk talks (Figes 1996, 519). Therefore, the Bolsheviks capitulated under the German conditions, which included the

received from Russian democratic forces the right to self-determination and full independence (Jabłoński 1962, 43–44).

¹⁴ Thesis on disingenuous Bolsheviks as a rule, see: Maila 1994, 132.

acceptance of the annexation of Polish territory. Nevertheless, there was one decisive aftermath of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk for the Polish future – the Soviet government officially renounced its right to the Kingdom of Poland and the outcome was the cancellation of treaties that legitimized Polish partition on 29 August 1918. For Marxist historians of the Polish journey to independence, that event had a crucial impact on the formal and legal status of Polish statehood, because Soviet Russia was the first to officially delegitimize the idea of the partition of Poland, which somehow opened up the possibility of the existence of a free country. If in Brest Russia relinquished its annexation of Poland, then on 29 August it abolished the legal legitimacy of the very partition (Jabłoński 1967, 71)¹⁵. It should not surprise us that rightist historians ignore this fact, because in their narrative Bolsheviks only wanted to impose the revolution on Poles from above, so their affirmation of the Polish people's right to independence could not be taken at face value. It means that the propagandist slogan of national self-determination was a disguise for the real agenda of Soviet communists – reconstructing the old Russian Empire in the new Red clothes, to replace negligent tsarist bureaucracy with disciplined and loyal commissars (Zieliński 2013, 22–23).

How did Polish leftist parties react to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk? As an act of protest against this agreement, PPS – both its left and right factions – abandoned the Commissar of Polish Affairs, a Soviet institution within Stalin's Commissar of Nationalities that represented the interests of Poles in Russia (Zieliński 2013, 31). The only party that remained in it was SDKPiL, but their leadership – Bobiński, Leszczyński and Unszlicht – also strongly condemned the treaty, although for another reason than PPS. If the former saw in it the betrayal of the Polish right to self-determination, the latter agreed with the “Left Communists” opposition against the peace, led by Nikolai Bukharin and Karl Radek (one of the SDKiPL leaders) (Najdus 1971, 70–73). They were sure that Germany, Austria, Turkey, and Bulgaria were all on the verge of revolution, and wanted to continue war with a newly-raised revolutionary force while awaiting these upheavals. Ultimately the upheavals did not arrive, and after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk there was no real prospect of the revolution spreading to the West.

¹⁵ Another symbolically significant act of Soviet Russia was an unprecedented decree proclaimed a few months after Red October, in which Sovnarkom committed to return to the Polish people all cultural heritage that was looted by the tsars. That decree provoked huge enthusiasm among some Polish communists; for instance, Stanisław Bobiński said: “When? Where? In what epoch has such a thing happened, that the government of a much stronger country not only returned independence to the weaker nation but also returned to it priceless works of art, which were appropriated during wartime?” (Bobińska 1966, 175).

3. Workers' Councils and revolutionary fervor in Poland

Although in 1918 the Red Army did not manage to rally revolution in the West, Polish people (mostly proletarians) organized from below their own Workers' Councils – representative organizations of Polish Soviet workers and peasants. The first council was established in October 1918 in Lublin, and after half a year in the former Kingdom of Poland more than one hundred of such Soviets had emerged (Malinowski 1967, 85; Jabłoński 1962, 181). Their structures and goals were directly inspired by Russian revolutionary councils and similar Soviet movements in Germany and Hungary, as an attempt to constitute dual power in the Polish territories. Therefore, councils were the platform that represented the interests of working people and protected them against oppression from the government. The main organizations behind the initiative were the Social Democracy and the Polish Socialist Party – Left, which soon – as mentioned above – merged to form the Communist Party of Poland. Other workers' organizations and parties competed for influence within the councils as well, including the Polish Socialist Party, the Bund in Poland (an anti-Zionist Jewish socialist movement), and the National Workers' Union (a democratic nationalist party, established after the revolution in 1905 by the right-wing National Democracy in order to increase its support amongst the working class). Due to significant disputes over the political and economic future of the newly independent Poland, the councils failed to create an executive committee – there were too many internal divisions in the weak workers' movement (especially related to the issue of “independence versus socialism”). Even the revolutionary left unified their forces too late, i.e. in December 1918, when the bourgeois state apparatus had already been solidified.

Nevertheless, over one hundred workers' councils operated in Poland in the years 1918–1919¹⁶, assembling around a half million workers, peasants and craftsmen. The most numerous and radical councils were located *inter alia* in Lublin, Warsaw, Zamość and Zagłębie Dąbrowskie (Dąbrowa Basin – the most industrial region of the Polish lands, in which communists had the greatest support); some of them even set up their own military self-defense units, Red Guards, and People's Militia (with their political commissars exactly as in their Russian counterparts)¹⁷. Councils with a communist majority – especially the most influential one in Dąbrowa – attempted to organize the germ of the workers' power in Poland, the Polish Soviet Republic. Their agenda was to constitute a “proletarian dictatorship” that would

¹⁶ Apart from the 1918–1919 period, workers' councils in Poland had also been set up in Congress Poland during the Revolution of 1905, in 1944–1947 in the aftermath of World War II (see: Kenney 1997), and in the Polish People's Republic during the Polish October of 1956 (see: Matejko 1963). Strike committees and councils appeared during the “Solidarność” strikes of 1980–1981 as well.

¹⁷ Elections for the Workers' Councils which sprang up in 1918 revealed that the Communist Party had a level of support almost equal to that of the Polish Socialist Party – communists had a majority in Dąbrowa Council, and socialists led the Warsaw and Łódź Councils. The results of general the elections were as follows: for 2357 delegates, there were 869 representing PPS, 810 CWPP, and 251 Bund (Jabłoński 1962, 192).

expropriate capitalists and landowners (Jabłoński 1962, 184–185). This aim is connected with the episode of the Red Republic of Dąbrowa (Deutscher 1958). In the territories under council control they established progressive and pro-worker policies: an 8-hour workday, wage increases, and public works for the unemployed (Bicz 1934, 33). At the turn of 1918 and 1919 those units, council representatives, and trade unionists¹⁸ organized the biggest strikes of that time, such as a general strike throughout the Dąbrowa coalfields on 8 November 1918 (Bicz 1934, 22), demonstrations by the unemployed, and demonstrations of solidarity with Soviet Russia (for example, a huge demonstration on the first anniversary of the October Revolution took place in Warsaw).

Meanwhile, the events across the eastern border inspired a curious social experiment – the ephemeral Republic of Tarnobrzeg in eastern Poland. The idea of the Republic emerged from mass demonstrations of peasants, which were happening almost on a daily basis in the fall of 1918. Former serfs even established their own farm councils, inspired by the urban workers¹⁹. Additionally, the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (of which Tarnobrzeg was part) incited political unrest. On 6 November, after a demonstration with some thirty thousand people, local peasants decided to take advantage of it and seize power. Its main organizers were two socialist activists – Tomasz Dąbal (who later became a member of the Communist Party) and Eugeniusz Okoń, a progressive Roman Catholic priest. As news of the Bolshevik Revolution came to Tarnobrzeg, the people decided to follow Communist ideas. They demanded liquidation of the capitalist government, socialization of forests and meadows, confiscation of church property and, above all, implementation of land reform, which would result in taking away land from rich owners and giving it to the poor peasantry. Also, the peasants, directed by Okoń and Dąbal, started to coordinate their local administration (in four local counties) as well as to organize a peasants' militia. Unfortunately, the Republic of Tarnobrzeg was pacified by units of the freshly created Polish Army at the beginning of 1919.

These examples show to what extent the idea of Polish Soviet power was powerful in those stormy years. What happened then to the Workers' Councils? They were dismantled around July 1919, following the withdrawal of the Polish Socialist Party (which in many cases had a council majority), and suppression by the Polish government, which saw the councils as a barrier to the formation of a bourgeois Polish state (Szczygielski and Tymieniecka 1960, 101). To understand this process, we should outline the broader context of the genesis of an independent Poland. On 7th November 1918 Polish reformist socialists established the Provisional Government of the Polish People's Republic in Lublin with Ignacy Daszyński as a

¹⁸ This means that the first united socialist and communist federation of trade unions in Europe was established in Poland (Malinowski 1967, 97)

¹⁹ A quite similar republic, but on a smaller scale, was created for six weeks in Pińczów (in central Poland), where peasant rebellion was led by Jan Lisowski (SDKPiL activist) and former Austrian officer Kalinka ("Kazuń").

prime minister. On the one hand, its agenda was progressive for that time (land reform, nationalization of industry, workers' control over the enterprises, free and secular education, and so on – the typical program of reforming capitalism), but on the other, this policy would be proposed only as a bill for the future parliament. The path to socialism was supposed to lead through parliamentary democracy. For this reason, Lublin's cabinet was subordinated to Pilsudski on 18 November, and a new government was constituted representing so-called national unity, and socialist Jędrzej Moraczewski became its chairman (with the support of the democratic alliance of PPS and the leftist peasants' party).

The new office was still the “people's” by name, but in fact, in its actions, it protected the interests of the Polish ruling classes and rescued Poland from the possible revolutionary scenario. Its reign brought about three major achievements: introducing an 8-hour workday, universal suffrage (including for women) and... suppression of the workers' and peasants' council movement (it disarmed Red Guards, brutally crushed strikes and smashed Tarnobrzeg's uprising). PPS, especially party elites, strongly supported this new government and actively helped to dismantle the Workers' Council – it was time for the long-awaited independent state, not for the socialist revolution²⁰. As we know very well from the example of the post-Second-World-War period in Western Europe, social democracy was a vaccine against the communist threat. No wonder that “Our Tribune”, the official organ of SDKPiL, compared Moraczewski's government to Kerensky's in Russia: “What differentiates Polish *kieieńszczyzna* from the Russian one is the fact that it was not begotten by revolution, but by the fear of reactionaries” (Jabłoński 1962, 200). As Jabłoński summarized:

The statement that all the cabinets then [in 1918-1919 - BW] were about to prevent social revolution in Poland is unquestionable, as everybody, from communists to conservatives, agreed on it. But why did the social masses not understand this, the masses which were far from wishing for the power of the bourgeoisie? (Jabłoński 1962, 201).

In trying to answer this question, we should address the internal predicaments of the socialist revolution in Poland. The most obvious factor was the weakness of Polish proletarians caused by the catastrophic condition of industry after the First World War (production levels had

²⁰ Socialists were also divided on this matter – the strongest antagonism was between pro-state party leadership and more radical, sometimes even revolutionary, rank and file militants. To give an example of two radically opposed platforms within PPS: the party's left (led among others by Tadeusz Żarski) wanted to establish ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ based on the unification of workers' councils and repressed all its enemies as counterrevolutionaries (Jabłoński 1962, 221–222; Szczygielski and Tymieniecka 1960, 77–78). But the left was the party minority then, and the voice of Mieczysław Niedziałkowski (socialist theoretician) is more representative of the party's position: “on 7th November 1918 communism in Poland was mortally wounded” (Niedziałkowski 1930, 12). The author praised PPS as the only political force which had a real agenda in countering revolution in Poland in 1918. To examine internal disputes between socialists about the workers' power see: Zaremba 1983, 316–353.

decreased about 90 percent compared with 1914) and the insufficient level of revolutionary class consciousness among workers (communist propaganda was mostly spreading in Dąbrowa coalfield and in some more developed parts of Congress Poland). Beside this objective condition, two other issues are of great importance. The Polish poor and working masses were disoriented because of the successful socialist agitation²¹ (PPS promised land reform and nationalization of main industries) that convinced them of the advantage of people's government over the council model, and hence the preferability of an independent national state over a socialist international republic²². The confusion was due to the fact that, in the eyes of the majority of the masses, the counter-revolutionary power was regarded as a revolutionary power. We should also not underestimate the fear of possibly repeating the Bolshevik scenario, which could result in bloody civil war and foreign interventions. This leads us to the second issue: the inability of Polish communists to deploy a convincing alternative narrative. Their vision of instigating revolution could be reduced to the hope of immediate intervention by the Red Army accompanied by German proletarians on Polish land in order to protect the Soviet workers' dictatorship. That was not enough to win the trust of Polish people who were strongly attached to the romantic, patriotic idea of independence. In other words, communists lost the battle for hegemony – in the Gramscian sense of the term – over the Polish masses to reformist socialists, even if the latter betrayed the real interests of proletarians in favor of bourgeois interests. For Marxist historians, socialists were class traitors, just as communists were national traitors in the eyes of rightist scholars.

However, the period of councils had an important impact on the newly established Polish state. The anxiety of the socialist revolution forced the first Polish independent government to adopt a wide range of social policies (as mentioned before, shortening the workday, securing rights to strike, and implementing the whole package of liberal-democratic reforms), which had already been initiated by the activity of Workers' Councils. However, even that was too much for the Polish bourgeois elites, still holding the real power in the country. They used Pilsudski to induce Moraczewski to resign on 16th January 1919. Reformist illusions in Poland ended when the cabinet was taken over by the right-wing Ignacy Jan Paderewski (Polish nationalist composer)²³. Both the chance of revolution and the moderate social democratic prospect of

²¹ In Poland as a rural country whose population belonged predominantly to the peasant classes, the Catholic Church in the countryside had a great influence on the people. Its conservative and anti-Semitic propaganda was radically opposed to Bolshevism as a Jewish plot threatening western civilization. For relations between revolution and anti-Semitism in the Polish context see: Marzec 2016, Krzywiec 2017.

²² We should not forget about the revolutionary legend of Pilsudski as the "savior of the Polish people, man of the moment," that was deeply rooted within Polish society at that time. He indeed was a savior, but a savior of the Polish ruling class from the revolutionary ferment.

²³ Against his post, Warsaw Workers' Council organized on 7th February 1919 a general strike that inspired other councils, like Lublin's. As a result, the new government was forced to proclaim partial amnesty for the imprisoned workers' activists (Szczygielski and Tymieniecka 1960, 52-56).

reforms disappeared. As a result, PPS had dug their own grave. Everything could change again in 1920, when the Red Army reached Bug, but that is another story.

Conclusion: Methodological anti-communism

In the right-wing narrative, we see a symptomatic contradiction in reference to the council movement in Poland and the revolutionary prospects in general. On the one hand, the council phenomenon and the bottom-up activity of the Polish masses in the period are almost unrecognizable; on the other, the danger of communist revolution is serious. We can analyze it well via Staroń's example. He argues that "Polish communism creates an exotic and marginal group of fanatics, but very flashy and clamorous" (Staroń 2018, 14) or in the same spirit he says:

In 1918 nothing essential could compete with the idea of Polish independence. It was rejected only by the marginal group of Polish communists that was irrelevant to the aspirations of the majority of Polish society. Other political parties across the whole spectrum, including PPS, demanded in the first place rebuilding of the independent state. Everyone who was not insane – both politicians and common people - thought that socialist ideas were just utopia (Staroń 2018, 161–162).

This is a typical ideological strategy of diminishing and discrediting opponents through presenting their views as something against the normatively constructed concept of nature or common sense. Not to mention that on the eve of independence, the influence of the Polish Communist Party over the working classes in the main industrial centres was certainly not smaller than that of the PPS – it was probably larger (see Deutscher 1958). However, although Staroń ignores this fact (and the whole Workers' Council event), he actually claims that those curious and insignificant Polish communists were the real threat to bourgeois Poland. He even quotes documents by the Polish secret service from the beginning of 1919, in which we can read that revolution then had a great chance of success (Miodowski 2011, 263) – especially because of communist mutinies in the Polish army, which aimed at creating a Soviet of Soldiers' Delegates (Staroń 2018, 172). As an example, Staroń – following Miodowski – recalls the soldiers from General Haller's army, who in August 1919 solidarized and cooperated with striking miners from Dąbrowa, helping them to disarm gendarmes, but most of all the revolutionary uprising in Zamość regiment in December 1918 – revolutionaries seized the town and established a Workers' and Soldiers' Council (Staroń 2018, 178–183; Miodowski 2011, 258–262). We see clearly that for the author the only actors who could induce a revolutionary situation were soldiers or Soviet agents, not proletarians, and definitely not peasants – because the people, masses, rabble, and other marginal underprivileged parts of the society were not

recognized in this right-wing narrative as autonomous and conscious subjects who were able to act. Therefore, contemporary anti-communist historiography of the October Revolution – such as Staroń, Miodowski, or Zieliński – mainly focuses on the Polish soldiers and high-rank Bolsheviks, who were the real national traitors, often the outstanding and admirable figures fighting on the wrong side of the barricade. For them, history is written only by the great personalities, while the masses as such are just meaningless sacks of potatoes, even unworthy to be a part of the nation. And this is the ultimate mark of their anti-communism.

Against this background, we can see how these anti-communists reproduce typical conservative and reactionary discourse about the masses, which represses and diminishes the poorest strata of society – the rabble, paupers, the mob, etc. (Moll and Pospiszyl 2019). They are anxious about the rebellious crowd gathering on the street during the revolutionary events, which destabilizes and disorganizes the unjust social order – so the most effective defense mechanism for reducing the anxiety is to deny the real existence of the very source of fear, i.e. to deny even the existence of the people. For anti-communist historians, Polish society during the turbulent year of 1918 was fundamentally divided into two groups: marginal communists lunatics (intellectuals, soldiers, and party activists) and the majority of the “healthy” nation (all those who identified with national and independence ideology). But what about the workers, peasants, or urban paupers and unemployed organizing demonstrations and councils? What about those who, for the communists, were the actual subject of social change? The nationalistic discourse did not recognize them at all, because they conceive the nation as an organic whole, deprived of any internal antagonisms (including class antagonism), and those who do not fit into this imagining of the nation are excluded from the community as foreign bodies – fanatical Moscow agents as national traitors – or even not counted as a part of social landscape, like the rebellious masses. Therefore, anti-communism for Polish rightist historians means two things: hatred of the masses who elude nationalistic form, and fear of the possibility of radical change that those masses could provoke. In other words, the revolutionary people are not a fully human subject for the anti-communists. In this context the classic formulation by Jean-Paul Sartre comes to mind: “Every anti-communist is a dog” (Sartre 1961, 248–249).

To conclude, the independent Polish state was constituted by the alliance of the counterrevolutionary forces – from the right to the left – that crushed the possible ‘dual power’ scenario in Poland. And all the anti-communist hysteria in AD 2018 – the centenary of independence – and the fact that works such as Staroń’s book are still being published, only confirms that in 1918 the specter of communism was something more than just a ghost haunting Europe from the East.

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TYTUŁ: Rewolucja październikowa w Polsce: Historia antykomunistycznego wyparcia

ABSTRAKT: Podstawowa teza niniejszego artykułu jest następująca: rewolucja październikowa miała istotny wpływ zarówno na odzyskanie przez Polskę niepodległości, jak i na kształt polskich walk klasowych. Jednak historia tego wpływu jest całkowicie wypierana albo nawet jawnie negowana we współczesnym hegemonicznym prawicowym dyskursie historycznym w Polsce. Setna rocznica rewolucji wywołała publicystyczną dyskusję, w ramach której wydarzenia te były przedstawiane jako „demoniczne źródło dwudziestowiecznego totalitaryzmu”, zapoznając tym samym entuzjazm, jaki rewolucja wywołała wśród Polaków (zarówno jej uczestników, jak i pełnych nadziei obserwatorów). Nacjonalistyczna historiografia, idealizująca Polaków za wszelką cenę, stara się usilnie wymazać polskie zaangażowanie w „Czerwony Październik” albo zredukować je do rangi nieistotnego epizodu. W związku z tym tekst stanowi analizę dominującej narracji na temat rewolucji bolszewickiej w Polsce na przykładzie popularnonaukowej publikacji Mateusza Staronia *Zdrajcy: Polacy u boku Lenina*. Stawką tej analizy jest z jednej strony zbadanie strategii i sposobów antykomunistycznego „przepisywania” historii, podporządkowanej doraźnym celom ideologicznym, z drugiej zaś przedstawienie alternatywnej – wobec obowiązujących

antykomunistycznych klisz – narracji dotyczącej rewolucji październikowej w polskim kontekście, opierającej się na trzech zagadnieniach:

1. Polskiego uczestnictwa w październikowych wydarzeniach;
2. Wpływu rewolucji na odzyskanie niepodległości przez Polskę;
3. Polskich rad robotniczych jako bezpośredniej odpowiedzi na rewolucję rosyjską.

Cel niniejszego artykułu nie ogranicza się – w związku z powyższym – do przedstawienia alternatywy dla dominującego dyskursu, wykonania kolejnego ćwiczenia w zakresie politycznej i historycznej wyobraźni czy wyciągnięcia na światło dzienne wypartych aspektów polskiej historii. Idzie tu raczej o ukazanie logiki i struktury samej antykomunistycznej narracji.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: rewolucja rosyjska, polska niepodległość, antykomunizm, dyskurs historyczny, ideologia prawicowa, rady robotnicze