

KRUK Józef (1885–1972), pseudonyms and cryptonyms “J.K., T. Jasiński, Tadeusz Jasiński”. Political activist. He was born 4th March 1885 in Częstochowa, the son of Leon (Ejzyk Lejb), merchant, and Salomea Salka née Jelenkiewicz.

He took part in the founding of the first Zionist workers’ grouping in his home city, before the events of 1905. When the revolution broke out, he became the leader of the territorial Zionist-Socialist Workers Party (from 1918, known as the Jewish Socialist Workers Party *Farejnikte*). In 1906, he was living in Kraków, after which he travelled around Europe. He studied law at the University of Bern, which is where he gained his doctorate. During World War I, he and his wife lived in London.

In 1918, he returned to Poland. In 1919, he became a member of the management of the *Farejnikte* and, in that same year, he unsuccessfully represented that organisation as a candidate in the elections to the Sejm – the Polish parliament. In the pages of “Unzer Weg” (dated 16th May 1919) he published the article *14 lat: maj 1905–1919 O powstaniu naszej partii [14 Years – May 1905-1919. About the Founding our Party]*. In it, he discussed the history of the party’s establishment and the party’s program which, unlike other factions of Zionism, believed that the nation-state of the Jews could arise not only on the territory of Palestine and that the full national and social liberation of the Jewish population was linked to the abolition of the capitalist system and the struggle for socialism.

In December 1918, he became a member of the Executive Committee of the Warsaw Workers’ Council and, in January 1919, he joined its executive. On 14th August 1920, he was arrested, accused of publishing “Jednodniówki”. He was jailed in the Mokotów prison. On 29th September 1920, he was released on bail. In July/August 1922, after much negotiation, he led to the unification of *Farejnikte* with the Independent Socialists Party (PNS). This ensured full autonomy for *Farejnikte* in cultural matters and an adequate participation within the PNS’ governing bodies. In November 1922, he again stood as a candidate for the Sejm, this time on a Częstochowa list. Again, he was unsuccessful.

From April 1923, he was a member of the PNS Executive Committee. After its transformation in 1924, in the Independent Socialist Labor Party (NSPP), he was secretary of the party’s Central Executive Committee. In June 1928, together with the left-wing of the party, he did not join the PPS. In July 1928, he was

elected as general secretary of the NSPP Supreme Council and held that position until the end of 1934.

During 1919-1926, he published a number of articles in "Głos Niezależnych Socjalistów", "Przedjutrza", "Socjalisty" and "Unzer Weg", in which he wrote about, among other things, a postulate of broad autonomy for national minorities, a critique of the PPS for its reluctance to cooperate with communists and spoke of the need to democratise the power system in the USSR. In 1924, in Kraków, he was the author of *Proces Listopadowy. Sprawozdanie z procesu 58-u o krwawy wtorek listopadowy r. 1923*. In the 1920s, he worked with the German socialist magazine "Volkszeitung", published in Bydgoszcz. Together with Aleksander Zasztowt, he began publishing the bi-weekly "Robotnik i Chłop" ["Worker and Peasant"] which, in February 1926, was replaced by "Przedwiośniem" ["Early Spring"].

As one of the NSPP's leading activists, he travelled all over Poland, delivering lectures on ideological and program issues, current political events and spoke at party-organised rallies. In May 1923, in Hamburg, as a representative of the PNS from Poland, he took part in the Congress of the Vienna Community of Socialist Parties. In May 1925, he was a delegate to a meeting of the Socialist Workers' International (SMR) in Paris. In the summer of that same year, he participated in the SMR Congress in Marseille, at which he was elected to the "Eastern Commission". At the end of 1927, together with Bolesław Drobner, he attended a meeting of Lithuanian socialists, at the International Socialist Bureau, about the Polish-Lithuanian conflict. In August 1928, he took part in the next SMR Congress, at which he was elected to the SMR Executive as the representative of the NSPP from Poland. He held that position until October 1930.

In the mid-1930s, he was active in the international forum, where he joined the discussion, with the left, on the issues of a united front. From 1929, he was in close contact with the Independent English Labor Party. From 1926, he was active in the Association of Polish Free Thinkers in Warsaw and in the International Secretariat of the Fight for Amnesty for Political Prisoners. In May 1927, he stood for election to the Warsaw City Council and, in 1930, for the Sejm on list No.5 of the Socialist Left Bloc (Bund, NSPP). However, he was unsuccessful in both.

Several times, he was arrested on charges of anti-state activities including, in November 1924, for participating in a textile workers' strike in Łódź and the surrounding area and, in November 1926, for delivering a speech in which he

declared that he stood for democratic rule achieved through evolution, rejecting violence and terror. On 19th November 1926, the Piotrków District Court gave him a suspended 18 months sentence. In July 1930, he was required to report to the prison in Grudziądz, in order for him to serve his sentence. On the eve of the dissolution of the NSPP, in mid-December 1937, he was arrested and was briefly imprisoned in Bereza Kartuska. Until 1939, he lived in Warsaw (at ul. Długa 39).

In 1939, he emigrated to Palestine. In Israel, in 1948, he wrote his *Szkice historyczne* [*Historical Sketches*]. He also worked with “Goldene Kejt”. He died on 6th July 1972 in Jerusalem.

His wife was Rywa née Rapaport (1885-), who graduated in medicine (1911) and worked in Warsaw as a paediatrician. She was active in politics and belonged to the District Workers’ Committee of the NSPP in Warsaw.

Słownik działaczy polskiego ruchu robotniczego, vol. III (A. Pilch), p. 463; *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. XV, pp. 390–391 (A. Pilch). – *Rocznik lekarski 1933/1934*, col. 879 (re: wife); *Urzędowy spis lekarzy*, p. 116 (doctors, re:wife). – APCz, group No. 58, birth record No. 34/1885. - Wikipedia.

Juliusz Sętowski, Wiesław Paszkowski