

ARTYKUŁY RECENZYJNE I RECENZJE

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AFTER WARSAW POSITIVISM: NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE STUDIES ON POLISH MODERN HISTORY. REVIEW ARTICLE: KAMIL ŚMIECHOWSKI, *ŁÓDZKA WIZJA POSTĘPU. OBLICZE SPOŁECZNO-IDEOWE „GOŃCA ŁÓDZKIEGO”, „KURIERA ŁÓDZKIEGO”, „NOWEGO KURIERA ŁÓDZKIEGO” W LATACH 1898–1914*

1. Introduction

The aim of this essay is to seek new directions in the studies on Polish modern history through reviewing of the monograph with the title of *The Vision of Progress in Lodz: Socio-ideological Aspect of “the Messenger in Lodz”, “the Courier Lodz”, and “the New Courier Lodz” in 1898–1914*², written by Kamil Śmiechowski. With total utilization of local newspapers published in Lodz (in Polish, Łódź), the largest textile industrial city in the Kingdom of Poland, Śmiechowski tackles on following questions such as what ideological trait of liberal intelligentsia so called as “progressive” was, how the trait changed historically, and how progressives differed from other political groups like nationalist and socialist. His monograph focuses on a “specific” group in a “local” city, therefore, rather than but, it contains many valuable arguments which have not been sufficiently discussed so far in spite of its importance. In the reviewer’s opinion, the monograph offers us an appropriate opportunity to go beyond the academic framework constructed by Brian Porter-Szűcs with his globally influential monograph entitled *When Nationalism Began to Hate*³.

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¹ K. Śmiechowski, *Łódzka wizja postępu. Oblicze społeczno-ideowe „Gońca Łódzkiego”, „Kuriera Łódzkiego”, „Nowego Kuriera Łódzkiego” w latach 1898–1914*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2014, ss. 370.

² Translated by the reviewer from the original title. In this essay, “*Goniec Łódzki*”, “*Kurier Łódzki*”, and “*Nowy Kurier Łódzki*” are translated as “*the Messenger in Lodz*”, “*the Courier Lodz*”, and “*the New Courier Lodz*”.

³ B. Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 2000). It was translated in Polish as, B. Porter-Szűcs,

In the abovementioned monograph Porter-Szűcs explained how the ethno-linguistic concept of nation defined by the National Democratic Party (hereafter, Endecja) had emerged in historical contexts of Polish socio-political thought in the 19th century. Indeed, there are critical comments for his work⁴, but it cannot be denied that the basic understanding of Polish history in 19th century described by Porter-Szűcs and his constructivistic approach toward nation and nationalism have become a standard. Today people being interested in Polish modern history have to refer to his works whether they agree with him, or not⁵. However, because in the work of Porter-Szűcs “generation” had a great role when he argued the changes of the ideological trend, his perspective lacked of certain essential aspects in historical past.

Kamil Śmiechowski is a younger historian in Poland and obtained doctor degree from University of Lodz in 2013. The monograph here reviewed is based on his doctoral dissertation. He has already published one monograph, in which he argued how Lodz had been recognized in the prism of the weeklies, which had deeply related to Warsaw positivism⁶. It means that he has keen insight into the Warsaw positivism, and the arguments in *The Vision of Progress in Lodz* are written under such background. Moreover, even though the main field of Śmiechowski is history of publishing, he plentifully refers to the works of social history. It is therefore suitable to seek new directions in the studies on Polish modern history with reviewing of this monograph.

In the following sections, the reviewer will summarize the contents of Śmiechowski’s monograph (section 2), argue about issues which occur in the monograph (section 3), and discuss further issue (section 4).

2. The Contents of Śmiechowski’s *Łódzka wizja postępu*

In the introduction, the author explains that history of publishing in Poland is still in the way of developing because of the serious situation over historical materials that even same series have been kept dispersively. Three main resources used

Gdy nacjonalizm zaczął nienawidzić. Wyobrażenia nowoczesnej polityki w dziewiętnastowiecznej Polsce, Sejny 2011.

⁴ The following essay is the most critical comment for Porter-Szűcs’s abovementioned work. P.M. Dabrowski, *What Kind of Modernity Did Poland Need? A Look at Nineteenth-Century Nation-Making*, “Nationality Papers”, 20–3 (2001).

⁵ In Japan, Haruka Miyazaki finished her doctoral thesis basing upon Porter-Szűcs’s work. See, H. Miyazaki, *Porando-Mondai to Domofusuki: Kokumin-teki-dokuritsu no Patosu to Rogosu (The Polish Question and Dmowski: Pathos and Logos for the National Independence)*, Hokkaido University Press, 2010.

⁶ K. Śmiechowski, *Z perspektywy stolicy. Obraz Łodzi w warszawskich tygodnikach społeczno-kulturalnych (1881–1905)*, Łódź 2012. He is now preparing for a new volume entitled in plan, *Łódzkie inicjatywy wydawnicze w opinii prasy lokalnej („Goniec Łódzki”, „Kurier Łódzki”, „Rozwój”) na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*.

by the author, “*the Messenger in Lodz*”, “*the Courier Lodz*”, and “*the New Courier Lodz*” (hereafter, ML, CL, and NCL) are no exception to this matter, and the author indicates basic information about these dailies in chapter 1 headed “From “the Messenger” to “the New Courier””⁷. In the early time of ML publishers restlessly changed, and it meant financial and organizational instability of the daily. This problem was resolved only in 1903, after the talented journalists, Jan Żółtowski and Stanisław Książek had become the publishers. In this stabilizing process of ML the revolution 1905–1907 also had an indispensable role. The October Manifesto allowed publishing to be limitedly free, and it enabled reading public to grow up. Moreover, revolutionary situation urged ML and CL to vigorously argue about not only political issues, but their political stances. The dailies formed a “progressive” camp led by one of the most prominent positivists, Aleksander Świętochowski, and had a close relationship with the Progressive Democratic Union (in Polish, Związek Postępowo-Demokratyczny), which demanded the right of self-governance and administration for mediation of class conflict. Those stances were succeeded to NCL, and NCL kept on making independent discursive sphere, neither socialistic nor nationalistic.

Then, how did such ML, CL, and NCL recognize contemporary social condition? In chapter 2 headed “Diagnose of Society” the author answers to this question. To put it shortly, they had described society as in crisis. Although Porter-Szűcs generationally sorted positivist as optimistic and nonpolitical and, on the other hand, “the Defiant (in Polish, niepokorni)” as pessimistic and political⁸, Śmiechowski describes that liberals influenced from Warsaw positivism also had had pessimistic and political mind in 1900’s. From the beginning, redactors of ML thought that all social classes were seized social pathology as egoism, which rapidly grew up in capitalism. It was said that people living in Lodz had never paid attention to others’ live condition, and attempts to resolve social problems were too feeble because of “provinciality” of the city. Journalists complained of the lack of public library and poor sanitary situation, and in their discourse, workers consisted from not only factory male workers, but also female worker, domestic servants, and so on, was regarded as the weakest socially vulnerable suffering in disastrous residential, healthy, and educational condition.

In the chapter 3 headed “From Idea to Program”, the author furthermore argues how the dailies thought the methods to improve contemporary social condition.

⁷ The first appendix attached in the end of the monograph shows the storage locations of ML and CL. Other appendixes (e.g. translation of official document) are also informative.

⁸ B. Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate...*, pp. 157–188. His understanding of Warsaw positivism was influenced from the following monograph. See, S.A. Blejwas, *Realism in Polish Politics: Warsaw Positivism and National Survival in Nineteenth Century Poland* (Yale Russian and East European Publications: New Haven, 1984).

The dailies propagated that to improve such situations was the obligation of intelligentsia, and the methods had been represented as “social work” or “quiet and impassive work” deeply influenced from Warsaw positivism, even though these were not the more well-known positivistic phrase, “organic work”. It is also worth to noting that social work was differentiated with philanthropy criticized for its blindness with “causes” of social problems.

In their discourse, cooperative society and trade union as institutionalized bodies of social work would protect workers from exploitation. Leftist journalist Witold Trzcíński insisted that any kind of worker had to belong to each common organization which mediated job to its member, and such organizations would protect society from internal turmoil⁹. On the other hand, campaigns such as the one for building workers residences were regarded as non-institutionalized social work. In sum, liberal program was to distribute the altruistic moral through social work, which meant to work for others. It was argued that social partition between classes was to be resolved, and this conviction was based on the idea of “self-help of society” (in Polish, *samopomoc społeczna*).

The idea, however, was shared with nationalist and socialist, therefore further argument is needed to make ideological trait of progressives more distinct. In chapter 4 “Idea of Progress and Politics”, and chapter 5 “Idea of Progress and the Vision of the Polishness”, the author discusses how progressives had been differed with nationalist and socialist. As was shown in the case of Trzcíński, progressives in general assumed positive attitude toward socialism for the common stance to acknowledge the existence of class conflict, being against brutal way of revolution, nevertheless. According to the author, the main political rival for progressives was *Endecja*. In ML, CL, and NCL, it was attempted to define the Polishness on their own, and the biggest difference with the Polishness of *Endecja* occurred over Roman Catholic Church. Progressives thought that Catholicism was not necessary for the Polishness, and it indicated the variety of national imagining at that period. However, progressives also had an aspect of antisemitism, although they protested racism of *Endecja* in the Fourth State Duma election. ML, CL, and NCL always paid attention to Duma, because it was obvious that their social program would not be achieved without the right of local self-governance. In sum, progressives were “socialistic” over the social problem, but, in political context, they were rather liberal.

In the conclusion the author notes that daily newspapers offers us huge information about contemporaries’ social consciousness and mentality. As is shown above, we can understand how society was represented from the perspective of ML, CL,

⁹ Witold Trzcíński was an activist of the Left Faction of the Polish Socialist Party. See, K. Śmiechowski, *Łódzka wizja postępu. Oblicze społeczno-ideowe „Gońca Łódzkiego”, „Kurier Łódzkiego”, „Nowego Kuriera Łódzkiego” w latach 1898–1914*, Łódź 2014, s. 198.

and NCL. Even after nationalism and socialism had held ideological hegemony in 1880's, liberal successors of Warsaw positivist continued to vitally act in various ways, and they thought social engagement as the obligation of intelligentsia.

3. Issues Related to Progressives

From the arguments abovementioned the reviewer understood that the vision of progress in Lodz had meant not only economic development, but also cultural cultivation, that progressives as people believing in such vision had regarded social engagement as the obligation of intelligentsia, and that they had tried to accomplish the obligation through social work, which meant to work for others. After the transformation in 1989–1990, historical researches on liberals in modern Poland have been developed by Tadeusz Stegner and Maciej Janowski, and apparently the monograph written by Śmiechowski will contribute to raise the level of research in this field¹⁰. In following sections, the reviewer intends to discuss issues related to the arguments of Śmiechowski. For the purpose of making this review more productive the reviewer will refer to some examples extracted from medical history in Lodz. This is because doctors were strongly influenced from Warsaw positivism¹¹ and related to ML, CL, and NCL¹².

The first issue is to consider to the location of progressive in the whole political structure. Śmiechowski focuses on the relationship between liberal and nationalist or socialist, but, on the other hand, the whole political structure formed of those individual relationship and the location of progressive in there are not argued sufficiently. Although the author has repeatedly referred to “the Lockout in Lodz” happened in 1906–1907, he doesn't step further in specifying the role of progressives in that accident. In the process of the lockout, only progressives were able to arbitrate between nationalists and socialists for making of the decision which represented the whole workers excluded from factories¹³. Apparently, progressives owned peculiar position among political groups, and it seems to be worth to researching how progressives had changed their location in the whole political scene after the revolution 1905–1907.

Moreover, related to “the Lockout in Lodz”, the reviewer regards the definition of citizenship (in Polish, *obywatelstwo*) from the viewpoint of progressives as significant issue, too. In general, liberalism is understood as based on the entre-

¹⁰ See, T. Stegner, *Liberalowie Królestwa Polskiego 1904–1915*, Gdańsk 1990; M. Janowski, *Polska myśl liberalna do 1918 roku*, Kraków 1998. The monograph of Janowski was translated in English as, M. Janowski, *Polish Liberal Thought before 1918*, (Central Europe University Press: Budapest, 2004).

¹¹ See, J. Fijałek and J. Indulski, *Opieka zdrowotna w Łodzi do roku 1945. Studium organizacyjno-historyczne*, Łódź 1990, s. 88–256.

¹² See, Śmiechowski, *Łódzka wizja postępu...*, s. 55.

¹³ See, „Rozwój”, 18.03.1907, nr. 63; 19.03.1907, nr. 64; 23.03.1907, nr. 68; 25.03.1907, nr. 69; 26.03.1907, nr. 70; 27.03.1907, nr. 71.

preneurs who composed of a majority of citizen. Such understanding, however, is misleading in the case of liberals in Lodz, because, as the author notes in chapter 2, progressives had begun to criticize entrepreneurs as the result of the lockout. Though it is well known that discourse over citizenship was often seen in this period, how people imagined it is still left to be unsettled issue, and this issue seems to be opened to the comparative studies on liberals in other countries.

The third issue is over organization. Although Śmiechowski substantially discusses organization in his monograph, the reviewer finds that his arguments so much lean to discursive aspect of organization. Indeed, his primary aim is to reconstruct history of daily newspapers, so the lack of paying attention to practical aspect of organization may not be appropriate critic for his work. However, even when we argue discursive transition, it is necessary to synthesize representation and practice, and, in the reviewer's opinion, there is a need to rethink to the formation process of liberal program, the main content in chapter 3, from such a point of view. This is because that chapter seems to be deficient in the consideration to nationality question, though it had brought serious conflict between intelligentsia in Lodz.

For example, in 3 March 1907, severe dispute over structural issue had occurred in the Society for Diffusion of Knowledge (in Polish, Towarzystwo Krzewienia Oświaty), which Śmiechowski treats as the most important social organization¹⁴. The dispute broke out from the protest against the assemble rule which set assemble to be held on Sunday and hindered Jewish intelligentsia to take part in decision making of the Society¹⁵. This dispute problematized more democratic administration of an association, and it was inevitable that such issue happened in multi-ethnic society. Even medical activities were no exception. For example, when the Society for Child Caring "Nest" in Lodz was established, there was polemics over inscription of "the spirit of Polish nation and religion" in the statue of the Society. Between medical doctors, on one hand Józef Bruziński, a founder of pediatrics in Lodz, strongly insisted on stipulating of the phrases, on the other hand Stanisław Skalski, to whom Śmiechowski often refer as the closed person to ML, CL, and NCL, agreed with a proposal to delete the phrases because the Society was founded for German and Jewish children, too¹⁶. As we have seen above, organizations which liberals had expected as the basement of social works hold conflicts inside of themselves, and it is needed to reconsider to the relationship between the construction of liberal program and such conflicts.

¹⁴ See, Śmiechowski, *Łódzka wizja postępu...*, s. 177.

¹⁵ See, S.L. Majewski, *Skrzynka do listów*, „Rozwój”, 2.03.1907, nr. 50; *Towarzystwo krzewienia oświaty*, „Rozwój”, 04.03.1907, nr. 51; *Kronika. W sprawie prawomocności zebrania ogólnego T.K.O.*, „Rozwój”, 06.03.1907, nr. 53.

¹⁶ K. K., *Towarzystwo opieki nad dziećmi*, „Rozwój”, 25.02.1907, nr. 45.

In addition, it seems curious for the reviewer that the author doesn't mention to anything about authoritarianism, though it is easy to find a character which seem to have been "authoritarianistic" at first glance in the mentality of liberals and their expectation to organization which had made individuals subordinated under permanent aim of society¹⁷. It has recently argued that authoritarianism had been formed not outside of democracy, but inside of it, and civil society could have a function as incubator of authoritarianism¹⁸. This matter seems to be of a great importance for history of not only 19th century, but also 20th century.

As is shown above, the researches on progressives will shed the new light on the whole situation in society, and the reviewer will argue in the next section that it can be connected with broader contexts.

4. The Issue over the Concept of "Province"

As we have already seen in the summary of chapter 2 in the monograph of Śmiechowski, representing Lodz as having a nature of "provinciality (in Polish, partykularz)", or being "provincial (in Polish, prowincjonalny)" implicated that the city was socially and culturally less equipped¹⁹. Such epistemologicistic practices were shared in other daily newspapers published in Lodz such as "*the Development* (in Polish, *Rozwój*)", which was ideologically closed to Endecja. In 1908, in context of propagating the necessity for founding of water and sewer services, Lodz was described as "outskirts of civilized world", where only industrially developed, not like "Western" Warsaw²⁰. Even more broadly, the medical periodical published in Lodz indicated that the concept of province had been utilized in whole territory of the Kingdom of Poland. The periodical was entitled *the Medical Journal: the Organ of Provincial Medical Societies in the Kingdom of Poland* (in Polish, *Czasopismo Lekarskie. Organ Towarzystw Lekarskich Prowincjonalnych Królestwa Polskiego*), issued in 1899–1908.

This periodical was founded by socially minded doctors in Lodz who were in the Medical Society in Lodz (founded in 1886), or the Lodz branch of the Warsaw Hygienic Society (founded in 1902). Above all, Seweryn Sterling and S. Skalski played leading roles in organizing of doctors' social activities and transporting of advanced medical knowledge from Western countries, especially

¹⁷ Porter-Szűcs argued about Endecja and authoritarianism. See, B. Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate...*

¹⁸ See, S.-L. Hofmann, *Civil Society, 1750–1914*, (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2006).

¹⁹ The reviewer agrees with the argument of Jan Chańko, who insisted that Lodz had not been a provincial city in the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. On the other hand, the reviewer regards that we can't overlook contemporaries' consciousness to imagine Lodz as provincial. Thus, we should be aware of the difference contemporaries' consciousness and the actual situation of the city. See, J. Chańko, *Łódź XIX–XX wieku – miasto prowincjonalne?*, „Roznik Łódzki”, t. 45, 1998.

²⁰ Janusz, *Kronika tygodniowa*, „Rozwój”, 19.09.1908, nr. 202.

German. They dealt with investigations of sanitary situation to compensate for the deficiency in official statistics, so their documents²¹ are quite valuable resources to survey living conditions of poor people. According to Anna Marek, redactors and collaborators of “*the Medical Journal*” belonged to the Medical Society in Lodz, Dąbrowa Basin, Częstochowa, Lublin, Warsaw, and Vilnius²².

It may seem to be odd, but obviously Lodz had stood at the center of social activities of doctors in the Kingdom of Poland. In the reviewer’s opinion, the reason why so many doctors appeared in Lodz was not that textile entrepreneurs provided them good salaries, but that the mentality of intelligentsia, which Śmiechowski argues in the monograph here reviewed, brought them to Lodz represented as demoralized and unsanitary in influential weeklies²³. In 1911, when the First Assemble of Provincial Doctors had been decided to be held in Lodz, the organizing commission declared that provincial doctors “had to improvise some expedients and manners to adapt progress of medicine to practical needs” without any medical institutions²⁴.

The words cited above had meant that to work in provinces had had a special sense, and the common purpose had lead doctors to the Assemble even from Galicia (Austrian Poland)²⁵. In other words, the concept of province had negative imagination, therefore, rather than but, it strongly motivated intelligentsia such as medical doctor to engage in social problems, and less equipped “provinces” were connected with each other beyond national border. On the other hand, however, these networks between provinces had located in both Polish national sphere and transnational sphere such as global circular of medical knowledge, so we have to pay attention to the tension between those two spheres²⁶. Either way, the reviewer regards that the issue of representations and practices over province indicates us to joint local and transnational perspectives, and it will be significant for future historical researches.

²¹ For example, six volume of “*Hygienic Book Series for Workers* (in Polish, *Robotnicza Biblioteczka Higieniczna*)” (1907–1910), and *Material for Sanitary Monograph of Lodz City* (in Polish, *Materiały do monografji sanitarnej miasta Łodzi*), Łódź 1912.

²² A. Marek, *Działalność społeczno-polityczna lekarzy związanych z łódzkim „Czasopismem Lekarskim” w latach 1899–1908*, „*Medycyna Nowożytna*”, t. 10, 2003, nr 1–2, s. 127.

²³ See also, Śmiechowski, *Z perspektywy stolicy*....

²⁴ Cited from, J. Cabaj, *Zjazdy środowisk medycznych Królestwa Polskiego 1908–1914*, „*Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki*”, t. 51, 2006, nr 2, s. 101. Translated by the reviewer. Cabaj described that doctors had discussed the necessity to organize assemble for provincial doctors from the beginning of “*the Medical Journal*”.

²⁵ In this period the network of doctors had expanded beyond Atlantic, and they corresponded with each other. See, J. Cabaj, “*Walczyć nauką za sprawą Ojczyzny*”. *Zjazdy ponadzaborowe polskich środowisk naukowych i zawodowych jako czynnik integracji narodowej (1869–1914)*, Siedlce 2007.

²⁶ The following book is useful to know the recent trend of transnational history. D. Rodogno, B. Struck and J. Vogel (eds.), *Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s*, (Berghahn Books: New York, 2014).

5. Conclusion

For the aim of this essay, the reviewer has consciously extended the arguments in various directions, so it is necessary to summarize them as conclusive remarks.

As we have seen in section 2, in his recent monograph Śmiechowski successfully indicates that liberal successors of Warsaw positivism vigorously acted even after ideological trend had sifted to nationalism and socialism, and this argument contains many subjects which can be developed furthermore. In the section 3, the reviewer pointed out two issues related to “the Lockout in Lodz” happened during the revolution 1905–1907, and these were to research the location of progressive in the whole political structure and the definition of citizenship from the viewpoint of progressives. Moreover, the reviewer insisted that it is necessary to synthesize both discursive and practical aspects of organizations in order to rethink the relationship between the construction of liberal program and ethnic conflicts. In the section 4, the reviewer discussed that to work in “provinces” had a special sense between intelligentsia in the Kingdom of Poland, and the issue of representations and practices over province shows us to joint local and transnational perspectives.

The reviewer believes that attempts to tackle on the issues abovementioned will bring anew historical understanding of the period, after Warsaw positivism, the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. It will pay more attention to dynamics in local society and be more opened to transnational contexts than understanding constructed so far. In the monograph of Śmiechowski, it is explicitly indicated that the studies on Polish liberals in modern history has huge possibility. Considering that nationalism has globally become influential, the reviewer regards contemporary significance in the studies on them at that period for their critics toward nationalism. We know that the critics had ended in less success, therefore, rather than but, it is meaningful to return to this theme.