
Conference of the Polish Socialist Organizations: National Headquarters, Socialist Party of America: Chicago — Oct. 29, 1910.

Minutes by Mabel H. Hudson, Secretary

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National Headquarters, Oct. 29, 1910.

The conference was called to order by National Secretary J. Mahlon Barnes at 2 pm, Saturday, October 29. Those present were Comrade I. Daszynski of Austria, Comrade L. Banka, representative from the Polish Socialist Alliance [*Zwiazek Socjalisów Polskich*], and the Executive Committee of the Polish Socialist Section [*Zwiazek Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej*], composed as follows: H. Cxiszewski, J. Raciborski, A. Gayek, B. Haron, and W. Wybronic. Comrade Barnes and Comrade George H. Goebel represented the National Executive Committee.

Comrade Henry Anielewski was asked to act as interpreter. Comrade Barnes elected chairman and Comrade Hudson as secretary.

Comrade Barnes reported that this conference was the result of action taken at the last meeting of the National Executive Committee [Aug. 7-8, 1910], at which meeting representatives of the Polish Socialist Alliance [ZSP] had brought up the question of affiliating with the Socialist Party, and that the purpose of this conference was to arrange for the first steps toward such affiliation.

It was decided that the representative for the Alliance [ZSP] and one for the Section [ZPPS] should take turns in setting forth their views, and Comrade Banka was selected for the Alliance and Comrade Cxiszewski for the Section.

Comrade Banka stated, in substance, that the Polish Socialist Alliance [ZSP] was to hold a convention at Bridgeport on November 24 [1910] and the

Alliance had sent him to this conference in order to prepare the work of affiliating with the party and to ask the National Executive Committee to send delegates to the convention; also that he was instructed to confer upon the subject of affiliation with the party and did not have in view affiliation with the Polish Socialist Section [ZPPS] as such. He also stated that the conditions upon which the Socialist Party wants to affiliate with the different foreign-speaking organizations was not satisfactory to the Alliance [ZSP]. They therefore wish to propose that the Alliance is willing to pay 5 cents upon each member per month to the Socialist Party, in return for which they ask nothing; that the balance of their dues should be used by the Alliance [ZSP] for propaganda and other expenses connected with such. That their dues would be spent for nothing but propaganda among the Polish population in America. The Alliance [ZSP] considers that it is unnecessary work and makes an unnecessary volume of bookkeeping to pay the dues to the respective state and county committees and then get the same money back again from the same state and country committees for the expenses of the propaganda, which the Socialist Party would have to allow. They therefore propose that the affiliation, so far as finances are concerned, should be based on the 5 cents per month. The Alliance [ZSP], in addition, thinks that the full autonomy should be left with them and the entire care of carrying on the work of propaganda among the Polish comrades in America, with the understanding that the different locals throughout America will cooperate during the election time with the American locals. They think the propaganda would be more

simplified if left in their hands, and that all Polish branches should be under the control of the national organization and not be broken up in the different states and towns.

Comrade Goebel: Will the different Polish locals expect to take part in the different state and county locals in the matter of voting?

Comrade Banka replied that they want to concentrate all their efforts among the Polish-speaking comrades.

Comrade Cxiszewski states, in substance, as follows: That the Polish Section of the Socialist Party [ZPPS] does not like to lose its influence upon the party officials, as they want to have active political life in the different localities of the country and therefore must have a voice in party affairs and in the election of party officials. That unless they have such influence upon the party officials the party in particular localities may act contrary to their wishes. The Section [ZPPS] is paying dues to the respective state and country organizations, for which they get in return, when they ask for it, money to carry on the propaganda work among the Polish comrades. This is not very convenient and they ask the Socialist Party to arrange for the payment of dues so that the dues may be paid to one central body instead of to the various state and country organizations. That the United States is such that they have different autonomy in different localities, but that if the financial difficulty could be overcome there would be no obstacle in the way. They want to emphasize, however, that they do not want to lose their influence upon Socialist Party affairs and do not want to lose their activity in electing Socialist Party officials.

Comrade Barnes asked Comrade Daszynski whether he has in Austria similar conditions, and if so how they have overcome the obstacles.

Comrade Barnes then asked to be excused from the conference, as he had an engagement to speak in Milwaukee.

Comrade Goebel took the chair.

In reply to Comrade Barnes' question comrade Daszynski said, in part, as follows: The main differences between the United States and Austria are very large. The Polish workers in America are scattered all over the country, whereas the different nationalities in Austria are in separate territories — that is, the differ-

ent languages are separated — and therefore they are organized into the Socialist Party in their respective territories. The such national parties are affiliated into one Central Committee through their delegate representatives. They act in harmony according to the members of the parliament representing the Socialist movement. Each of the national Socialist parties in Austria has its respective Executive Committee representing the different nationalities. Then each of those Socialist parties pays a certain amount into the Austrian Central Bureau. This money is not being used for any nationality, but is used for propaganda in any particular nationality where insufficient funds hinder the work of propaganda. The political activity is carried on in national political groups, composed of the members of parliaments elected by the various Socialist bodies; but those groups carry on their mutual activity with the exception of national affairs. Each group in parliament decides upon its own affairs with its own nation, and they also endeavor to have their affairs in such form that other nationalities can vote for them. This is the main difference from the Polish workers in the United States, where they are so scattered. We should endeavor to bring this difference between the Polish Alliance [ZSP] and the Polish Section [ZPPS] down to some practical ground and it should be immaterial who shall be the party officials, especially where the Polish nationality is in small numbers. It is extremely important to place all their activity in propaganda in such localities instead of worrying over the different officials. When we get results from spreading propaganda then we will become very important to the Socialist movement in America. The main question is that the Polish Socialist comrades should affiliate themselves in certain localities directly with the regular body, such as state and county locals. Wherever that is possible it should be done, but wherever there is a very small number of Polish comrades they should devote entirely their energies to the Polish Socialist propaganda.

Comrade Goebel states that he thinks the Polish comrades should get in their minds the question of their relations to the local organizations. That the wise thing to do is to accept the arrangements as stated in the national constitution for at least 2 years — that is, until the next national convention, when the weak points will be shown after trying them out.

Comrade Raciborski states that the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party has no power to change this article of relationship, which was accepted at the last national congress, and that therefore he agrees with Comrade Goebel that such arrangements should stand. He believes that each nationality should acquaint itself with the local movement and, having that knowledge, would be much better fitted to select local comrades for the Socialist Party ticket and would be in a position to elect or reject any candidate. That it is also important that the party officials should be proper ones, and that they do not wish to deprive themselves of the right to take part in electing party officials.

Comrade Goebel suggests that we have no right to help in electing their National Executive Committee, and that therefore, in fairness, they should have no voice in electing our committee except as regular party members.

Comrade Banka states that regarding the amalgamation of the foreign-speaking organizations and the Socialist movement, the trouble is the difference in languages, and that this is one that cannot be overcome, as we will always have the foreign languages to contend with, as new foreigners are coming over to this country all the time. He states that the Alliance does not desire to make a point of issue of the payment of dues, but that they have their own organ to support, while the Polish Section [ZPPS], though having a daily, does not have to support it, since it is not their organ. But the Alliance [ZSP] owns its own organ and the support of it must come from the dues of the members. Their dues are 25 cents a month, the whole of which is used for propaganda and in supporting their organ. That what is paid to the Socialist Party will have to be added to the dues already paid.

Comrade Goebel read aloud the article in the national constitution relating to foreign-speaking organizations.† It was then read in Polish and general discussion as to the understanding of it followed.

Comrade Daszynski advised that the only conclusion that can be reached is that the Polish Section [ZPPS] should send their representatives to the convention of the Alliance [ZSP] at Bridgeport on November 24 [1910], and that the first steps toward affiliation should then be made, and that the Alliance [ZSP] should in turn send their representatives to the convention of the Section [ZPPS] to be held in Cleveland, O., on December 25 [1910], at which time the work of completing the affiliation should be done.

Comrade Banka said in conclusion that the section of the constitution relating to foreign-speaking organizations had not been understood by the members of the Alliance [ZSP] before, but that now since the different ways of affiliating had been made plain to him he was sure the Alliance [ZSP] would also see things differently. He said he did not want to be a prophet, but that he thinks the question of joining the party is just about the same as settled.

Comrade Anielewski state that in conclusion he wanted the comrades from this moment to cease to carry on any friction, especially in public, and that there should never be any friction between speakers of the Alliance [ZSP] and the Section [ZPPS]; to remember that we are all Socialists with one aim; that we all belong to the Socialist movement of America. This sentiment met with unanimous approval.

The conference adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Attest:

Mable H. Hudson,
Secretary.

†- The Socialist Party's constitution adopted by the 1908 convention in May and endorsed by party referendum on Aug. 8, 1908, does not contain any article or section dealing with the existence of foreign language branches. The May 1910 Socialist Party "Congress" did not deal with constitutional matters on its agenda. An extensive Article XIV on "Foreign Speaking Federations" appears in the constitution adopted by the 1912 convention in May and endorsed by party referendum on Aug. 4, 1912. Presumably, this or similar language was amended to the constitution via referendum, circa 1909. The fact that these provisions were amended midstream goes far to explain why Banka was not aware of the extant language on the matter.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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