

SERHIY HIRIK
The M. S. Hrushevsky Institute
of Ukrainian Archeography
and Source Studies of the National
Academy of Sciences of Ukraine
sergiusz.1985@gmail.com

Jewish National Communist Parties and the Comintern: A Non-Mutual Association

The evolution of Jewish national communist parties (Zionist as well as non-Zionist) within borders of the former Russian Empire is one of the most interesting and almost unknown pages of the history of leftist movements. Analysis of relations between these political forces and the Third International (Comintern) allows us to trace changes in the policy of the rulers of the Comintern (particularly of the leaders of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) / All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)) in the period of 1919 to the early 1920s toward the Jewish problem in the Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian Soviet Republics and (in part) in Palestine. It can give us the opportunity to understand some trends in the political activity of Jewish radical left parties during the early interwar period more deeply.

First of all, we have to make a survey of the studies of the Comintern history with emphasis on its connections to the Jewish left movements. Unfortunately, this topic has not been adequately explored in previous literature. It is true for the early researches as well as for recently published studies. For instance, the editors of the *Chronicle of the Comintern* prepared in the late 1930s did not say one word about the positions of the Jewish Communist Party (Poale Zion) (JCP(PZ)) established after the split in the Jewish Social Democratic Workers Party (PZ) in August 1919 although this group immediately had proclaimed its aim to join in the Third International.¹

We can see the same lack of information about Jewish communist movements in the studies of the history of the Comintern by Lev Zubok. This author did not mention

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¹ Khronika Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala. Pervyi razdel: Ot I do II Kongressa Kominterna (mart 1919—avgust 1920) (hectographed copy). Russian State Archives of Social and Political History (RGASPI). F. 71, op. 35, d. 224.

the attempts of Jewish parties to become sections of the Third International.² This feature of the Soviet historiography of the history of the Comintern was preserved until the disintegration of the USSR.³

The works of Western researchers of the history of the Third International generally cover wider fields of questions, but these authors also do not concentrate on the problem of Jewish communist movements. Such scholars as Kevin McDermott, Jeremy Agnew and others⁴ almost entirely do not consider this subject in their works. One of the most competent contemporary Russian scholars researching the history of the Comintern — Aleksandr Vatlin — had not touched on the problem of the relations of this organization with Jewish leftist parties, too.⁵

Historians of Jewish political parties have paid more attention to this topic. Famous Jewish politician Moisei Rafes was one of the first authors who had written about their relations with the Third International (his works simultaneously play role of both primary and secondary sources). First of all, we have to mention his article “The Jewish Communist Movement” published in the official magazine of the Comintern.⁶ He had written about Jewish leftist organizations with brisk criticism, but argued that some local groups of the Jewish Social-Democratic Workers Party (Poale Zion) “recognized the platform of the Soviet power although this step did not turn them into communists and was not reflected on their general nationalist ideology.” Nevertheless he had found following:

The Poale Zion Party during the time of the second Russian revolution rejected the active agitation for transfer of Palestine to Jews and (similarly to the activity of the party of “United”⁷) launched to conduct more or less radical revolutionary agitation. However, as we can see, the Zionist ideology of the Poale-Zionists protected them from a passion for “defencism.” Their nationalism low not in the defense of the states of “alien”

² Lev Zubok, *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v 1919–1923 gg. Stenogramma lektsii, pročitannykh v Vysshiei partiinoi shkole pri TsK VKP(b) v 1940–1941 uchebnom godu* (Moscow: VPSH pri TsK VKP(b), 1940).

³ See e.g.: Aleksandr Sobolev, ed., *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional. Kratkii istoricheskii ocherk* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1969); Petr Fedoseev et al., eds., *Komintern i ego revoliutsionnyie traditsii. materialy nauchnoi sessii, posviashchennoi 50-letiiu obrazovaniia Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala. Moskva, 25–26 marta 1969* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1969); Vladimir Aleksandrov, *Lenin i Komintern: Iz istorii razrabotki teorii i taktiki mezhdunarodnogo kommunisticheskogo dvizheniia* (Moscow: Mysl', 1972) et al.

⁴ See: Kevin McDermott and Jeremy Agnew, *The Comintern: A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996); Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe, eds., *International Communism and the Communist International: 1919–43* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998) (no one of the authors of this important collection of articles had mentioned the topic raised by us) and others. This argument can also be used for old works on the history of the Comintern, see e.g.: Franz Borkenau, *World Communism: A History of the Communist International* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1938 and numerous reprints); this author had not written any word about Jewish communist parties in his book.

⁵ See the book prepared on the base of his articles: Aleksandr Vatlin, *Komintern: Idei, resheniia, sud'by* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2009).

⁶ Moisei Rafes, “Ievreiskoe kommunisticheskoe dvizhenie,” *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional* 9 (1920): 1299–1308.

⁷ Rafes means the United Jewish Socialist Workers Party.

nations but in the desire for their own Zionist homeland. The same, if we may say so, “exterritorialism” of the Poale-Zionism made it yet more susceptible to the Bolshevik moods: Poale-Zionists had not to break the traditions of the Second International because of the fact that they were not its part either ideologically or formally.⁸

He traces the history of splits in Jewish leftist parties and their shifts to the left: the creation of the Communist Bund in Ukraine as a separate party on the foundation of the left wing of the Bund (the right one remained the section of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Party (Mensheviks) (RSDWP(M))), the same process in Belarus, where “during the meeting at Gomel in November 1919 the larger part of the ‘Bund’ had joined to the Third Communist International and decided to leave the RSDWP(M).”⁹ He briefly mentioned the renaming of the United Jewish Socialist Workers Party to the United Jewish Communist Party (UJCP) and wrote about the secession within leftist Zionist groups: “In the late August [1919] at the All-Russian Conference at Gomel this party was split also. The new ‘Jewish Communist Party (Poale Zion)’ emerged along with the old ‘Jewish Social-Democratic Workers Party (Poale Zion).”¹⁰ He ended the article with information on the uniting of the Communist Bund and the UJCP. This coincided with the emergence of the Jewish Communist Union (Farband) that had joined to the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine in three months as the separate Jewish national section.¹¹

Rafes describes the process of cleavage within the Bund in Ukraine in more detail in his important book “Two Years of the Revolution in Ukraine (Evolution and Split of the Bund)” (1920). Concerning the relations of this party with the Comintern he had quoted the Claim of the Provisional Bureau of the Ukrainian Chief Committee of the Bund from the February 18, 1919 (less than two weeks before official foundation of the Third International): “There is necessary [sic] to exert every effort for the earliest possible establishment of the Third Communist International for the closer uniting of Jewish proletariat with Russian and Polish¹² [workers] fighting under the banner of the Communist Party.”¹³ But the uniting of the Communist Bund, established the following day after publication of this document, with the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine was impossible that time. The Third Congress of the CP(B)U (March 1–6, 1919, i.e., simultaneously with the First Congress of the Comintern) had made the decision that prevented any “group joining” of former representatives of the “petit bourgeois par-

⁸ Rafes, “Ievreiskoe kommunisticheskoe dvizhenie,” 1300.

⁹ Ibid., 1305–1306. This formula is not correct. The left wing of the Bund proclaimed its joining to the Comintern, but it was not the same as to join to this organization actually. See also: Moisei Rafes, *Dva goda revoliutsii na Ukraine (Evolutsiia i raskol Bunda)* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe isdatel'stvo, 1920), 167–168.

¹⁰ Rafes, “Ievreiskoe kommunisticheskoe dvizhenie,” 1305–1306..

¹¹ Ibid., 1306–1308.

¹² Rafes means the Communist Workers Party of Poland established in December 1918 by merging of the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPiL) and the Polish Socialist Party-Left (PPS-Lewica).

¹³ Rafes, *Dva goda revoliutsii*, 161.

ties” (as the Left Bund, the Ukrainian Socialists–Revolutionaries (Borotbists), and so forth) to the party of Bolsheviks.¹⁴ Rafes mentioned the Jewish Communist Party (Poale Zion) out of context of its relations with the Third International. He noted that this party had “whimsically connected communism with old bourgeois Zionist program.”¹⁵

The excellent survey of the history of Jewish leftist parties (with particular attention to Zionist ones, i.e., two wings of former JSDWP(PZ) after its split) was made by Baruch Gurevitz in the 1970–1980s, but his works were based on documents from Israeli and US archives and published materials only.¹⁶ He described the political conceptions of Poale Zion based on political works by Ber Borochov (especially on his theory of socialist Zionism). Scholar names the entire ideology of the Jewish national communism as “Borochovism.”¹⁷ Concerning the Jewish Communist Party (PZ) established in August 1919 he argued: “The new party accepted the Russian Communist Party’s platform. However, it made some additions, especially on the national question.” Gurevitz emphasized on the role of the idea of Jewish autonomy (territorial as well as extraterritorial, realized in the form of Jewish soviets in the lands of diaspora) and planned to use the Third International and communist parties united in this organization for purposes of Zionism:

The autonomy would not organize emigration but would prepare the background for the centralization of Jews in Palestine, in which the Jewish Socialist Territorial Autonomy would take place. The Jewish settlements in Palestine should be led by the Jewish proletariat, with the assistance of the socialist republics and the international proletariat through the Comintern.

For Practical reasons, the Party decided not to support immediate emigration to Palestine but to spread the idea of Socialist Jewish Autonomy among the Jews as a preparation for the future settlement in Palestine and, in addition, to publicize this idea among the Communist parties.¹⁸

Gurevitz wrote about participation of the JCP(PZ) and JSDWP(PZ) at the Fifth World Conference of the World Union of Jewish Workers Poale Zion in Vienna in 1920. The World Poale Zion was split into right and left wings after it. It is interesting that both of factions of the Poale Zion in former Russia “were among the founders of the Leftist organization. The new Leftist World Organization was confused by the status of

¹⁴ “[Rezoliutsiia] Ob otnoshenii k melkoburzhuznym partiiam,” in *Tretii zjazd Komunistychnoi partii (bil’shovyktiv) Ukrainy, 1–6 bereznia 1919 roku*, ed. Stanislav Hurenko et al. (Kyiv: Parlaments’ke vydavnytstvo, 2002), 201–202.

¹⁵ Rafes, *Dva goda revoliutsii*, 168.

¹⁶ Baruch Gurevitz, *National Communism in the Soviet Union, 1918–1928* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980); Baruch Gurevitz, “Un cas de Communisme National en Union Soviétique. Le Poale Zion: 1918–1928,” *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* 15, no. 3/4 (1974): 333–361; Baruch Gurevitz, “The Liquidation of the Last Independent Party in the Soviet Union,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes* 18, no. 2 (1976): 178–186; Baruch Gurevitz, *The Bolshevik Revolution and the Foundation of the Jewish Communist Movement in Russia* (Tel-Aviv: Russian and East European Research Center at the Tel-Aviv University, 1976).

¹⁷ Gurevitz, *National Communism in the Soviet Union*, 46.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

Poale Zion in Russia. The two new parties considered themselves as Left Wing, in favor of the Third International etc.” The JCP(PZ) perceived the new Left World Union as a base of the future World Jewish Communist Party and asked this organization to accept the Palestinian branch of the Poale Zion as the territorial section of the Comintern. The JSDWP(PZ) declared its subordination “to the resolution of the Third International in all general subjects.”¹⁹ After it the World Union Poale Zion (WUPZ) applied to join to the Third International. The WUPZ had sent the delegation which presented their memorandum to the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI). The WUPZ wanted to be accepted to the Comintern as the exterritorial organization (Jewish division) with all its territorial sections. Gurevitz noted that “the national proletarian idea of Jewish territorial autonomy in Palestine was not mentioned at all” in this document. Historian also wrote:

In addition, the Poale Zion was indirectly trying to challenge the national structure of the Communist International. They did this by encouraging the need for a new type of organization in which all workers’ movements would be represented. It would not be only those who came from one nation, and concentrated in one state. The Third International would be expected to do this because for a Communist organization the borders among countries should be meaningless. However, as it was mentioned previously, the Communist world adopted the national division into its system. The challenge never received any notice.²⁰

ECCI allowed the WUPZ to take part in the Third Congress of the Comintern. After the end of this event ECCI proposed it several conditions for the continuation of negotiations about the possible join of the World Union Poale Zion to the Third International. There are the following points among them:

- (1) The Poale Zion would drop from its platform the idea of settling Israel;
- (2) The World Union Poale Zion would cease to exist;
- (3) The Poale Zion would join the Communist parties on a national level as a Jewish division.

So, the ECCI planned to accept the WUPZ as the Jewish sections within territorial parties but not as the separate party. Negotiations were stopped in 1922 after the Sixth Congress of the WUPZ.²¹ Thereby on July 25, 1922 the ECCI issued the special statement.²² Thus the JCP(PZ) as the part of the WUPZ as well as the JSDWP(PZ) renamed

¹⁹ Ibid., 53.

²⁰ Ibid., 54–55.

²¹ Ibid., 55.

²² Fragments from this document were published in English by Jane Degras: “Extracts from an ECCI Statement on the Decision of the Poale Zion not to Affiliate to the Third International,” in *The Communist International, 1919–1943: Documents*, ed. Jane Degras (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 365–366. It is remarkable that this text was not published or even mentioned in the official collection of selected documents of the Comintern, prepared by the Institute of Marx–Engels–Lenin in early 1930s, see: Bela Kun, ed., *Kommunisticheskiĭ Internatsional v dokumentakh. Resheniia, tezisy i vozzyvaniia kongressov Kominterna i plenumov IKKI, 1919–1932* (Moscow: Partiinoe izdatel’stvo, 1933) (this book in-

in the Jewish Communist Workers Party(PZ) had not join to the Third International as separate organizations either then or later. In 1922–1923 the JCP(PZ) fell into a crisis and “would have to give up the Palestinian national program and join the Russian Communist Party” (and thus to the Comintern).²³ Its conference approved the suggestion to join the RKP(b). The resolutions about the merger were clear:

(1) The Conference recognized the Comintern’s proposal presented during the negotiations with Poale Zion as a satisfactory basis for joining the Comintern.

(2) The Conference recognized the rejection of the Comintern’s proposal by the World Union of Left Poale Zion as an anti-Communist act.

(3) The Conference chose to dissent from the World Union and drop Palestinian ideology. By doing so, it declared itself part of the Comintern, subordinate to all the international organization’s demands. In addition, without any preliminary conditions, it was decided to join the national territorial parties.

(4) The Conference rejected the idea of having separate-independent Jewish Communist organizations and would prefer that the Jewish organizations join the territorial parties.²⁴

In 1923 former members of the dissolved JCP(PZ) joined the RCP(b).²⁵

The last mention about the attitude of Jewish national communists to the Third International in Gurevitz’s book concerns the late period of the history of the JCWP(PZ). Historian describes the views of one of the leaders of this organization; Z. Brayter expressed in his article in the Yiddish-language party press body *Der Proletarisher Gedank* (no. 43–45 (1926)):

The Communist International (Comintern) would have to stop adapting a general approach to the national movements in the East. Instead, it would have to study the complex conditions in each area and adjust its policies to those particular conditions. Such an understanding opened new horizon for the Jewish question and for the Comintern’s policy in Palestine. Brayter and his party believed that this would mean a new opportunity for the Jewish masses that it would lead to full recognition on National-Communist ideology.²⁶

As for the collaboration between Jewish and Arabian population of Palestine, the ideologists of the JCWP(PZ) thought that “the workers of two nations should unite for

cludes the texts of selected resolutions, appeals and theses of the congresses of the Third International and plenums of the ECCI only).

²³ Gurevitz, *National Communism in the Soviet Union*, 58.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

²⁵ The Ukrainian researcher Oleksandr Naiman argued that the ultimately dissolution of the JCP(PZ) occurred in the December 1921 after the Third All-Russian Congress of this party, but it is not correct. See: Oleksandr Naiman, *Ievreis’ki partii ta obiednannia Ukrainy (1917–1925)* (Kyiv: Institute of the Political and Ethno-National Studies of the NASU, 1998), 120, 179 (appendix 2). Yet he mentioned about the existence of the JCP(PZ) in the late 1922 below in the same work, see: *Ibid.*, 129. The actual date of the Third Congress of the JCP(PZ) (early December 1922) is mentioned in: Isaak Mints, ed., *Neproletarskie partii Rossii: Urok istorii* (Moscow: Mysl’, 1984), 528.

²⁶ Gurevitz, *National Communism in the Soviet Union*, 96.

the common struggle under the leadership of the Party and the Comintern.” The exception was that the party planned to “assist by all available means the Comintern’s policy regarding a ‘United Front’ and the unity of the world proletariat.” The JCWP(PZ) supported the idea of the cooperation between communist and social-democratic parties. The party planned “to continue to struggle for the recognition of the demands and the program of the JCWP Poale Zion by all communist parties and the Comintern.”²⁷ Immediately after the liquidation of the party (1928, soon after beginning of realization of the Soviet project of the Jewish territorial autonomy in Birobidzhan, when the program of JCWP(PZ) became inconsistent with the Soviet policy on the Jewish question) its leaders Z. Brayter and S. Kivin in the name of the Central Committee of the JCWP(PZ) had sent the memorandum of protest to the Third International. They did not receive any answer.²⁸

In one of the studies published in the mid-1970s Joel Beinin presented the analysis of the history of the Palestinian Communist Party (PCP) and its relations with the Comintern with attention to the Poale Zion role in the creation of the PCP and struggle between Zionist and non-Zionist trends within the PCP.²⁹ However the subject of this work is the communist movement in Palestine only.

The Ukrainian scholar Ivan Kuras considered some aspects of the activity of the Jewish leftist parties in his monograph on the “petit bourgeois” parties in Ukraine. He gives a false argument that “the left trends of the Bund and the JCP (Poale Zion) shared an adherence to Zionist ideology”³⁰ (naturally the Bund was an anti-Zionist formation). However, he pays little attention to the Jewish parties and does not examine their relations with the Comintern entirely.

Additional information on our subject can be found in the collective work “Non-Proletarian Parties of Russia: The Lesson of History” (1984). In chapters prepared by Viktoriia Polushkina, she wrote about the decision of the conference of the Bund in Gomel to join to the Comintern and recognize that ideology of the JCP(PZ) was “a mix of Marxism and Zionism.”³¹ Further, this historian argued that the JCP(PZ) “stood on the position of ‘the national communism’” and “simultaneously ... tried to join to the Comintern through ‘Weltfarband’³² as the Jewish section. Negotiations continued, but the JCP did not win concessions around the key questions from the Comintern and the RCP(b).”³³

²⁷ Ibid., 97–98.

²⁸ Ibid., 101–104; Gurevitz, “The Liquidation of the Last Independent Party,” 184–185.

²⁹ Joel Beinin, “The Palestine Communist Party 1919–1948,” *MERIP Reports* 55 (1977): 3–17 (particularly on the pages 5–6).

³⁰ Ivan Kuras, *Torzhestvo proletarskogo internatsionalizma i krakh melkoburzhuaiznykh partii na Ukraine* (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1978), 247.

³¹ Mints, *Neproletarskie partii Rossii*, 480–481.

³² I.e. the World Union Poale Zion.

³³ Mints, *Neproletarskie partii Rossii*, 526–528.

Authors of the works on the history of Jewish political parties in Ukraine published during 1990s ignore the question of their relations with the Third International.³⁴ As for studies published during the last decade, it is important to note several interesting works on the history of the national communism in Palestine³⁵ as well as in the former Russian Empire (especially — in Belarus).³⁶ These authors (except Mikhail Agapov, who concentrates on the Palestinian problem) do not pay significant attention to the attempts of the Jewish leftist parties to become members of the Comintern.

In researching the attitude of Jewish national communist parties toward the Third International, first of all we have to analyze their ideological documents and some features of the language formulas used by officials of these political organizations. Thus, we need to note the common motto of Zionist national communist movements “Proletarians of *all nations*, unite!”³⁷ in contrast to the motto of non-Jewish communist parties (“Workers of the world, unite!” or “Proletarians of all countries, unite!” (this literally translation from the original German form is commonly used in non-English-speaking countries)). This fact expressed the actual extraterritorial status of the Jewry of that time.

The Declaration of the JCP(PZ) “To all Jewish workers” issued in September 1919 argued that the party is still loyal to ideals of the Poale Zionism as a single world party of Jewish proletarians, but simultaneously “it will seek to ensure that this global party

³⁴ See e.g.: Viktor Gusev, *Bund, Komfarband, Ievseksii KP(b)U: Mistse v politychnomu zhytti Ukrainy (1917–1921)* (Kyiv: Asotsiatsiia “Ukraino”, 1996) (this book contains the comprehensive analysis of the history of the Bund and its successors in Ukrainian political life) and: Naiman, *Ievreis'ki partii ta obiednannia Ukrainy* (there is a lot of mistakes in this work, for instance the cause of the date of the JCP(PZ) dissolution, mentioned in the endnote 25, the cause of false representing of the JCWP(PZ) as the direct successor of the JCP(PZ) (p. 179, appendix 2) and others).

³⁵ Johan Franzén, “Communism versus Zionism: The Comintern, Yishuvism, and the Palestine Communist Party,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 36, no. 2 (2007): 6–24.

³⁶ Mikhail Agapov, “‘Evreiskii natsional'nyi ochag' v Palestine v politike Komintern v 1920–1930-e gody,” *Vestnik Tiimenskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 2 (2011), 63–69; Petr Stetskevich, “Evreiskie politicheskie partii i organizatsii na territorii Sovetskoi Belorussii (1918–1921 gg.),” in *Hramadskii rukhi i palitychnyia partyi w Bielarusi (aposhniaia chvirc' XIX — pachatak XXI st.): Materyialy Respublikanskai navukovai kanferentsyi (Hrodna, 23–24 kastrychnika 2008 h.)*, ed. Ivan Kowkiel' et al. (Hrodna: Hrodzienski dziazrhawny universitet, 2009), 207–215; Iuliia Fedianina, “Deiatel'nost' partii Poalei-Tsion na territorii Belorussii v usloviiakh pol'sko-sovetskoi voiny v 1919–1920 gg.,” in *Materialy mezhdunarodnoi zaochnoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii ‘Aktual'nye voprosy filosofii, istorii i politologii’ (Rossia, g. Novosibirsk, 10 marta 2011 g.)*, http://sibac.info/files/2011_03_10_Politologiya/Fedyanina.pdf/.

³⁷ E.g. see the motto in logo of the official press organ of the Central Committee of the JCP(PZ) “Nakanune: Organ tsentr. komiteta EKP (Poalei-Tsion)” (first issue was published in December 2, 1919 in Moscow). The Russian form “Proletarii vsekh natsii, obiediniaites'!” was used there. It must be noted that much of official publications of the Jewish Social-Democratic Workers Party (Poale Zion) in former Russian Empire before the split were printed without any motto. See for example: *Programma Evreiskoi Sotsial-Demokraticeskoi Rabochei Partii (Poalei-Tsion)* (Petrograd: Izdanie Petrogradskogo komiteta, s.a.).

would not be imitators of the yellow International at Lucerne,³⁸ but would be an instrument of the Third Communist International, the body of power that governs the struggle of the Jewish proletariat against world imperialism internationally.”³⁹

However, still in December 1919 the JCP(PZ) rarely showed a desire to join to the Comintern. There are only few mentions of the world revolution in the first issues of the *Nakanune* journal (the main press organ of the party), although the resolution “On the political moment” approved by the Gomel conference in August 1919 argued that the “politics of the working class must be based on the development of the world socialist revolution. As it is possible this politics has to adapt to the economic conditions, the peculiar mode of life and ethnic composition of the population of each country.”⁴⁰ At the same time the circular letter of the Ukrainian Central Bureau of the JCP(PZ) to the local party organizations ordered them “to enter into a close contact for joint activity with the UCP (Borotbists), KPU and UPLSR (Borbists)” but did not mention the propaganda for their organizational merger or the popularization of the idea of their uniting within the Third International.⁴¹ The resolution of the Central Committee of the JCP(PZ) “On the tactic in Ukraine” from January 10, 1920 called for the closest possible cooperation with all of these parties and especially between JCP(PZ) and the Borotbists.⁴²

In June 1920, the role of the Comintern and the world revolution in the ideology of the JCP(PZ) became more significant. The Bureau of the CC of the Party had approved the resolution “On the Comintern” which claimed:

As long as it exists the JCP seeks to include the world Jewish communist movement into the Comintern.

The exceptionally peculiar situation of the Jewish proletariat put hard obstacles on this way. The plenum of the CC clearly understands that these obstacles are not resolved at the moment.

The CC considers proposals of the “Farbandsbureau” from its memorandum to the plenum of the Communist International as a serious attempt to organizational uniting of the Jewish communist movement within the Communist International on the basis of its 21 terms. These proposals provide unity and discipline of the international proletarian activity and put the problem of the Jewish proletariat before the Comintern.

³⁸ I.e. the Second International (its Conference at Lucerne had occurred in early August 1919, a month before the adoption of cited document).

³⁹ Deklaratsiia Evreiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Poalei-Tsion) ko vsem evreiskim rabochim. Central State Archives of Public Organizations of Ukraine (TsDAHOU). F. 41, op. 1., spr. 138, ark. 1 zv.

⁴⁰ “Rezoliutsiia o politicheskome momente (t.t. M. Barngol'tsa i M. Gerra),” *Nakanune: Organ tseñtr. komiteta EKP (Poalei-Tsion)* 1 (1919): 10.

⁴¹ “Tsirkuliar № 1 Ukr. Tsentr. PB EKP (Poalei-Tsion) ko vsem partiinym organizatsiiam,” *Kommunisticheskoe slovo: Biulleten' Ukrainського tseñtral'nogo partiinogo biuro Evr. Kom. Partii (Poalei-Tsion)* 2 (1919): n.p.

⁴² Izvlechenie iz Rezoliutsii TsK Evr. Kommunist. Partii (P.-Ts.) po voprosu o nashei taktike na Ukraine. TsDAHOU. F. 41, op. 1., spr. 173, ark. 2.

Plenum believes that any attempt to narrow the program platform of the memorandum will be a threat to the Jewish communist movement and a refusal to meet the peculiar needs of the Jewish working class. Thus, the plenum considers such an attempt harmful, able to disrupt the work of the delegation and to complicate our struggle for the joining to the Communist International.⁴³

In 1920 the conception of the politics in Palestine in the ideological documents of JCP(PZ) was changed. If in 1919 this party called to create there the Red Army groups for struggle against Entente and did not mention the opportunity for Arab population to participate in such formations,⁴⁴ the desire for cooperation with local Arabs in this cause was showed in the resolutions of the Second Conference of the party in Kharkiv: “The Conference give the CC the right to begin negotiations with the Communist International and with our sister party in Palestine to organize the fight against the imperialist occupiers jointly with the Arab revolutionary elements.”⁴⁵

In January 1920 the representative of the JCP(PZ) Iashin/Iashko (both Russian and Ukrainian versions of his surname are used in archival sources) in his complimentary speech to the First (Constitutive) Congress of the Ukrainian Communist Party (Ukapists) called for merger of all territorially Ukrainian parties into the united Ukrainian Communist Party as the prerequisite of the world revolution. It was symptomatic that he had not even mentioned the Comintern in his speech.⁴⁶

The Second Congress of the Third International occurred in July 1920. The representative of the Poale Zion from Austria Michael Kohn-Eber had taken part in its work with consultative vote⁴⁷ as well as representatives of the Bund (Aron Vainshtein, Moshe Litvakov and Maria Frumkina).⁴⁸ Frumkina had accused all Zionists including the Poale Zion of a desire to subordinate most of Palestinian population to the Entente and said that the “proletarian groups with Zionist tendencies (Poale Zion) seek to perceive

⁴³ Iz otcheta Biuro TsK na plenum 9–15/VI [1920]. TsDAHOU. F. 41, op. 1., spr. 173, ark. 14.

⁴⁴ See: “Rezoliutsiia o nashei palestinskoi deiiatel’nosti (t. M. Gerra),” *Nakanune: Organ tsestr. komiteta EKP (Poalei-Tsion)* 1 (1919), 11–12.

⁴⁵ “Nash palestinizm (rezoliutsiia t.t. Hashina i Gerra),” in *Evreiskaia kommunisticheskaia partiia. Rezoliutsii i postanovleniia, priniatyie na Vtoroi vsepartiinoi konferentsii, sostoiavsheisia v gor. Khar’kove 16–23 iyunia 1920 goda* (Kharkov, 1920), 18.

⁴⁶ Stenogramma 1-go uchreditel’nogo siezda Ukrainskoi kommunisticheskoi partii /UKP/, org. ustav UKP, 22.1.1920–25.1.1920. TsDAHOU. F. 8, op. 1, spr. 1, ark. 7.

⁴⁷ Osip Piatnitskii et al., eds., *Vtoroi Kongress Kominterna, iul’–avgust 1920 g.: Protokoly* (Moscow: Partiinoe izdatel’stvo, 1934), 619. Formally he represented the Socialist Party of Palestine. The Poale Zion as single organization was not represented on the Congress, the Mandate Commission of the Congress decided that “the organization of Poale Zion did not get rid of its nationalist prejudices. That’s why participation of its members in the Congress as delegates or affiliation of this organization to the Third International is fundamentally unacceptable. Hoping that the Poale Zion will share the views of the Communist International, the Mandate Commission considers feasible and desirable to let to be present at the Congress two delegates of the Poale Zion as the guests” (Ibid., 617–618).

⁴⁸ Piatnitskii, *Vtoroi Kongress Kominterna*, 624. It must be noted that Maria Frumkina was not mentioned in the list of delegates of the Congress (pp. 619–625) but she took the floor (pp. 139–141 ff.).

the Communist phraseology,” thus she called the Comintern to struggle against Zionism and Poale-Zion.⁴⁹ Kohn-Eber’s polemic against her had concerned to the Palestine question only.⁵⁰ No one of them mentioned any of wings of the Poale Zion in the former Russian Empire.

In November 1920, one of the delegates of the Fifth Conference of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine said about the JCP(PZ): “Concerning the JCP (this party prides itself that we allowed them to join to the Third International, however, thereafter we had kicked them out of the organization), relationships with this party are not established entirely.”⁵¹

In 1921 the JCP(PZ) retained the hope of becoming a member of the Comintern but expressed this in indirect form. There were such statements as the following: “The grim wall of alienation that is still surrounding the Jewish working class is collapsing in a whirlwind of revolution now. The Jewish labor movement is on the eve of its uniting with the world communist movement.”⁵² At the same time, in August 1921 the Jewish Communist Party (Poale Zion) considered a possibility of organized joining of its members to the RCP(B) (and through it to the Comintern) but had not approved such a decision.⁵³

Concerning the other wing of the Jewish national communism — the JS DRP(PZ)/JCWP(PZ) — we need to note that the image of the Third International took more significant place in its ideology. The materials of the plenums of the Central Committee of this party convince us of this. For instance, during the meeting of the bureau of the CC of the JS DP(PZ) on September 1, 1919 the central issue was the possibility for the party to become a member of the Comintern. The CC had ordered its member Berlinraut to prepare the text of the memorandum to the ECCI. In this case, Berlinraut had visited leaders of the Comintern just before it.⁵⁴ His project of the memorandum was approved on September 18, 1919 with several changes.⁵⁵ Abramovich, speaking at the meeting of the Parteirat (the party council), argued that “21 terms” of the Comintern had “played a moderating role in the development of the social revolution” and caused series of splits in the workers parties throughout Europe. He argued the need to send the delegation of the WUPZ for negotiations with the Third International on the issue of the possibility of some changes in its requirements for parties applying for member-

⁴⁹ Ibid., 139–141.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 149 ff.

⁵¹ Stenogramma V konferentsii KP/b/U. Chast’ I. Zasedanie 18 noiabria 1920 g. TsDAHOU. F. 1, op. 1, spr. 42, ark. 57.

⁵² Evreiskaia kommunisticheskaia partiia (P.-Ts.). K IV godovshchine Oktiabr’skoi Revoliutsii. TsDAHOU. F. 41, op. 1, spr. 158, ark. 1.

⁵³ Vypiska iz Biulletenia № 4 EKP /P.Ts./ ot 13/VIII 1921 g. TsDAHOU. F. 41, op. 1, spr. 157, ark. 27.

⁵⁴ RGASPI. F. 272, op. 1, d. 25, l. 3.

⁵⁵ Ibid., l. 13.

ship.⁵⁶ Members of the CC of the JSDWP(PZ) strongly criticized the memorandum of the WUPZ to the Comintern presented during its negotiations with the ECCI in May 1921.⁵⁷

The Fifth Congress of this party (September 7–14, 1920) approved the special resolution “On the Comintern”:

Taking into account that the Jewish proletariat has the peculiar economic structure and culture ... the 5th party congress considers the creation of a special Jewish section within the Comintern necessary. ... Party Congress at the same time expresses his satisfaction with the recognition of the Palestine Section by the Third International and giving the right to represent it to the Poale Zion.⁵⁸

After it the Fifth Congress of the party decided to ask the Comintern to change the organizational statute of the Third International, giving wide autonomy to its sections in questions of national policy. Regarding this, the JSDRP(PZ) required autonomy for itself in resolving internal Jewish problems. At the same time, it declared its complete subordination to decisions of the Comintern concerning international politics.⁵⁹

The Sixth Congress of this party (August 9–16, 1922) had sent to the Comintern a message of greeting with a declaration of its readiness “to sacrifice on the altar of the world social revolution being in the front ranks of the fighters of the revolution under the command of the World Headquarters of the Revolution — the Comintern.”⁶⁰ The issue of the possibility of joining of the JSDRP(PZ) to the Comintern was not addressed, the Congress had not taken any decisions on this problem.

During the Eleventh All-Russian Conference of this party (December 24–29, 1924; it was renamed the JCWP(PZ) already) the only mention about the Third International concerned the death of Vladimir Lenin as the moral leader of this organization and the view of the JCRP(PZ) activists that this fact will not cause apathy within the Comintern.⁶¹ Their impression that the RCP(B) planned to liquidate their party was expressed in the Conference as well.⁶² In 1926, the situation was the same. The Twelfth All-Russian Conference of the JCWP(PZ) (March 11–16, 1926) had sent a greeting message to the Executive Committee of the Comintern where was expressed the hope that “during the days of the coming battles for world communism the Jewish revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat, the Communist Party of the Jewish workers (Poale Zion) and

⁵⁶ Mezhdunarodnoe polozhenie i zadachi vsemirnogo dvizheniia “Poalei-Tsion” (Doklad t. Abramovicha). RGASPI. F. 272, op. 1, d. 26, l. 31–32.

⁵⁷ Protokol sovместnogo zasedaniia rasshirennoho biuro TsK ESDRP /Poalei-Tsion/ s delegatsiei Ferbandsbiuro Evr. Sots. Rab. Soiuza ot 18 maia 1921 goda. RGASPI. F. 272, op. 1, d. 26, l. 224.

⁵⁸ As we had noted above (endnote 47), the Third International did not make such decision.

⁵⁹ Rezoliutsii 5-go Partiinogo s'ezda ESDRP (Poalei-Tsion). RGASPI. F. 272, op. 1, d. 7, l. 17.

⁶⁰ Rezoliutsii VI Vserossiiskogo s'ezda ESDRP (Poalei-Tsion). RGASPI. F. 272, op. 1, d. 11, l. 134.

⁶¹ Stenogramma XI Vsesoiuznoi konferencii Evreiskoi kommunisticheskoi rabochei partii (Poalei-Tsion), sostoiavsheisia 24–29 dekabria 1924 g. v Moskve. RGASPI. F. 272, op. 1, d. 18, l. 107 (Breiter's speech).

⁶² Ibid., l. 110 (Titensky's speech).

its World Ferband⁶³ will take a responsible and honorable place among the Communist sections of the Communist International.”⁶⁴ The program document “On the world communist movement” called to struggle for the creation of possibility “for joining of the Weltfarband to the Comintern and a sectioning of our parties in several countries.”⁶⁵ Generally, statements of the participators of this party event were more optimistic than in previous case.

But this optimism was self-deceptive. In less than one year and a half the Jewish Communist Workers Party (Poale Zion) was dissolved.

So, we can see the evolution of the views of Jewish political parties of the former Russian Empire on the Third International. These political organizations had made several attempts to become members of the Comintern during early period of their activity. Some of them (the left wing of Bund and the Jewish Communist Party (Poale Zion) were absorbed by the party of the Bolsheviks. The Jewish Social-Democratic Workers Party (Poale Zion) / Jewish Communist Workers Party (Poale Zion) that was consistently both Zionist and Marxist simultaneously existed until 1928 as politically isolated organization. The Third International was mentioned in its ideological documents almost until the liquidation of this party but in this case it played the role of an ideal political symbol.

⁶³ I.e. The Weltfarband (the WUPZ).

⁶⁴ Ispolkomu Kominterna. RGASPI. F. 272, op. 1, d. 20, l. 146.

⁶⁵ Vsemirnoe kommunisticheskoe dvizhenie i nashi zadachi. Ibid., l. 195.