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THE FUTURE STATUS OF GALICJA (MAŁOPOLSKA) WSCHODNIA – VIEWS REPRESENTED BY THE POLISH PEASANT CLUBS IN 1919

With reference to the future status of Galicja[1] (Małopolska[2]) Wschodnia in the Polish state after the First World War, there appeared contradictions between views expressed by particular political parties, not the least controversies between particular peasant political parties. The contradictions were primarily related to the emergence of two basic conceptions as regards the status of the so called Kresy Wschodnie (Eastern Borderlands): a conception which stressed their incorporation into the Polish state and a conception which favoured a federal integration. Notably, the views expressed by promulgators of either of the conceptions were not always clear-cut and fully consistent, they evolved being influenced *inter alia* by stances taken by great European powers.

Both Rusyns (Ukrainians, Ruthenians) and Poles voiced claims to Galicja (Małopolska) Wschodnia after the First World War. Historically, the boundaries of the region were changeable. Ziemia Czerwińska (Czerwona Ruś – Red Rus, Ruthenian Rus), which constituted part of the Halych-Volodymyr Principality, was in 1018 won back and incorporated into Poland by Bolesław the Brave, after it had been lost during Mieszko I's rule. Subsequently, Ziemia Czerwińska went through vicissitudes. Podole (Podolia), Pokucie (Pokuttya) and Ruś Halicka (Halych Rus) had been part of the Korona (the Polish Crown) since the XIV century. After the Lublin Union had been concluded (1569), bracławskie, kijowskie, podlaskie and

[1] Eng. *Galicia*.
[2] Eng. *Lesser Poland* or *Little Poland*.

wołyńskie voivodeships were also incorporated as part of the province of Małopolska. The territories occupied by Austria in the aftermath of the First Partitioning of Poland were named by the Austrians „Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria" in an attempt to legitimize their supposed right to claim those lands lawfully. Austria put forward linkages that had existed between Królestwo Halicko-Włodzimierskie (Halych-Volodymyr Kingdom), back in the XIII century and the Hungarian Crown despite the fact that the territories taken by Austria from Poland were much larger than the territory of the ancient Ruthenian Kingdom. Therefore, the Austrian claim had been, as emphasized by Maciej Kozłowski, more than dubious (Kozłowski 1990: 26).

In 1850, the Austrians established thus a crown land (*kraj koronny*) Królestwo Galicji i Lodomerii together with the Great Duchy of Cracow (Wielkie Księstwo Krakowskie) and the Duchy of Oświęcim and Zator (Księstwo Oświęcimskie i Zatorskie) whose area took up about 78 407 of square kilometers. At the same time, Galicja was divided into two parts according to criteria established by court proceedings, known in the vernacular as, respectively, Galicja Zachodnia (Western Galicia) and Wschodnia (Eastern Galicia). The administrative border between them more or less followed the length of the San river and its tributary, the Wisłok river. Galicja Wschodnia reached as far as the Zbruch river, which constituted an Austrian-Russian border dividing in an artificial manner the Rusyn (Ukrainian, Ruthenian) population living there into two parts. Galicja was not divided according to an ethnic criterion, as demanded by the Ukrainians, especially towards the end of the First World War (Kozłowski 1990: 69–70; Batowski 1993: 33 and ff.; Wasilewski 2001: 156–157). The division of Galicja, effected in the mid-nineteenth century, was not abolished until October of 1918. When Poles regained independence, they started to use the name of Małopolska Wschodnia (Eastern Lesser Poland) ever more frequently, while the Ukrainians continued to use the name of Eastern Galicia, only later switching to the name of Western Ukraine.

On the 18th of October, there was established in Lviv a Ukrainian National Council which assumed the status of a constituent assembly. The day after, a Ukrainian state was proclaimed as part of Austria-Hungary. The Ukrainian National Council passed a „Temporary Basic Law" (a temporary constitution) on the 13th of November. The constitution established, *inter alia*, the name of the new state as

Western-Ukrainian People's Republic. The state encompassed those territories of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy which were inhabited *inter alia* by Ukrainians[3].

The proclamation of the Ukrainian state, which in addition had occurred 10 days before in Kraków (Cracow) Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna (Polish Liquidation Committee) was established which claimed the right to the whole of Galicja, collided with the plans of the Committee members who had determined that the Committee's seat should be moved from Kraków to Lviv – a city which had belonged to Poland from the mid-fourteenth century until the period of the Partitions. As of 1910, Lviv was inhabited by more Poles than Ukrainians – respectively 51,0% and 18,9% of the city residents. Its population included also Jews (27,7%), Armenians and other less populous nationalities.

During the break-up of Austria-Hungary, Rusyns (Ukrainians, Ruthenians) took control of Lviv in the night of the 31st of October in 1918. Subsequently, they took control of the territories as far as the San river. Even though military units of Western-Ukrainian People's Republic had been pushed by the Poles out of Lviv on the 22nd of November, the fighting went on (for more on the issue, see: Kozłowski 1990: 115 and ff.; *Generał...* 1929: 127 and ff; Klimecki 2000: 67 and ff; Galuba 2004: 46 and ff; Czubiński 1993: 57 and ff). In the war between the two nationalisms it was difficult to reach a compromise, primarily because of the historical record of mutual injuries as well as because of the ethnic structure of the population of the region which was heterogeneous. The ethnically differentiated population of Galicja was dispersed regionally. According to an Austrian census of 1910, in which the linguistic criterion was used as a decisive indicator, Poles constituted 47,6% of the Galician population, while Ukrainians – 40,3% and Jews – 10,9%. However, in Galicja Wschodnia, which took up about 70% of the administrative territory of Galicja, the proportions were different: the Ukrainians constituted 71,1% of the whole population there, while the Poles –

[3] Lviv was the seat of the WUPR's authorities until the 22nd of November in 1918, then it was replaced by Tarnopol and then Stanisławów. On the 22nd of January in 1919 in Kiev, the unification of Ukrainian People's Republic and Western-Ukrainian People's Republic was solemnly announced. Since then, Western-Ukrainian People's Republic was known as Western Region of Ukrainian People's Republic (J. Pisuliński 2004: 84; Serczyk 2001: 285). According to L. Zaszkilniak (1999: 460), Western-Ukrainian People's Republic was established on the 1st of November, whereas according to R. Galuba (2004: 54–55) – on the 9th of November.

14,4% and Jews – 12,4%. The first Polish general census, conducted on the 30th of September in 1921, produced the following data: 53,7% of the Ukrainians and 39,1% of the Poles in Galicja (Małopolska) Wschodnia. Ukrainian scientists stipulate, in turn, basing on the aforementioned census of 1910, that Galicja Wschodnia was inhabited by 74% of Ukrainians and only 12% of Poles (Klimecki 2000: 16)[4]. Taking into account the complex relationships between the nationalities in Galicja Wschodnia and the arguable credibility of the particular censuses, it may only be stated that the Rusyn (Ukrainian, Ruthenian) population was more numerous within the territory than the Polish population.

Following the election to the Sejm Ustawodawczy (Constitutional Assembly), which took place on the 26th of January in 1919, parliamentary clubs of peasant parties' deputies announced their programmatic declarations. The clubs of PSL Wyzwolenie (Polish Peasant Party Liberation) and PSL Piast (Polish Peasant Party Piast) filed the declarations on the 22nd of February in 1919 r, whereas the club of PSL-Lewica (Polish Peasant Party-the Left) – on the 24th of February. Błażej Stolarski delivered a declaration on behalf of Klub Poselski PSL Wyzwolenie being both the deputy club's chairman and the president of the High Council of the party. He spoke in favour of establishing an ethnic border in the East and a union of „peoples – free people with free people, equal people with equal people". The intention was to stop a military conflict with Ukraine and reach an agreement. However, it was also assumed that Kresy Południowo-Wschodnie (Southern-Eastern Borderlands), including Lviv, would remain part of the Polish state and that the rights of the Polish national minority in the Ukrainian state would be secured. It was a federalist programme which was proposed to be implemented by peaceful measures. According to Klub Poselski PSL Piast, on behalf of which Wincenty Witos, the party's leader spoke, Galicja Wschodnia should belong to Poland. Witos did not mention the issue of the formation of an independent Ukrainian state. Jan Stapiński, in turn, speaking on behalf of Klub Poselski PSL-Lewica, declared that

[4] The quoted data are based on estimations because the census did not take into account the Jewish language. Jews, who by the criterion of religious denomination constituted ca. 12% of Galicja's population, during the census survey in their majority chose the option of the Polish language (Dąbkowski 1985: 23–26, 28 and ff; Żurawski vel Grajewski 1995: 91). Slightly different data are provided by A. Czubiński (1993: 59).

his party's programme and intentions were similar to the postulates by PSL Wyzwolenie (Sprawozd. stenogr. from the 4 sitting SU, 22 II 1919, column 110–111, 128; Sprawozd. stenogr. from the 5 sitting SU, 24 II 1919, column 176).

By the moment at which a debate took place over a report by the Polish delegation to the Paris Peace Conference (the 22nd – 23th of May, 1919), which was delivered by prime minister Ignacy Paderewski, yet another debate was staged over ratification of the Peace Treaty (the 30th – the 31st of July 1919), during which Jan Dąbski of PSL Piast, Maciej Rataj and Stanisław Osiecki of PSL Wyzwolenie, and, to a lesser degree Jan Stapiński of PSL-Lewica, voiced in the most representative manner the views of the peasant parties present in the Sejm.

Dąbski conceded that the victorious powers should have an upper hand when the Western borders of Poland were being established. Nevertheless, he simultaneously stressed that the Peace Conference (the 18th of January – 28th of June, 1919) would not contribute to ending of the military conflict with the Bolsheviks and the Ukrainians. He said that the ethnic borders of Poland in the East were „torn and uneven". He claimed that Poland's historic mission in the East remained unfulfilled because it had been disrupted by the Partitions. After the First World War, the Polish national life started to recover not only in Galicja but also in Lithuania, Byelorussia and in Volhynia. Dąbski emphasized that Poles inhabited also areas which lay beyond the Zbruch river, within the following administrative regions (*gubernie*): podolski (Podolia), wołyński (Volhynia) and kijowski (Kiev). Supposedly, there were as many as nearly 2 million Poles there, owing about 6 million *morgs*[5] of the „Polish soil", which was not to be surrendered. The population of Galicja Wschodnia was differentiated in national terms, however, and no border dividing the Polish from the Rusyn (Ruthenian) masses existed, which is why Dąbski, like many others, did not see any reason why Galicja Wschodnia should be surrendered to anyone else. Poland was therefore to claim at least the whole territory of Galicja Wschodnia (Sprawozd. stenogr. from 24 sitting SU, 3 IV 1919, column 26–28).

It is therefore clear that Dąbski represented the conception entailing incorporation as regards the eastern borderlands of Poland.

[5] 1 morg = ca. 1,5 acres.

He was only in favour of establishing Lithuania within its ethnic boundaries, with the capital city in Kaunas. The Lithuanian state was to be allied with Poland. He doubted whether it was possible to establish fully independent Byelorussia, Ukraine, even Lithuania for that matter. He feared that the Polish border in the East would not then run in „parallel to a Ukrainian, Byelorussian or Lithuanian border but rather it would be a border between the Polish and the Russian state" (Sprawozd. stenogr. from 7 sitting. SU, 26 II 1919, column 291).

Maciej Rataj believed that the Ukrainian problem could not be solved by force because the Polish and the Rusyn (Ruthenian) population were intermingled in many areas. According to his opinion, a just basis for a compromise might be constituted by a „line of balance which will guarantee to us that Lviv will be Polish because the city undoubtedly testified to its Polishness in front of both the whole world and the Ukrainians, and the line which will provide us with a Polish oil basin" (Sprawozd. stenogr. from 18 sitting SU, 26 III 1919, column 1080). Speaking of the line, Rataj was not so much intent on an exact and immediate drawing of the Polish-Ukrainian border as on arriving at a criterion of its drawing. He emphasized that the Polish army marching eastwards should not be made to play the role of enemies or occupants but liberators.

Stanisław Grabski, a deputy of Związek Sejmowy Ludowo-Narodowy (the Sejm People's National Union) and the president of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, took issue with Rataj. In his view, it could be in many ways useful to Poland if a state was created there by secession from Russia. This did not apply to Ukraine, however, because then Poland would have to deal not with just one enemy but with two enemies, that is with Russia and Ukraine (Sprawozd. stenogr. from 24 sitting SU, 3 IV 1919, column 18).

Another plan to establish the eastern border, more concrete than the one voiced by Rataj, was outlined by Stanisław Osiecki, according to whom there were two major objectives of the Polish foreign policy in the East. The first of them entailed a voluntary agreement with Ukrainians, Byelorussians and Lithuanians, who – in his opinion – were not as yet ready to begin an „autonomous life". The second objective involved the moving of the Russian border as far eastwards as possible from the Polish ethnic boundaries. Realizing that Russia did not want to surrender Kresy (Borderlands), Osiecki wanted to make sure that there would not be a direct border between

Poland and Russia in an immediate vicinity. This is why he favoured establishing of three states – Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Byelorussian – which were to be either tightly allied with Poland or linked to it by friendly relations (Sprawozd. stenogr. from 24 sitting SU, 3 IV 1919, column 22). Osiecki was convinced that independent Ukraine could and should be created, and it indeed stood the best chance of being created in the circumstances. There were several factors which indicated that Lithuania could achieve independence as well. The least chances to create their own state had, in Osiecki's eyes, Byelorussians, mainly because of an insufficient degree of their national awareness. He nevertheless proposed that they should still be treated as a nation and encouraged by providing them assistance „so that they could create a state organism within which the Polish national minority living in Byelorussia would enjoy full and equal rights whereas the state itself would simultaneously declare its will to become tightly allied with the Polish state" (Sprawozd. stenogr. from 24 sitting SU, 3 IV 1919, column 21).

Stapiński criticized those deputies who felt that the demands to incorporate Galicja Wschodnia into Poland were overbearing. His remarks most probably applied both to Rataj, who spoke about the so called line of balance, and to Osiecki, who was in favour of incorporating into Poland „almost the whole of" Galicja Wschodnia. According to Stapiński, Poland had an exclusive right to Galicja Wschodnia, or, more exactly, to the „whole of it". At the same time, the leader of PSL-Lewica stipulated that the creation of a Ukrainian state was in the interest of Poland as it would weaken Russia. He suggested that the relationship with Ukrainians in Galicja Wschodnia should be established by peaceful means (Sprawozd. stenogr. from 25 sitting SU, 4 IV 1919, column 15).

The parliamentarian debate over the report on the activities of the Polish delegation to the Paris Peace Conference took place on the 22nd and 23th of May. Maciej Rataj of PSL Wyzwolenie and Jan Dąbski of PSL Piast represented the peasant parties in the debate. Rataj postulated that the Ukrainian problem should be regarded in connection with the situation in Russia. He thought that Ukrainians and Poles had a common, dangerous enemy. He favoured therefore creation of an independent Ukrainian state, perceiving it as beneficial to Poland. He also suggested that some concessions to the Ukrainians in Galicja Wschodnia should be made. Those needed, however, to be premised on the condition that the Ukraine remained allied

with Poland against Russia. Simultaneously, he acknowledged an „indisputable" right of Poland to claim Lviv and the oil basin (Sprawozd. stenogr. from 41 sitting SU, 23 V 1919, column 3 and the ff).

Dąbski devoted a considerable part of his speech to Galicja Wschodnia, which was organically – according to him – linked to Poland. If the Ukrainian issue had been voiced at all, it was only – as he stipulated – „because Polish culture had permeated the Rusyn element, which was condemned to be perished within" (Sprawozd. stenogr. from 41 sitting SU, 23 V 1919, column 21). A „Galician Ukraine" and a „Russian Ukraine" were perceived by Dąbski as two different worlds. Since Galicja Wschodnia was inhabited by various nationalities, he supported the so called averaged border (*granica wypośrodkowana*). Its conception was to be implemented in the following manner: as many „Ukrainians and [as much of] the Ukrainian land would remain part of the Polish state as many of the Polish population and as much of the Polish land will remain on the other side of the border" (Sprawozd. stenogr. from 41 sitting SU, 23 V 1919, column 24). According to Dąbski, the border was then to be drawn on the river Zbruch, if not even further eastwards. He claimed that Galicja Wschodnia might not be conceded to Ukraine also because of the necessity to maintain the existence of a border between Poland and Romania. He was in favour of peaceful relations with the Ukrainian state that was to be created on the far bank of the river Zbruch. The Ukrainians inhabiting Galicja Wschodnia were to be promised a broad autonomy within the framework of the Polish state.

The complex situation in Volhynia, Podolia and in the neighbourhood of Lviv had begun to change since March of 1919. After a truce had been signed at Trier (on 16th of February in 1919), some Polish military units could be moved to Galicja Wschodnia. When the fighting broke out on the 18th of March, the initiative on the front was on the Polish side. The Polish army faced the Red Army in Volhynia at the beginning of June, which – to a great extent – influenced the attitudes of the Western Powers towards the Ukrainians and undermined their confidence in the ability of the Ukrainians to fight off Soviet Russia. On the 25th of June, the High Council, following a three-week period of elaborating a solution to the problem, issued a directive legitimating the Polish army to carry out military operations in the territories as far as the river Zbruch, which was not, however, binding for any future decisions as concerns the fate of Galicja Wschodnia. Poland was obliged to have a civilian

government in Galicja Wschodnia formed and to guarantee autonomy to the territory. Those decisions were not satisfactory to the Polish side, but they made it possible to resume the offensive military action in the East. Between the 29th of June and 17th of July, the Polish military units reached the river Zbruch in the South and Styr in Volhynia. The whole Galicja Wschodnia was in the Polish hands. The military front temporarily stabilized at this line.

Facing a common enemy, Semen Petlura, who headed the remaining military units of the Directorate of Ukrainian People's Republic, signed on the 1st of September a Polish-Ukrainian truce. Accepting the river Zbruch as a demarcation line, he moved on to fight the Red Army. On the 21st of November in 1919, the High Council let Poland administer Galicja Wschodnia for the period of 25 years. On the 10th of December, the Polish delegation handed in a diplomatic note to Georges Clemenceau, chairman of the Peace Conference, in which it demanded that instead of the 25-year mandate, Poland be granted Galicja Wschodnia as an autonomous province (*Sprawy*... 1967: 375; Kumaniecki 1924: 175–177; Galuba 1929: 221 and ff; Czubiński 1993: 116 and ff). On the 22nd of December, the High Council decided to withhold the implementation of the former decision in accordance with which Poland had been granted the 25-year mandate in Galicja Wschodnia, reserving the right to consider the issue once again (*Sprawy*... 1967: 376). This was a success by the Polish diplomacy. Neither the „White" Russia nor the Soviet Russia supported the annexation of Galicja Wschodnia by Poland. They also opposed granting the right to self-determination to Ukrainians. Out of the Great European Powers, only France showed more support for the Polish conceptions as concerns Galicja Wschodnia (for more on the issue, see: Galuba 1929: 38 and ff). The future fate of Galicja Wschodnia was decided by the result of the Polish-Russian war and the resolutions signed within the Treaty of Riga (concluded on the 18th of March in 1921). Poland attained its primary goal which was related to the shape of the southern part of the eastern borderline based on the river Zbruch, i.e. the borderline was established on the border line that formerly divided the Polish partitions contained, respectively, within the Tsarist Russia and within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The goal was reached by incorporation and not by federal integration, which was favoured *inter alia* by PSL Wyzwolenie and PSL-Lewica. In terms of surface, the territories granted to the Polish state approximated the postulates

voiced by PSL-Lewica and exceeded the expectations of PSL Wyzwolenie. PSL Piast, some of its members in particular, demanded that the border be established at least as far as the river Zbruch. They drew attention to the fact that a populous Polish national minority had inhabited the territories on the far bank of the river for centuries.

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