

Activity of the Pro-communist USDP in Western Ukraine (1923–1924)

The article highlights the activity of the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine after its transition to the Radical Left Camp at the VI Party Congress of March 1923 in Lviv. It was before the Polish authorities banned the Party in January 1924.

The attention was paid to the reasons and consequences of the political evolution of the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine, the main directions of its activities, the foundation of the separate club of the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine in Sejm.

Key words: USDP, Party, Congress, General Council, communists.

At the end of XIX century, in 1939 the notable place in European political process took place the social- democratic movement, which belonged to the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (hereafter USDP). It was originated in 1889 at the beginning of the registration of Ukrainian movement in Galicia and actively asserted the national and social rights of the Ukrainian working class. The article disclosed the activity of the USDP in Western Ukraine from March 1923, when the Party Congress openly declared the transition of Social Democrats to Communists positions, before the Polish authorities banned it in 1924. Chosen theme attracted the attention of some researches [3; 4; 43], including the author of this publication [37–42], but is still arose the interest. The USDP took an active part in the Ukrainian revolution in 1917-1920 [38], before the Unification Act in January 1919, supported the government of the West Ukrainian National Republic and later the activity of social governments the Directory of Ukrainian National Republic. In 1919 -1920 the members of this party were the Galicia social-democrats V. Temnytskyi, O. Bezpalko, V. Starosolskyi and S. Vityk. In 1920 USDP has condemned the Treaty of Warsaw, instead it supported the Polish – Ukrainian rapprochement. The defeat of national –liberation movement caused a discouragement of social –democrats in the political concepts of S. Petliura and T.

Petrushevych. The party started to search for a new orientation with the purpose of gaining national statehood. USDP supported the platform of negation as to the Polish authorities, boycotted the enumeration in 1921 and the parliamentary elections in 1922 in Eastern Galicia. At the same time the formal existence of the Ukrainian state – the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (thereafter the USSR), particularly the policy of “Ukrainization”, which has become an attractive contrast to the destruction of Ukrainians in Poland, distributed among the population the Soviet mood. Supporters of the Soviet Ukraine had massively joined the USDP (because other Ukrainians parties were supported by emigration authority West Ukrainian National Republic to 1923) and as radical M. Stakhov noted, “gained the majority in it”.

<https://translate.yandex.ua/>Under the pressure from below USDP took a pro-bolshevik position, orientating on the Soviet Ukraine, in which saw the basis for the construction of the United Ukrainian socialist state. The origins of Pro-Bolshevik orientation A. Chernetsky rightly considered that the Galician social-democrats, which “studied socialism from the western-European sources” and “grew in mass socialist democratic parties of the West, ... did not know of the psyche (“imperialist”. – I. R.) of the Moscow Bolshevik [56, c. 63].

The Communist party of Eastern Galicia (hereafter CPEG) took advantage of the orientation of the USDP on the unity around the USSR. The Communists-“Vasylkivtsi”, embodying the proclaimed by Comintern tactics “Unitary working front”, since 1921 penetrated into social-democratic organizations. After the split in May 1922 in the Main USDP government, the leaders like L. Gankevych, P. Buniak and I. Kvasnytsia left it. The Communists launched a campaign as to the open acquirement of the party. Ideological and political differences in the USDP, the personal ambitions of the leaders were distracted the activities of the party organizations in places. The transition of the USDP in the Communist camp at the VI Congress was a major success of the Communist Party of Western Ukraine (CPWU, since October 1923). In a speech at the IV conference of the Polish

Communist Party, in December 1925 Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPWU, Y.Krilyc said, "...in 1923 we passed our resolutions, and seized the Party... I don't know, if in the history of the working movement of recent times has a similar case" [59, s. 149]. On 14 March 1923 before the Congress of the Council of Ambassadors of the Entente was openly sanctioned the annexation of Eastern Galicia by Poland, which caused an ideological crisis among the Ukrainian parties of national-state orientation. The VI Congress of USDP was held in Lviv on 18 March 1923 with the participation of 52 delegates and 18 guests [14, арк. 15, 18]. In the beginning of the meeting on the initiative of A. Chernetskyi "Declaration of the Congress of the social democratic party of Eastern Galicia" was adopted, in which the USDP has condemned the decision of the Council of Ambassadors: "In spite of all the ruling capitalist imperialism, the Ukrainian proletariat of our country considers himself as one of the proletariat of our mother Soviet Socialist Ukraine and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" [54, 6]. In the first report "Statement of activities" A. Chernetskyi accented that in the ranks of the USDP were 4200 people, of which 3500 in the province and 700 abroad. The speaker warned that "we should not become at different times in different ways to national issues, and to approach to all with the Marxist class point of view" [14, арк. 17, 18].

During the speech which is called "The International political situation and USDP" M. Parfanovych emphasized that the party "must take the path of merely class interests and to solve all questions only from this point of view" [53, 13].

The Congress adopted a "Resolution in the modern political situation", in which USDP declared that "the liberation of the proletariat from both social and national captivity is inconceivable within the scope of the capitalist system ... and the unification of all Ukrainian lands into one Soviet socialist Republic in alliance with the already existing Soviet socialist Republics may come only after the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie" [50, 51]. The Congress elections

were held the Main Council. The Chairman of the USDP elected A. Panas [55, 1], and members of the new Council became the communists V. Popel and B. Kuzma, except the social-democrats (A. Chernetskyi, M. Parfianovych, etc.). Organizational notice of A. Chernetsky contained a statement that in front of the USDP “bright horizons open to work in rural areas”, among the agricultural proletariat [14, 21]. The Congress approved a new Statute of the USDP, in which the party acted as a defender of the interests of the Ukrainian working class not only in Galicia, and Volyn, Kholmshchyna, Polissia and Pidlyashya. It has to extend its activities on the Ukrainian lands under Poland, “by means of class struggle ... build a socialist social regime” [16, 3].

A special Commission of the USDP has developed a new project of the Party’s program, which was not adopted “because of shortage of time” [15, 81]. USDP has set a target of “elimination of the capitalist system on these (Western. – I.R.) lands, the beginning of proletariat power”: the nationalization of the trade, the banks, the socialization of land, the taxation of the wealthy sections of the population, the introduction of public distribution of products, as well as the reunification of Western Ukraine with the Ukrainian SSR in the “Federative Union with all Eastern Soviet Republic”.

The program - minimum of the USDP in the framework of the bourgeois state provided establishment of democratic freedoms, 8-hour working day for manual and 6-hour – for brain- workers, prohibition to work for children under 14 years of age [48, ark. 42, 43]. The participants of the Congress adopted a number of specific resolutions, the meeting closed with the song of “the Internationale” [14, 23, 25]. Pro-Communist decisions of the VI Congress were supported by 50 delegates against two [10, 3], and that showed the unanimity of the Congress.

On 20 March 1923 the Main Council on the USDP meeting, adopted the appeal “To the Ukrainian working people of Eastern Halychyna, Volyn, Kholmshchyna, Polissia and *Pidlyashya*”, which stated that the Congress has given the party's

“proletarian class face” [13, 18]. According to the testimony of the police, “USDP as a whole had adopted the Communist platform” and the “former legal name was left only for tactical reasons, to work more efficiently and without interference from the authorities” [12, 70]. At the same time, the new government rose in opposition against the subordination of the USDP by governing authorities CPWU. Communist M. Tesliuk remembered that “the head of Main Council of the USDP O. Panas and his deputies and other members actually were against the Communist party implemented control over the actions of the USDP. They looked on the communists V. Popel and B. Kuzma, elected by the Congress of the Main Council, and especially at me, a local collaborator of the “Land and freedom”, as we were strangers” [46, p. 98]. M. Stakhiv, expressed the view that the leaders of the USDP “were disgusting to communists”, but “still were allowed to choose themselves to the new Central Committee of the party” [45, p. 42]. Resolution of the VI Congress USDP has caused a resonance in the political life of the region.

Ukrainian parties of national and side harshly condemned SDPU for destroying the unity of the national front. The Ukrainian National Working Party (UNWP) in newspaper “Hromadskyi Visnyk” pointed out the fallacy of the thesis “about solving the national question in social revolution, about the creation of the proletarian united world front and other.. the SDPU’s ruling that was issued on its last convention.. is rudely reactionary...” [8].

The SDPU’s headquarters escalated the struggle against national democratic parties. On May1, 1923 at the meeting in Lviv A.Chernetskyi urged to “the class struggle that aimed at breaking the borders and building a worldwide social republic” [15, 36]. Meeting of the SDPU’s Main Council on May 21, 1923 sharply condemned the UNWP’s activity [23]. The SDPU’s press named the labors “a political corpse, the decay of which is rapidly coming” [9, 90], and URP – the party, that “revealed the most of national traitors” [6]. The policy of Polish socialistic party (PSP) was critically evaluating, because of it is supporting “the bourgeois countries.. forgot about the labor’s class interests...” [28]. On March

1923 the adherent of the communist ideology I. Kalyatynskyi became the editor of SDPU's newsweekly. On May 1923 they started publishing the "Nova Kultura" magazine edited with S.Rudyck Central SDPU's agency the "Vpered" magazine that had been closed by police in 1992 was restored on January 1, 1924 (the editor – I.Kalyatynskyi). "The new, exceptional proletarian way" of SDPU's was grounded right in its first issue [5]. In "Zemlia I Volia" magazine was written that "Ukrainian workers had had to fight against Ukrainian bourgeoisie the same way as against one's Polish" [26]. "The working- rural authority "in the USSR was called "related for labor and villager of every nation..." in the "Nova Kultura" magazine [36, p.5]. In the end of 1923 in Volyn "Selyanska dolya" appeared. It was the newsweekly circulation with the 800 copies which was affected by SDPU [49, 10].

After the VI meeting of the SDPU's de facto became into the legal addition of CPEU- CPWU. According to police's information, the famous communists under the SDPU's flag were taking part in the celebration in Stryi on May 1, 1923 [11, 15]. On May, 1923 the communist M. Tesliuk was the participant of the socialistic parties' conference in Warsaw. He mentioned that after this meeting, "the main areas of work of USDP were determined by Central Committee of CPWU" [46, p. 99, 100]. Along with USDP operated another legitimate Pro-Communist organization – "Union of the proletariat of the cities and villages" (hereinafter – SPCV), and the difference between them was found by the district Secretary of CPEG: the members of the SPCV were the communists of different nationalities and the USDP became the analogue of SPCV for "Ukrainian Streets". Not all of them were the members of the CPEG, but "the height" of USDP was seized by communists totally [9, 105].

On the September 2, 1923 in Stanislaviv, the united actions of USDP and SPCV ensured the conducting of mass rally of working youth on the International Youth Day with the requirements. The requirements were: the establishing of 6-hour working day, free general education in Ukrainian language, the decisive

struggle against “nationalism, fascism and militarism” [10, ark. 4, 15]. Under conditions of crisis, the Ukrainian social and political movement began to increase the number of local organizations of USDP. New working council of USDP appeared in Zolochiv, Tysmenytsia, Sudova Vyshnia, Nadvirna, Liuboml, Yavorov, also peasant councils – in Lapatyn of Radekhiv district, Lavrov of Starosambirskiy district, Chystyliv of Ternopilskii district, Triitsa, Ilyntsi, Hlibychyn Pilnim of Sniatynskiy district, Hryhoriv of Rohatynskiy district and others [37, p. 173]. Party societies, where was no more than 20 members, existed in dozens of villages. The organizational activities of USDP in Stanislavivsk province, according to the police data, captured the territory of Kolomyia, Sniatyn, Stanislavivsk, Rohatynsk, Kalysk, Dolynsk and Zhydachivsk districts [2, p. 30]. The most actively the USDP worked in Kolomyia and Sniatyn district, under the leadership of Communist V. Korbutiaka [54, 15]. He initiated the formation of 9 peasant councils of USDP [10, 102]. The strengthening of public influence of USDP testified the district Party Congress, which took place on the June 3, 1923 on Pokuttia in Kolomyia [24] and Drohobych district Party conference on June 24, 1923 [25]. The newspaper “Kurjer lwowski” reported that the positions of the USDP in rural areas, especially among landless and land-poor, grow from day to day, removing from thence the influence of the working group and the Ukrainian radicals. The influences are exceptional” in many districts [58]. Pro-Communist leaders of the USDP gained predominant influence in some of the reading rooms of “Prosvita” [29]. Activities for education of the local branches of USDP was carried out by the Main Council, the members of which, in particular, the Communists V. Popel and V. Kuzma, traveled to popularize Communist ideas in the province [27]. Informing about the establishment of the Council of peasant councils of USDP in Bolehiva and Bolihivtsi of Drohobych district, the police were concerned that “much of the USDP in Lviv wants to instill Communist ideas in the countryside” [15, 117]. According to the testimony of police, M. Tesliuk was “a courier between Centrale in Lviv and local organizations” [11, 26]. “Under the guise of an employee of the authority of USDP “Zemlia i volia” he assumed actual leadership

of the USDP Secretariat”, organized “the dispatching of members of the Main Council of the USDP and the Communists ... to solve legal cases of CPEG. So USDP began to grow, and using its legal form, increased the ranks of CPEG were increased...” [46, p. 97, 100, 101]. USDP policy influenced on the evolution of the Ukrainian parliamentary representation (hereinafter – UPR) in the Polish Sejm, founded after the elections on November 1922 in the North-Western lands, over which was enshrined the sovereignty of the Polish state (in Galicia taking into account the uncertainty of its international-legal status of Ukrainian population boycotted the election). On the meeting which was conducted on 26 March 1923 the Main Council of USDP decided to establish the socialist group in Sejm [15, 95]. Autonomous socialist faction in the Ukrainian Sejm club was founded on May 23, 1923, consisting of nine persons: I. Voytyuk, O. Pashuk, and H. Prystupa, Y. Skrypa, P. Vasynchuk, M. Chuma and later S. Makivka, V. Mohniuk and A. Bratun [1, p. 74]. They provided preparation for the Socialist Congress in Volyn, Polissia, Kholmshchyna and Pidliasha, which forbade the police [57, k. 1]. On November 17, 1923 in Lutsk hosted the meeting of only 9 ambassadors of socialist fraction and 60 delegates from the socialist groups [10, 4, 5]. At the meeting, delegates of the Main Council of USDP arrived. They were A. Chernetsky, B. Kuzma and V. Popel. The meeting adopted a resolution about leaving from the current socialist parties” and the recognition of the USDP program. The meeting decided on the establishment of the regional organization of USDP Volyn, Polissia, Kholmshchyna and Pidliasha with the centre in Lutsk. The participants of the Assembly delegated six members to the Council of the USDP [48, 51]. USDP has spread its activities in Western Ukraine. “The unification of Ukrainian socialist movement in the Ukrainian lands under Poland ... in one party, the USDP, which overshadows and protects the interests of the peasant and working masses, is a new victory ... in the way of their social and national liberation”, – was noted in appeal of socialist faction of UPR on December 5, 1923 [10, 19, 52]. At the enlarged meeting the Main Council of the USDP in Lviv on 9 December 1923 four deputies of socialist faction (I. Voytyuk, O. Pashuk, H. Prystupa and M. Chuchmai) became

members of the Council, and one of them (S. Makivka) – deputy of the Council member. The meeting adopted a resolution in which the Council “decided to lead in the future, the most resolute class struggle in the region, and on the parliamentary arena as well, and gave it to socialist faction...” [31]. In fact, socialist faction of UPR became a parliamentary representative of the USDP. The Council of USDP during the meeting which was conducted on 27 January 1924 decided to “take under its political influence the masses, which lost the credibility to nationalist govern centers” [49, 56].

The transition of USDP to the Left Camp has caused an anxiety for the authorities. A broad attack started on the Party press. Thus, from 52 issues of USDP newspapers “Zemlia I Volia” during 1923 only 11 left without the confiscation. In 1923 at night from 14 to 15 October, police carried out the revision in the party Secretariat, in the press offices in Lviv in the flats of USDP leaders [30]. A. Chernetskyi, S. Rudyk, I. Kaliatynskyi and S. Volynets had been arrested for half a month. [14, 29]. On December 9, 1923 during the extended meeting of the Main Council of USDP with the participation of four Sejm’s deputies, the police conducted a search. H. Prystupa declared that it was the violation of constitutional rights. But the policeman answered in a rude way. He said to hide the Constitution to his pocket.

Ministry of the Interior convinced that single repressions do not give the desired results and the broadening of the pro-Communist USDP influence can be dangerous for the state. Therefore on December 19, 1923 the Ministry decided “to eliminate the USDP on the whole territory of the state, because of Communist activities as in the party and in organizations, societies...under its influence”. The liquidation action took place on January 30 1924. The police conducted more than 10 thousand searches and 2 thousand arrests, banned the Party press publishing house (Lviv newspaper “Vpered”, “Zemlia i Svoboda” and the magazine “Nova Kultura”, in Lutsk – the newspaper “Selianska Dolia”) [20; 21]. Were arrested the most active members of the USDP A. Chernetskyi, I. Kaliatynskyi, S. Rudiuk and

editor of "Selianska Dolia" L. Stepaniuk [51, 4, 5]. Eliminating of USDP, the Polish authorities launched a blow to Ukrainians. The newspapers "Dilo" pointed out that "behind the prison bars were not only members of the USDP, but also public figures from Ukrainian National Camp, that do not have anything in common with socialism" [19]. "The arrests among Ukrainian citizenship on 30 and 31 of January – declared the deputy of the Polish Sejm, S. Makivka, - can be considered for the greatest repressions that was practiced by the Polish government to the present time" [20]. During the liquidation of USDP to criminal responsibility for the crime "of high treason" 60 people, hundreds of Party members had different penalty [33, p. 72, 73]. Despite of the prohibition, USDP continue to exist some time. During February – May in 1924 were published issues like "Nasha Meta", "Nash Shliah", "Robitnycha Dumka", "Robitnyche Slovo", "The 1st of Mai". The prohibition of USDP strengthened fanatical and radical elements inside the USDP and "accelerated the process of its merging with the Communist Party" [35]. The Radicals after the dissolution of USDP passed to the illegal CPWU. About a third part of the 34 delegates of the second Congress of CPWU (October, 1925) were social – democrats. [52, 1, 3, 6, 8, 14, 16, 21, 23, 26, 27, 28, 32, 33]. The activity in the CPWU continued the members of the Main Council I. Kaliatynskii (Gauzner) and S. Rudyk (In 1924 since November S. Rudyk published the Communist magazine "Kultura in Lviv) [46, p. 141, 160]. After the submission of USDP inside the socialist faction intensified the ideological struggle. In January, 1924 the meeting of regional Council of USDP in Volyn, Polissia, Kholmshchyna and Pidliasha, appealed to the leaving of the UPR by socialist faction. Y. Voitiuk declared that faction "became ideologically on the ground, on which the Communists stands. But some members wish to join the working people – this tactic is useless, it must be ended" [49, 8]. On January 27, 1924 the Council of USDP supported the decision of the regional party Council [7]. According to the passage of USDP, in February 22, 1924 five members of faction from 9 (Y. Voitiuk, A. Paschuk, H. Prystupa, Y. Scrypa and V. Mohniuk) left the UPR and founded the separate club of USDP in Sejm. The declaration accented that

“socialist faction finds it impossible to continue cooperation with the Ukrainian club as the representative of the poor peasants and workers” [33, 74, 75]. In the proclamation of the “Ukrainian workers and peasants the deputies of the USDP club saw only one ally”, - “the revolutionary workers and peasants’ camp without any differences as to the nationality” [47, 16]. Other members of socialist faction rose in opposition against directions of USDP. From this reason in November, 1924 the social faction initiated the foundation of Ukrainian socialist unity – “Selianskyi Soiuz” [22, c.74].

The faction of USDP defended the point of view of CPWU on the parliamentary arena and published own press – newspapers “Nash Shliah”, “Nash Stiah”, “Holos Pratsi” and “Pratsia”. It was in Lutsk. The deputies from USDP convened a mass Assembly in support of the ideological platform of the party. In June 29, 1924 – 3 thousand people took part in the rally in Volodymyr – Volynskiyi and about 1.5 thousand people in Mezhyrichia [32]. The activity of the Secretariat of the Embassy faction of USDP was headed by the Communist V. Popel. It was prohibited by the police at the end of May, in 1924 [18, 19]. By decision of June Plenum in 1924, CC CPWU, four members of the USDP club (except V. Mohniuk) has united with two Polish Communists in a Communist Embassy faction. Y. Voitiuk became the deputy chairman of the faction and I. Scrypa – its secretary [1, p. 75]. In a special declaration the club USDP decided “from now on undaunted struggle together for the victory of the Communist idea...” [34, p. 97].

Thus, Radicals Left evolution, that caused by the defeat of Ukrainian revolution of 1917 -1920 forced the USDP to leave the national-state Camp. On March 18, 1923 during the VI Congress USDP was on the Communist positions, has joined to CPEG – CPWU. In January, 1924 the police prohibited the USDP, which have increased their influence on the masses, under the guise of liquidation of the party, launched a blow to Ukrainians. 5 deputies from 9 of socialist faction UPR admitted the program of the Party and in February, 1924 created the separate club in Sejm. On November, 7 four deputies of socialist faction joined the Communist faction.

The transition of the majority from USDP on the political platform of the CPWU weakened the unity of national-democratic power, in struggle against Polish occupation of Western Ukraine.

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Ігор Райківський

Діяльність прокомуністичної УСДП на Західній Україні (1923–1924 рр.)

У статті висвітлюється діяльність УСДП після переходу в комуністичний табір на VI з’їзді 18 березня 1923 р. у Львові, до заборони партії польською владою в січні 1924 р. Звернуто увагу на причини і наслідки ліворадикальної еволюції УСДП, основні напрямки її прокомуністичної діяльності, створення клубу УСДП у сеймі.

Ключові слова: УСДП, партія, з’їзд, Головна управа, комуністи.

Игорь Райковский

Деятельность прокоммунистической УСДП на Западной Украине (1923–1924 гг.)

В статье освещается прокоммунистическая деятельность УСДП после перехода партии в леворадикальный лагерь на VI съезде 18 марта 1923 г. во Львове. Среди причин политической эволюции УСДП было поражение украинской революции 1917–1920 гг., что привело к идейной дезориентации в среде социал-демократов, которой успешно воспользовались коммунисты. После

съезда УСДП превратилась в легальную пристройку Компартии Западной Украины. В условиях идейного кризиса в национально-государственном лагере (после решения стран Антанты в марте 1923 г. о признании польской аннексии Восточной Галиции) УСДП увеличивала свое влияние в обществе, в том числе за пределами края – на Волыни, Холмщине и др., что привело к запрету партии польскими властями в январе 1924 г. Часть украинских депутатов в польском сейме основала отдельный клуб УСДП, а в ноябре 1924 г. вступила в коммунистическую посольскую фракцию.

Ключевые слова: УСДП, партия, съезд, Главная управа, коммунисты.