

**Prof. Julian Auleytner**

Chairman of the PTPS from 2001

## **The Polish Society for Social Policy (1924–1948) – Community Orientation**

The activities between 1924 and 1948 of the Polish Society for Social Policy (Polish acronym: PTPS), which only recently have been dealt with in the relevant literature, provide a graphic illustration of the “blank spots” that still persist in the history of the discipline. Finding just a scrap of information was truly an uphill battle in a situation where no textbook published between 1948 and 1999 contained any mention of the organization. The same holds for the entire content to date of the monthly *Polityka Społeczna* [Social Policy]. Brief references to the PTPS are made in T. Szturm de Sztrem’s 1959 work, *Instytut Gospodarstwa Społecznego* [Polish acronym: IGS, The Institute of Social Economy] and in a 1981 book, *Historia Katolicyzmu Społecznego w Polsce 1832–1939* [The History of Social Catholicism in Poland 1832–1939], both published in Warsaw. Not incidentally, the latter provides an erroneous date for the PTPS’s establishment. In these circumstances, one would be justified in believing that the Society failed to leave any mark whatsoever during its nearly 15-year existence. But as I was able to discover in the archives of the National Library, the Warsaw School of Economics (SGH) and the City of Warsaw, little could be further from the truth.

The direct impulse to set up the institution was provided by the Social Policy Congress held in Prague in October 1924, to which Poland was to send a delegation. Learning about the event in May of that year, practitioners and academics launched preparations for a new organization, crowned with the adoption of its bylaws (August 31, 1924), election of a provisional executive, and entry in the registry of associations (No. 1153), which was tantamount to official imprimatur. The Polish delegation was thus dispatched to Prague on time, although the first general meeting of the Society, and its election of regular authorities, was held not until February 27, 1925. The Society’s bylaws set out the following goals for the PTPS:

- 1) to collect and disseminate texts of legal regulations on social affairs;
- 2) to collect information on social movements at home and abroad;
- 3) to conduct questionnaires and compile monographs on social policy matters;
- 4) to publish the Society’s own paper;
- 5) to organize lectures popularizing social policy issues in Poland;
- 6) to take part in international congresses devoted to social policy;
- 7) to promote information campaigns abroad about socio-political relations in Poland;
- 8) to post correspondents abroad;
- 9) to run a social policy museum and take part in social policy exhibitions at home and abroad.

The founders believed in 1924 that an organization dealing with social policy issues had been lacking in Poland since the early days of independence. While in a number of areas the country’s social legislation surpassed that of several Western countries, the awareness of social issues among Poles was negligible. The PTPS was thus seen as an attempt to create a centre for scientific and popularizing work.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Zarys działalności Polskiego Towarzystwa Polityki Społecznej 1925-1928* [The Polish Society for Social Policy. An outline of activities 1925-1928], Warszawa, 1929. This publication contains the only known full list of PTPS membership, as of 1929. Other information about the organization, in the period to 1933, was sporadically provided in the ministerial quarterly *Praca i Opieka Społeczna* [Labour and social welfare]. But in: M. Świącicki, *Instytucje polskiego prawa pracy w latach 1918-1939* [Institutions of Polish labour relations law in 1918-1939], Warszawa, 1960, the author often draws on PTPS members’ output—namely publications by G. Simon and M. Klott—without naming the organization. Information about the objectives set out in the PTPS charter and the founding meeting is available from *Przewodnik Społeczny* [Social Guide] 1925(9). p. 428. The PTPS charter of 1924 is safeguarded at the City of Warsaw Archives, in the collection of the City Executive Board, Socio-political Department, File 273.

A bylaws provision declared the Society to be a non-partisan scholarly institution.

High among its goals was broader public understanding of the importance of a rational social policy. The intention was to draw broad sections of society into the solving of numerous social issues. For the young Polish state to consolidate its freshly regained existence, the promoters believed, all strata of Polish society should seek mutual consolidations and settle their internal relations.

The PTPS initiative was reminiscent of the establishment in 1872, by a group of influential German economists and historians, of the *Verein für Socialpolitik* [Association for Social Policy], which played an important opinion-making role through stimulating discussions, holding conferences and publicly presenting positions on key socio-economic issues.

In 1925, the PTPS joined, as a national section, the newly formed International Union for Social Progress in Basel, and throughout the interwar period was represented on its board by Fr. Prof. A. Wóycicki, a deputy to the Sejm (Poland's lower house of Parliament) for the Christian Democrats (1922–1927) and a KUL professor, who later became rector of King Stefan Batory University in Wilno. PTPS representatives attended the Union's annual congresses, presenting papers and taking part in discussions.

Here is but a sample of these contributions, attesting that the Polish school of social policy was beginning to make its mark in the international arena by the late 1920s:

1. *The legal framework for the Polish emigrant community and its organization*, by Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska (Bern, 1925);
2. *Statistics for the Polish emigrant community*, by S. Dziewulski (Bern, 1925);
3. *The role of bank credit in the fight against unemployment*, by E. Lipiński (Montreux 1926);
4. *The role of public works in the fight against unemployment*, by Z. Daszyńska-Golińska (Montreux, 1926);
5. *Unemployment insurance*, by J. Drecki and A. Wóycicki (Vienna, 1927).

The Society's 1928 roster contains close to a hundred names, among them professors L. Caro, Z. Daszyńska-Golińska, S. Dziewulski, K. Krzeczowski, L. Krzywicki (member of the audit committee between 1926 and 1928), E. Lipiński (later, the secretary-general), I. Koschembahr-Łyskowski, T. Szturm de Sztrem (later, the author of a monograph on the IGS), A. Szymański (later, KUL rector), and A. Wóycicki (later, rector of Stefan Batory University). Other prominent names included I. Daszyński, K. Kornilowicz (of the *Instytut Spraw Społecznych*, ISS, Institute of Social Affairs), F. Młynarski, M. Klott de Heidenfeldt (Chief Inspector for Labour Relations in 1921–1939), J. Chaciński (from the Christian Democratic movement), A. Rose, and the labour ministers, J. Iwanowski, F. Sokal (co-founder of the ILO and first chief inspector for labour relations), G. Simon and B. Ziemięcki.

An interesting trait of PTPS membership was its pronounced **axiological pluralism**. On the one hand, there was the renowned left-winger Ludwik Krzywicki, and on the other, proponents of Catholic social thought, for whom affiliation with PTPS proved no obstacle to academic careers at KUL, King Stefan Batory University or the Social Council to the Polish Primate (established in the 1930s). The Society also had Jewish members, a circumstance which, together with the membership of socialist figures, earned it a Freemasonry reputation in some quarters.<sup>2</sup>

The first president of the PTPS was, for a short time, Prof. Stefan Dziewulski (1876–1941). A graduate in law from Warsaw University, he further studied social sciences in Berlin and Paris. In 1904–1928, he was the editor-in-chief and publisher of *Ekonomista* [Economist, Polish scientific journal]. A member of the IGS, where he published a work on the results of the Silesian plebiscite (1921), Dziewulski is regarded as a statistician, but his scholarly output is interdisciplinary in character.<sup>3</sup> In 1926 he was succeeded as PTPS president by Minister Gustaw Simon, who remained in that capacity till the outbreak of World War II.

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<sup>2</sup> A surprising corroboration of this opinion is provided in Ludwik Hass (1999), *Wolnomularze polscy w kraju i na świecie. Słownik biograficzny* [Freemasonry in Poland and the world: A biographical dictionary], Warszawa. A juxtaposition of PTPS and IGS membership lists with that publication reveals, respectively, 15 and 13 freemasons, primarily senior officials of the Ministry of Labour and Welfare.

<sup>3</sup> See *Słownik biograficzny statystyków polskich* [Biographical dictionary of Polish statisticians], Warszawa, 1998, pp. 82 and 83.

Vice-presidential positions went to Prof. Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska, a senator from 1928 on the pro-government BBWR ticket (she stayed on as vice president till her death in 1934), and Fr. Prof. A. Wóycicki<sup>4</sup> from Wilno, who during his parliamentary tenure was chair of the Sejm's Labour Protection Committee. This line-up seems to indicate an intention to keep a balance among various schools of thought and between Christian democrats and moderate socialists.

Growing in the initial period, the PTPS's membership later stabilized, reflecting the association's tight financial conditions and difficulties with pursuing a social policy at a time of crisis and unemployment. The 1926 roster included 78 names. In later years the figures were as follows: 80 in 1927, 96 in 1928 (the by-name roster for that year has survived), 101 in 1929, 111 in 1932, 106 in 1936 and 100 as of December 31, 1937.<sup>5</sup> In numerical terms, the PTPS and IGS were almost on a par with each other, the former registering slightly more members.

The PTPS's seat was located in downtown Warsaw, first at 19 Jasna Street and then, from the summer of 1930, at 4 Szpitalna Street. In 1932, in response to financial pressures, it was temporarily moved to the offices of the ISS, at 19 Wiejska Street. Its final address was 1 Wilcza Street. Throughout its existence, the PTPS had on its payroll a secretary and a janitor, who in the early 1930s were receiving annual payments of 1100 and 300 zloties (Polish currency), respectively.

The registration fee (running at an unchanged level of 5 zloties) and the membership fees (1 zloty per month) produced a yearly inflow of some 900 zloties, which remained below the break-even point. The organization was therefore subsidized by the Ministry of Labour and Welfare and also by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (in view of the trips to Switzerland for sessions of the International Union for Social Progress). Sponsoring by the PKO and BGŻ banks also played a role in some of the early years.

Starting from 1928, public lectures were held to popularize social policy questions. Some of them were delivered at Warsaw University, where they gathered between thirty and fifty attendees.

In 1930 and 1931, the Society published *Wiadomości Społeczne* [Social News], a 16-page brochure of which 14 (sometimes double) issues were produced over the period. Its editor-in-chief was Dr. Melania Bornstein-Łychowska, a Ministry of Labour employee and an IGS member who edited a work on the first ten years of social policy in Poland. Intended by its editors to be an independent source of direct information on developments in the field at home and abroad, it was one of just a handful of similar publications, among which were also the ministerial quarterly *Praca i Opieka Społeczna* [Labour and Social Welfare] (appearing from 1920), *Statystyka Pracy* [Labour Statistics] (from 1921), *Inspektor Pracy* [Labour Inspector] (from 1928) and *Ruch Prawny, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny* [Legal, Economic and Sociological Movement], issued in Poznań. Catholic papers, such as *Prąd* [Current], *Przewodnik Społeczny* [Social Guide] or *Ateneum Kapłańskie* [Priestly Atheneum], led by priests doubling as social politicians (A. Szymański, E. Kozłowski and S. Wszyński will not be discussed here). For although they provide a wealth of information about social policy, they form yet another "blank spot" waiting for a discoverer and researcher.

Probably the only place to find a complete set of *Wiadomości Społeczne*'s archival copies is the National Library in Warsaw, where they are safeguarded in the IGS collection. Their perusal reveals the interest taken at the time in labour legislation, social welfare, the activities of the International Labour Organization, migrations, coal-mining developments, unemployment, and trade union activities. Thus, the July 1931 issue carries an account of the May 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* by Fr. Prof. A. Wóycicki, and a list of the IGS's recent publications, received free of charge by the PTPS. The *Wiadomości Społeczne* articles were presented in a form similar to that of today's *Polityka Społeczna* [Social Policy], only in a much finer print. But the ambitious periodical met with a weak response among potential subscribers, and ran out of funds in 1931. In the same year, it was reactivated for a short period, during which time its final four issues were brought out.

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<sup>4</sup> Their biographies are provided in this author's publication *Polityka Społeczna. Teoria i organizacja* [Social policy: Theory and organization], Warszawa, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Based on the surviving PTPS reports for 1934, 1936 and 1937, kept in the Library of the Warsaw School of Economics (SGH). The reports contain numerous financial statements of the organization, and lists of PTPS lectures delivered in a given year. I obtained access to these reports thanks to my colleague Dr. M. Grewiński.

The PTPS mounted an important Exhibition on Cottage Industry,\* opened on May 31, 1931 in Warsaw at the seat of the Institute for Social Affairs (13 Leszno Street). Sitting on its organizing committee were professors Krzywicki and Krzeczkowski, members of both the PTPS and the IGS. *Wiadomości Społeczne's* last (fourth) issue in 1931 contained a report on cottage industry in Poland, the only such presentation of the subject by the social policy community. The measures taken to publicize the exhibition provide ample evidence of cooperation among the PTPS, the IGS and the ISS. Indeed, there is no trace of any conflict within the milieu of social politicians in the pre-war period.

The main line of PTPS activity was that of monthly lectures to which practitioners and academics alike were invited. Annually, between 4 and 15 such gatherings were held, as available resources permitted. And so, according to the 1934 activity report, six hundred people attended 15 lectures/discussions, boasting an average 40 attendees per meeting. At one such event, a lecture on Soviet developments was delivered by Czesław Bobrowski.

Starting from 1932, the PTPS ran monthly 15-minute programmes on Polish Radio that were broadcast on Wednesdays. And so, in a December 1932 chat, M. Balsigerowa discussed the social consequences of joblessness on the basis of the findings of her questionnaire research carried out among 204 households.

A report for 1936 carries the name of then 24-year-old Dr. Waclaw Szubert, who lectured on May 19 about Great Britain's unemployment insurance - the subject of his doctoral thesis, just defended at Warsaw University. Presumably, the PTPS authorities intended to promote the young academic, who made such an impression on his colleagues that he was elected in 1937 for a three-year tenure as a member of the Society's executive and as deputy secretary. This important episode has eluded the authors of a publication that portrays Szubert as a social policy scientist.<sup>6</sup>

PTPS publications aimed to fill in the gaps in the relevant Polish literature. In all, twelve titles were brought out.<sup>7</sup>

Dealing with a variety of subjects and covering a wide area of academic interests, these works provide a powerful illustration of how the Polish school of social policy was taking shape in the pre-war period.

Another line of PTPS activity was initiated in 1928 by Prof. Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska, who collected and processed data on a strike action by textile workers in Łódź. Her contribution was the subject of a discussion that involved representatives of government and labour.

The main proceedings of the PTPS took place at plenary sessions. In rare cases, special-interest sections were set up, such as one focusing on labour co-operatives, in existence between April 30, 1928 and April 10, 1934. During that time it issued eight PTPS brochures on Polish developments in the field (mostly authored by member J. Wolski). Co-operative organizers joined the PTPS to form their own section, although after four years - having delivered 531 lectures to a combined audience of

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\* Cottage industry, a notion that may sound archaic to some contemporary readers, meant small-scale industry that can be carried on at home by family members.

<sup>6</sup> *Polityka społeczna XX wieku. Waclaw Szubert* [Twentieth-century social policy. Waclaw Szubert], PTPS and UW Publisher, Katowice-Warszawa, 1997. Interestingly, Szubert himself did not mention the PTPS in his publications.

<sup>7</sup> I. Koschembahr-Łyskowski (1927), *Cele i zadania polityki społecznej* [Objectives and tasks for social policy], Warszawa, (written by a lawyer, the publication contains a warning against two extremes in approaching the social question: demagoguery and dilettantism); S. Roszkowski (1927), *Czas pracy jako zagadnienie społeczne* [Working time as a social issue], Warszawa; J. Drecki (1927), *Organizacja pracy, produkcji i zbytu* [Organization of production and distribution], Warszawa; H. Fuss (1928), *Zapobieganie bezrobociu i stabilizacja życia gospodarczego* [Preventing unemployment and stabilizing the economy], Warszawa; J. Drecki (1928), *Główne zasady ubezpieczenia na wypadek bezrobocia* [Main tenets of unemployment insurance], Warszawa; M. Bornstein-Łychowska (1928), *Międzynarodowa Organizacja Pracy* [The International Labour Organization], Warszawa; G. Simon (1928), *Zagadnienie społeczne w konstytucji polskiej* [Social issues in the Polish Constitution], Warszawa; A. Wóycicki (1929), *Dzieje robotników przemysłowych w Polsce* [History of industrial labourers in Poland], Warszawa (the weightiest academic publication to the PTPS's credit); M. Balsigerowa (1933), *Społeczne skutki bezrobocia wśród fizycznych robotników przemysłowych m. st. Warszawy w świetle ankiety roku 1931/1932* [Social consequences of unemployment among blue-collar industrial workers in Warsaw in light of the 1931-32 survey], Warszawa; J. Drecki (1934), *Idee i polityka gospodarcza Prezydenta Fr. D. Roosevelta* [The economic ideas and policies of President F.D. Roosevelt], Warszawa; M. Klott de Heidenfeldt (1937), *Inspekcja Pracy w Polsce* [Inspection for Labour Relations in Poland], Warszawa, (impression: 1,000 copies), *Sprawozdanie z obrad Drugiego Międzynarodowego Kongresu Polityki Społecznej w Paryżu w dn. 25-28 lipca 1937* [Report from the Second International Congress of Social Policy in Paris on July 25-28 1937], Warszawa, 1938.

nearly 23,000, and having broadcast three radio programmes—they left amicably to form the Society for the Support of Labour Co-operatives.

Prof. Daszyńska-Golińska, the Society's vice president, died in February 1934. Although inconspicuous in the now-available documentation, this fact must have affected the subsequent activity of the PTPS. She was succeeded by S. Sasorski, the head of the Directorate General at the Social Insurance Board (ZUS) and an IGS member. From then on, the executive of the organization was composed of ministerial officials and one professor.

The PTPS's pre-war history had its own dynamics. Especially in the initial period, the Society emphatically sought to create a Polish school of social policy that would hold its own in a competitive international environment. It operated in the shadows of the Ministry of (Labour and) Social Welfare, by which it was subsidized, and yet its published output testifies to the PTPS's autonomy. The Society had many distinguished names on its roster, but in unfavourable economic and political conditions it failed to provide a platform from which to effectively popularize the cause of social reform.

As revealed by research into the PTPS's membership,<sup>8</sup> out of the 98 fellows listed by name in the 1928 register, twelve professors died or were killed during World War II. The war experiences and the post-1945 fortunes of many other members, whether non-academics or those who left written traces of their activity, remain unknown. What is clear is that only a minority survived (among them, professors E. Lipiński, W. Szubert and A. Wóycicki).

It is to be regretted that the PTPS remains a forgotten chapter in the history of social policy science in Poland,<sup>9</sup> a predicament created by the communist authorities' attitude towards those thinking differently. One year after the war, as Waclaw Szubert recalls,<sup>10</sup> Roman Garlicki (1901–1986) tried to reactivate the Society, having first established contacts with the International Federation of Social Policy Societies, of which the Polish organization had been a member. In June 1947, a request for renewed registration—complete with the text of the 1924 bylaws—was presented to the Warsaw City Hall by a group of 15 promoters.<sup>11</sup> Led by A. Wóycicki and A. Krygier, they included W. Szubert, J. Piotrowski, J. Rosner, H. Altman, S. Jurkiewicz and W. Sokorski. The offices were to open at 231 Czerniakowska Street. The petition waited for eleven months in the drawers of Department V at the Ministry for Public Security, where it had been sent for opinion. However, when the City Hall asked for speedier processing, a rebuff came, citing “lack of guarantees that the tasks set out in the bylaws will be discharged properly”. On this basis, the Warsaw mayor issued a formal refusal (dated August 28, 1948) which read: “The legalization of the Society would not serve the public good, because its frame of reference would encroach upon the competences of the State, thus introducing a multi-pronged approach to the field of social policy”. The PTPS Organizing Committee appealed the decision to the Ministry for Public Security (its text could not be found in the archives), and in early November 1948 a final refusal closed the initiative for many years to come.

Following the havoc wrought in the 1939-1989 period, the discipline of social policy, keen to preserve its identity, is now coming back to its illustrious historical roots, as marked by axiological pluralism and compromise on technicalities. Thus, it was not until the 1990s that the PTPS's reactivation could be finally carried out.

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<sup>8</sup> Based on: M. Walczak (1995), *Ludzie nauki i nauczyciele podczas II wojny światowej. Księga strat osobowych* [Scientists and teachers during World War II: Register of human losses], Warszawa. I have found in this book the following professorial names that also appeared on the list of PTPS founding members: S. Dziewulski, M. Handelsman, K. Kornilowicz, K. Krzeczowski, L. Krzywicki, L. Kulczycki, M. Lewy, Z. Ludkiewicz, J. Łazowski (PTPS vice-president), I. Koschembahr-Lyskowski, J. Piekalkiewicz and A. Szymański. The PTPS's human losses were no doubt higher – we do not know the names of academics who joined the PTPS between 1929 and 1939.

<sup>9</sup> Sadly, there is no-one today to lay flowers at Warsaw's Powązki cemetery at the tombs of the PTPS's vice-presidents, professors St. Dziewulski, A. Wóycicki and Z. Daszyńska-Golińska. The tomb of Daszyńska-Golińska is no longer in place, despite an inscription on the Plaque of the Deserving. And A. Wóycicki is also forgotten – both as rector of King Stefan Batory University in Wilno and as a priest – by scholars sharing his ideological beliefs.

<sup>10</sup> *SiM z Historii Ubez. Społecznych* [Studies and Research Materials on the History of Social Insurance], 1987(5), R. Garlicki's obituary of W. Szubert.

<sup>11</sup> The information presented herein has been passed to me by R. Wojtkowski, head of the Warsaw State Archives, who in October 2003 found the PTPS file (No. 273) in the collection of the City Executive Board, Socio-political Department.