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## **When cordons broke and borders were born... Western Galicia Province in November 1918**

The 19th century, referred to by historians as the “long century”, as it lasted from the beginning of the French Revolution (in the case of Poland, to the time of the Partitioning) to the collapse of the “old” European order in the wake of the Great War<sup>1</sup>. For Poles living in the Austrian partition, the twilight of the old era came in November 1918, a month that can unquestionably be regarded as the “longest month” of the “long 19th century”. It was a month in which the situation in the counties of Western Galician changed like a kaleidoscope: from euphoria, through critical moments, to relative stability. Nevertheless, there were cities where all these stages occurred simultaneously. However, before the memorable November came, Galicians of Polish nationality had already gained independence in October.

1 See J. Osterhammel, *Historia XIX wieku: przeobrażenie świata*, ed. W. Molik, Poznań 2013, pp. 71–74.

## Independence came in October

On 30 April 1937, a law voted by the Polish Parliament only a week earlier came into force, establishing 11 November as Independence Day. Article 1 of this act stated that the day would be “the anniversary of the regaining of the independent state by the Polish Nation”<sup>2</sup>. Since then, 11 November has become the most important date in the calendar of Polish national holidays. The joy of this celebration was only short-lived, as from 1939, for the next half a century, Poles had neither the opportunity nor permission to celebrate this holiday. This changed in February 1989, when the Sejm of the Polish People’s Republic re-established 11 November as the “National Independence Day”. At this point, however, it is worth asking a legitimate question regarding how the actual day was remembered by the people concerned, in this case the inhabitants of the western part of Galicia.

It turns out that Monday 11 November was a day like any other here. People living in Western Galicia were rather concerned with existential problems. One witness to that day is the headmaster of the humanist gymnasium in Wadowice, and at the same time the father of the well-known writer Janina Brzostowska, Jan Doroziński. Under the “memorable” date of 11 November 1918, he noted: “Wadowice swamp – municipal office = profiteer sells flour at 12 k[oronas] each! Bread is still not baked. In Germany, revolution and Bolshevism. Incredibly harsh armistice conditions = English imperialism. Armistice from today”<sup>3</sup>. His picture of 11 November is completely different from that of 30 October 1918, as he wrote that Galicia was passing into Polish rule. On 1 November, on the other hand, Doroziński made a longer entry, drawn up in a truly enthusiastic tone, which read as follows: “We begin a new life as citizens of the Polish State!!! Universal joy! The Liquidation Commission is beginning to govern – all the eagles are down! Beautiful weather in the morning, nice mood yesterday evening! Pay 1148.25 K + 920 K dearness allowance = 2068.25”<sup>4</sup>. The author’s euphoria was not unjustified, as already by 28 October, a founding meeting of the Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna Galicji i Śląska Cieszyńskiego [Polish Liquidation Commission for Galicia and Cieszyn Silesia, hereafter:

2 Ustawa z dnia 23 kwietnia 1937 r. o Święcie Niepodległości, Dz. U. Nr 33 poz. 255.

3 J. Doroziński, *Dziennik*, ed. G. Studnicki, Wadowice 1998, p. 82 [diary published in the form of a manuscript of a limited edition, the copy used is in the collection of the Wadowice Public Library, ref. No. R9/49546].

4 J. Doroziński, *Dziennik*, ed. G. Studnicki, Wadowice 1998, p. 82.

Polish Liquidation Commission] was held in Kraków, its members envisaging the takeover of the territory of the Austrian partition. Three days after this event, on 31 October, the Commission took full control of Kraków, removing the Austrians from the city. The same day saw the issuing of a mobilisation order for the Polish Army Headquarters in Kraków signed by Bolesław Roja, who at the same time, with the support of the People's Party, became Commander in Chief of the Kraków Army District with the rank of Second Lieutenant General<sup>5</sup>.

## Euphoria

The events unfolding in Kraków did not go unchallenged in the Galician counties. The euphoria that prevailed in the cities and towns of Western Galicia found vent not only in memoirs, as in Doroziński's case, but above all in deeds. In fact, as early as the first days of November 1918, and less than a week after the establishment of the Commission in Kraków, information posters announcing the creation of an independent Poland appeared on the walls and fences of Galician cities. At the same time, the inhabitants were informed of the assumption of total power by the local representatives of the Polish Liquidation Commission of Galicia and Cieszyn Silesia, formally recognised as the government of the area. Announcements of this type were found, among others, on the streets of Mielec. Its issuers and signatories, including the president of Polish Liquidation Commission structures in Mielec, Stanisław Łojasiewicz, and his deputy Franciszek Krempa, on the one hand proclaimed the creation of independent Poland, and on the other called for the maintenance of public order and respect for fundamental rights, in a way anticipating the events that were to follow. Their proclamation read:

Compatriots!

A free, united, independent Poland has been established!

At the same time, by the will of the whole county, a county government was formed under the name of the County Polish Liquidation Commission, which assumed authority over all the offices and affairs of the county.

All previous authorities placed themselves under the orders of the Polish

5 H. Korczyk, *Roja Bolesław Jerzy (1870–1940)*, in: *Polski słownik bibliograficzny*, vol. 31, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1988–1989, p. 509; *Narodziny niepodległości w Galicji (1918–1919). Wybór dokumentów z archiwów lwowskich*, ed. by M. Przeniosło, Kielce 2007, pp. 104–105.

Government and continue to hold office under the direction of the County Polish Liquidation Commission. Lieutenant Kazimierz Wierciński was appointed the commander of the army and gendarmerie in the county. The existing gendarmerie, with some changes, continue to serve as Polish gendarmeries; they should be obeyed and helped unconditionally. All deserters from the Austrian army and those on leave in hiding may safely return home. A separate order will be issued by the Polish military authorities regarding their further military status. Order and peace must unconditionally be maintained, and any offence will be severely punished. Personal freedom and respect for other people's property must be respected and guaranteed by all. All taverns must close until further notice, which is to be carried out by the municipal chiefs. Requisitions in favour of foreign countries [i.e., central states – K.M.] shall be abolished. However, in order to avoid starvation among the population of Polish towns and factories, the crops found in the fields must be collected with the help of the local and neighbouring population. Compatriots! At such a great and important moment for the Polish nation, let us throw away all private resentments and all dissensions, and let us stand together in love and harmony to rebuild our homeland, so terribly destroyed by our enemies<sup>6</sup>.

Interestingly, the appeal was dated 2 November 1918 and was probably delivered to the streets of the towns and villages of Mielecki County at that time, while the correspondence, as can be seen from the annotation on the presentation, containing a copy of the announcement was delivered to the Polish Liquidation Commission headquarters in Kraków eight days later, on 10 November<sup>7</sup>. This fact proves that the activities carried out by the Mielec residents took place under the auspices of the Polish Liquidation Commission headquarters, but without its detailed control or top-down instructions.

6 Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in Lviv/Центральний Державний Історичний Архів України у Львові [hereafter: CDIAL], fond 211: Polish Liquidation Commission, description 1: Administrative Department, case 158: Appeal of the representation of the county authorities in Mielec to the population on the rebirth of the Polish state, k. 1.

7 CDIAL, fond 211, case 158, k. 1.

Initiatives similar to those seen in Mielec, however, were ostensibly grassroots. Perhaps there even were so, yet only in a tactical sense. In fact, however, as Ludwik Mroczka noted, their initiators received telegraphic orders from Kraków from the local provisional leadership of the Polish Liquidation Commission, which had barely taken control of the historic Polish capital. The call to action, addressed to Galician magistrates and county councils, came at a crucial moment, from 31 October to 4 November, when the permanent composition of the Polish Liquidation Commission was established<sup>8</sup>. The dispatches sent from Kraków included an order to start “the election of representatives by the population in the form of county liquidation commissions or other similar national political-administrative bodies”<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, the manner in which these elections were to be made was not imposed. In this respect, it was left to the discretion of local activists<sup>10</sup>. Often, though not always, the county commissions were composed of members of patriotic organisations already active in the region, which were established in the early autumn of 1918 or, as in the case of Nowy Sącz, as early as February. It is worthwhile to point out that such organisations existed in Nowy Targ (Powiatowa Organizacja Narodowa – County National Organisation), Nowy Sącz (Towarzystwo Obrony Obywatelskiej – Civic Defence Society), Sanok (Komitet Samoobrony Narodowej – National Self-Defence Committee), Kęty (Organizacja Narodowa – National Organisation), and also in Jarosław (Organizacja Narodowa – National Organisation)<sup>11</sup>. In cities where there were no patriotic organisations (or their structures remained rather weak), county committees were appointed ad hoc from local activists<sup>12</sup>.

The few days in late October and early November 1918 proved to be crucial in taking control of the cities and towns scattered across Western Galicia. In many cases, the process was carried out in an organised manner. Apart from the aforementioned Mielec, where the local authorities even had a printing press at their disposal (as evidenced by printed announcements), it is worth mentioning the example of Biała (now Bielsko-Biała),

8 L. Mroczka, *Galicji rozstanie z Austrią. Zarys monograficzny*, Kraków 1990, p. 144.

9 L. Mroczka, *Galicji rozstanie z Austrią*, pp. 144–145.

10 L. Mroczka, *Galicji rozstanie z Austrią*, p. 145.

11 L. Mroczka, *Galicji rozstanie z Austrią*, pp. 152–154; M. Tylza-Janosz, *Kto był kim? O kęckich burmistrzach*, in: *Kęty 740: historyczne fundamenty miasta*, eds. R. Bożek, M. Tylza-Janosz, Kęty 2017, p. 73.

12 L. Mroczka, *Galicji rozstanie z Austrią*, pp. 155–157.

where an Executive Committee subordinate to the Kraków Liquidation Commission was established as early as on 1 November. It was headed by prominent representatives of the local community including: Antoni Mikulski, director of the teachers' seminary in Biała (acting as president of the Committee), Waclaw Seidl, a doctor at the sanatorium in Bystra (vice-president), Ignacy Stein, director of the Gimnazjum Realne school (secretary), Daniel Bernard Gross, a domestic lawyer (rapporteur for food matters), secondary school teachers Karol Rybarski (clerk for military affairs and public safety), Józef Braszka (clerk for food affairs), and the only woman in the group, Adela Domanusowa (treasurer) – an activist with the Liga Kobiet Naczelnego Komitetu Narodowego w Białej [Women's League of the Supreme National Committee in Biała]<sup>13</sup>. Besides them, several other locally recognised people were selected to assist the Committee. Almost simultaneously with the establishment of the Executive Committee, in agreement with the magistrates of Bielsko (Austrian Silesia) and Biała (Galicia) and the German Rada Narodowa [National Council] established in Bielsko (sic), a proclamation was issued in Polish and German to the population calling for peace among representatives of both nationalities, and “refraining from all disturbances”<sup>14</sup>. On Friday, 1 November, the Polish Committee accepted a declaration of loyalty to the new authorities from Polish officers of the Bielsko 55th Infantry Regiment. The soldiers took over the limited supplies remaining in the local military warehouses. That step enabled the establishment of a Polish militia in Biała, under the command of Lieutenant Bolesław Kański from the 55th Regiment. With such an established position, on Saturday, 2 November, the authorities of the local Polish Liquidation Commission Committee began negotiations with the starost in Biała, persuading him to recognise himself as a Polish official, which he did several hours later. At around 2 pm, he ordered flying the white-and-red flag with the simultaneous removal of the black eagle symbolising Austrian rule<sup>15</sup>. Along with the starost's decision, similar steps were taken by the heads of other government offices located in Biała. At the same time as the starost of Biała was taking the decision to recognise the authority of the Liquidation Commission over the county, its representatives visited the mayor to persuade him

13 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 102: Correspondence on the establishment of the Executive Committee in Biała, k. 1.

14 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 102, k. 1.

15 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 102, k. 1.

to follow in the footsteps of the county authorities. The mayor emphasised that he would do so once the Rada Miejska [City Council] had given its approval. On Tuesday 5 November, the Executive Committee received a message back from the Town Hall that the municipality “submits itself to the sovereignty of the Polish State”<sup>16</sup>. As the municipal council’s declaration was not followed by any real action, on the following day, the presidium of the Polish Liquidation Commission Committee issued an ultimatum requiring the following five conditions to be fulfilled within the following three days (by the evening of 9 November):

1. The municipal council will fly the white-and-red national flag from the tower of the town hall as a sign that it has placed itself under the orders of the Polish government.
2. The municipal council will introduce the Polish language for Polish parties and the German language for German parties in its oral and written proceedings.
3. Letters to the Polish authorities and public institutions shall be written in Polish.
4. Signage in the city streets and in the offices of the municipal council shall be changed to bilingual Polish–German.
5. All forms of official announcements to the public issued by the municipal council shall be in Polish and German with signatures in both languages<sup>17</sup>.

In the event that the demands were not met, the Polish Committee was to ask the Polish Liquidation Commission in Kraków to send a government commissioner to Biała to assume the powers of the mayor. At this point, it is worth noting that while the situation in Galician Biała was quite clear, in Bielsko, a Silesian city neighbouring it, the local German National Council set up a civic guard composed of soldiers from the former Austrian gendarmerie and equipped with weapons from the 55th Infantry Regiment. It was commanded by a captain named Josephy. With the troops at his disposal, he threatened the Bielsko authorities with intervention in the event of a pledge to the National Council of Cieszyn Silesia. This declaration caused friction between Poles and Germans on both sides of the Biała River<sup>18</sup>.

16 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 102, k. 1.

17 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 102, k. 2.

18 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 102, k. 2.

Due to its geographical location and the large German minority in the socio-political life of the city, Biała had its own peculiarities, as reflected in the ultimatum referred to above, which was concise in its content. However, apart from the points which presumed equal treatment of the Polish and German languages, the seizure of power was similar in other cities and towns where local Polish Liquidation Commission structures had been organised. In addition to expressing loyalty to the Polish government in Kraków, there used to be a symbolic display of the red-and-white flag and the removal of Austrian eagles.

In the first period of the rebirth of Polish statehood in Western Galicia, the Liquidation Commission adopted the concept of appointing county commissioners in individual starosties. By the decision of the members of the Commission taken on 6 November, a former starost or at least a starosty official could become a commissioner. This move was intended to ensure a “smooth” transition of county structures from Austrian to Polish rule. It was even suggested that the personal continuity of the county office should be maintained<sup>19</sup>. Of course, a sine quo non condition for the former starost to remain in office was, among other things, the proper attitude shown during the war. The first appointments of county commissioners took place on 6 November. The starosts appointed by the Austrians were retained in, among others: Biała (Kazimierz Chłapowski), Brzesko (Władysław Chyliński), Brzozów (Roman Trzeciak), Dąbrowa Tarnowska (Włodzimierz Hendrich), Gorlice (Aleksander Strzelbicki), Jarosław (Michał Rawski), Kolbuszowa (Kazimierz Jaworczyński), Myślenice (Bolesław Kudelski), Mielec (Stefan Różecki), Oświęcim (Jan Dauksza), Przeworsk (Eustachy Romanowski), Pilzno (Henryk Stubenvoll), Ropczyce (Stefan Żelechowski), and briefly in Wadowice (Antoni Pogłódowski, later replaced by Tadeusz Moszyński)<sup>20</sup>.

The commissioners in charge operating on behalf of the Liquidation Commission took the oath of office from subordinate officials in the first few days after taking office, and then prepared reports on the local supply situation and public safety. These reports were then sent to Kraków, to the knowledge of the Polish Liquidation Commission Administrative Department<sup>21</sup>. The tasks of the commissioners did not generally differ

19 L. Mrocza, *Galicji rozstanie z Austrią*, p. 146

20 L. Mrocza, *Galicji rozstanie z Austrią*, pp. 148–149.

21 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 105: Report of the commissioner of the Polish Liquidation Commission on his stay in Wadowice in connection with instructions implemented in the work of the county, k. 1–2.



from the previous competences of the county starosts. Their duties included supplying the civilian population with food and basic raw materials as well as ensuring public safety. In November 1918, the fulfilment of these tasks proved particularly difficult due to the apogee of the social and economic crisis at the time.

### **The crisis**

The euphoric state associated with the restoration of independence passed very quickly, and if it persisted it was rather among those with a strong national and political consciousness. Nevertheless, for the majority of inhabitants of Western Galicia, November 1918 was a time of particular concern about what the following day would bring. Problems with provisions, the spreading Spanish flu, and common crime peaked at that time.

Shortages of food, clothing, and energy resources came to the fore. Food prices “skyrocketed” to dizzying heights. To confirm this, let me just mention that the black-market price of a kilogram of butter in Wadowice rose from 10 koronas in May 1916 to 60 koronas in September 1918, while in February it was still 50 koronas<sup>22</sup>. In comparison, in May 1918 the price of one kilogram of butter in Brzozów was at 40 koronas, which was a fivefold increase compared to the same period a year earlier<sup>23</sup>. Prices for other products were equally unfavourable. In November 1918, a kilo of sausages near Wadowice cost 24 koronas. Several months earlier (April 1917), a merchant had to pay a mere 8 koronas for it<sup>24</sup>. Clothing was not spared from the increases. The price of a pair of everyday shoes in Galicia in autumn even reached 400–500 koronas, i.e., about 25% of the salary of a state gymnasium headmaster<sup>25</sup>.

To make matters worse, in addition to problems with provisions, the people of Galicia were directly exposed to epidemic diseases “raging” in the province and taking a deadly toll, especially among children, from the beginning of the war. The most dangerous diseases were cholera, typhoid, smallpox, and scarlet fever. However, the real hecatomb was yet to come in 1918. It was the Spanish flu virus, which decimated the

22 J. Dorosiński, *Dziennik*, p. 80.

23 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 97: Correspondence with the county authorities in the town of Brzozów and others on the maintenance of public order in connection with the Jewish pogroms and the payment of compensation, k. 19.

24 J. Dorosiński, *Dziennik*, p. 66.

25 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 97, k. 19.

civilian population. Numerous surviving chronicle accounts attest to the scale of the drama. One such account was given by a chronicler from the monastery of the Discalced Carmelites in Wadowice, who wrote in October 1918:

While men, fathers or sons of families are dying on the battle fronts, at the same time death is taking its toll at home in the same families, perhaps more numerous than the battles on the battlefield. For 2 or 3 months now, there has been a dangerous epidemic in all European countries [...] which first appeared in Spain last summer, and for this reason is called “Spanish flu” in our area, and is taking a lot of people, most of them girls. At present, it is reported to be raging strongly in the whole of the monarchy and is raging so strongly that whole towns, villages, and cities are like one big hospital [...] it hardly misses anyone in families, it lays down individual members of the family either one by one or several together, sometimes even whole families at once, so that there is no one to tend to the sick and the less sick have to serve the more seriously ill, when it lays down everyone in several neighbouring houses. Doctors call it “Spanish Influenza”, because its symptoms are similar to those of Influenza, but it is much more troublesome and dangerous, because in more severe cases it covers the surface of the lungs with a purulent film, which in the event of cold causes death already on the third day of the illness<sup>26</sup>.

Of course, with the end of November, the epidemiological situation did not change significantly. Influenza continued to take its deadly toll. Its last outbreak did not die out until 1920 and, to make matters worse, the threat of spotted fever and cholera appeared in the lands of the former Austrian Partition.

In November 1918, an “epidemic of banditry” also raged in Galicia. The depraved and armed soldiers of the collapsing imperial army moving along the Galician roads posed a real threat to the civilian population<sup>27</sup>. Some of them committed crimes against life, health, and property after returning home, showing far-reaching demoralisation caused by their war experiences. They fuelled fatalistic and antagonistic sentiments, which

26 *Kronika klasztoru Karmelitów Bosych w Wadowicach 1892–1921*, ed. by C. H. Gil, Kraków 2009, p. 389.

27 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 234: Reports of county commissioners, heads of county courts, etc. on anti-Jewish pogroms and their aftermath, k. 1–2, 5, 31, 71–72.

soon turned into attacks on Galician Jews. To make matters worse, with the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy, a general feeling of impunity prevailed in Galicia, exacerbated by the prolonged war, the increasing cost of living, widespread epidemics and overwhelming hunger<sup>28</sup>. As a preventive measure, the local authorities, together with local national organisations, restricted the opening hours of taverns and inns in some counties. Entrepreneurs breaking local law were threatened with severe sanctions, including the withdrawal of licences to sell alcohol. In the Żywiecki County, a circular containing such a directive was announced as early as on 2 November 1918 and confirmed in a relevant circular four days later<sup>29</sup>.

As has already been mentioned, a group particularly vulnerable to the progressive brutalisation of social life in Galicia were Jews. They were blamed for the dramatic food costs and economic situation. Rumours circulated among the common people that Jewish shopkeepers were hiding food, which de facto resulted in horrendous prices of necessities or their complete absence. Traditionally, Jews were accused of getting rich by practising usury. In addition, it was widely believed that Jewish soldiers serving in the imperial army enjoyed exceptional privileges and some successfully avoided conscription altogether<sup>30</sup>. In selected regions, the Jewish minority was accused of hiding weapons which, it was frequently believed, were to be used against Poles<sup>31</sup>. In such circumstances, any anti-Jewish agitation meant that hitherto prevailing social norms were shattered and Jews became victims of physical violence. The first recorded anti-Jewish incidents occurred in Krosno as early as on 28 October 1918. In the following days, riots against Jews took place in Kraków and Tyczyn. The apogee of the riots was between 4 and 7 November. At that time, the riots “swept” through, among others, Andrychów, Chrzanów, Dynów, Jaworzno, Kłaj, Mszana Dolna, Niepołomice, Oświęcim, Radomyśl, Rymanów, Trzebinia,

28 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 234: Reports of county commissioners, heads of county courts, etc. on anti-Jewish pogroms and their aftermath, k. 23–24, 42.

29 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 117: Reports of the county committee of the Polish Liquidation Commission in Żywiec, k. 1, 3–4.

30 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 97, k. 14–20; CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 234, k. 2.

31 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 131: Reports of the starost in Krosno on the prevailing situation in the county, k. 2.

Wadowice, Wiśnicz, Zakliczyn, Zator, and Żmigród<sup>32</sup>. Of the cities mentioned, the most dramatic events were recorded in Chrzanów, where four people were killed, two Jews and the same number of Christians<sup>33</sup>. The riots in the towns most often occurred on market and fair days, when there were exceptionally large numbers of the rural population coming from the neighbouring municipalities<sup>34</sup>, although (e.g., in Kolbuszowa) the riots also escalated on a public holiday (Sunday)<sup>35</sup>.

From around 10 to around 20 November 1918, anti-Jewish incidents took place in the Eastern Galician cities of Przemyśl and Brzesko, where clashes broke out between villagers participating in a pogrom and the Jewish self-defence. A controversial situation occurred in Brzozów in November, where the municipal council passed a resolution to expel Jewish refugees who had left the surrounding villages for fear of pogroms. It is also intriguing that the refugees were not allowed to return to their homes because of the attitude of the local peasantry<sup>36</sup>. The events became notorious thanks to the well-known Jewish activist, politician and lawyer Adolf Gross, who represented the interests of the victims in contacts with the Polish Liquidation Commission<sup>37</sup>. It was mainly thanks to his intervention that the Administrative Department of the Polish Liquidation Commission

32 M. Przeniosło, *Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna 1918–1919*, Kielce 2010, pp. 234–236; see also K. Meus, *Anti-Jewish Riots in the Cities of West Galicia in 1918. An outline of the Problem*, in: *Vel'ká doba v malom priestore: zlomové zmeny v mestách stredoeurópskeho priestoru a ich dôsledky (1918–1929)/Grosse Zeit im kleinen Raum. Umbrüche in der Stadt des mitteleuropäischen Raumes und deren Wirkungen (1918–1929)*, eds. P. Svorc, H. Heppner, Prešov–Graz 2012, p. 379.

33 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 225: Report of the commissioner of the County Starosty in Chrzanów on the damage suffered by the Jewish community during the anti-Jewish pogroms taking place in the county with examples, k. 25.

34 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 99: Reports of the commissioner in the Bocheński county on the damage suffered by the Jewish community during the anti-Jewish pogroms taking place in the county with examples, k. 2.

35 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 234, k. 36.

36 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 97, k. 6.

37 C. Brzoza, *Reprezentanci społeczności żydowskiej w Radzie Miejskiej międzywojennego Krakowa*, in: *1866. Odbudowa samorządu miejskiego – narodziny nowoczesnego Krakowa*, eds. K. Meus, Ł. T. Sroka, Kraków 2018, pp. 183–184.

annulled the debatable resolution of the Brzozów councillors that went unquestionably beyond all norms<sup>38</sup>.

Violence against Jews also reached the Galician countryside, where Jewish property was robbed. Inns and shops were particularly vulnerable to attacks. A reading of the surviving reports drawn up by the county starosts for the Polish Liquidation Commission shows that attacks occurred mainly along the main roads, although not exclusively. The pattern of looting remained very similar in many places. To illustrate the extent of the lawlessness and social depravity prevalent in Galicia at the time fully, I will quote the account of one of the victims of the tumult, Maurycy Huppert, an innkeeper from Bulowice near Andrychów:

On the morning of 6 November, around 11 am, some 20 farmhands came to my house, where I run a tavern, armed with sticks, and demanded beer, wine, vodka, and snacks, as well as some tobacco, which I immediately gave them without any payment, and they also took away the liquor in bottles, the rest of the tobacco, and all the meats. The articles taken from me had a value of 2000 koronas. These farmhands came from the Wadowicki County. They left my premises as a military patrol was approaching from Kęty. The court investigation was not conducted. No one was bodily injured because I handled the attackers very gently. Of the perpetrators I do not know any, they only attacked Israeli houses and mostly taverns and shops<sup>39</sup>.

There were also situations where the victims themselves tried to defend their possessions. There is confirmation of this in the village of Skawa near Jordanów, where, during an attempted theft at Abraham Goldman's inn, four assailants were severely wounded, and one of them subsequently died<sup>40</sup>.

In some areas of Western Galicia (e.g., in the Krośnieńskie County) attacks on Jews living in the countryside repeated even for several weeks<sup>41</sup>. There were towns where the economic losses caused by the anti-Jewish riots were counted in hundreds of thousands of koronas. For example,

38 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 97, k. 8.

39 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 104: Reports of the commissioner of the starosty in the town of Biala for the assessment of the damage suffered by the Jewish community during the pogroms taking place in the county, k. 5.

40 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 234, k. 16.

41 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 131, k. 2.

in Andrychów, where 18 shops and five private dwellings were destroyed, the losses were estimated at almost one and a half million koronas<sup>42</sup>.

At this point, however, it must be emphasised that riots were avoided in many places. Here I will refer to the example of the town of Kęty, located on the Lviv–Vienna route. There, a group of almost a hundred people, consisting of inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, was successfully dispersed. On 6 November 1918, having earlier ransacked Isaac Reich's inn in Czaniec, they headed towards Kęty. Before the crowd reached the town, its march was stopped at its turnpikes, by what is known as Geller's inn, by the head of the railway station named Waga and one of the Austrian gendarmes. The two men's determination thus protected the Jews of Kęty from the rabble, who had been enraged by the earlier attacks<sup>43</sup>.

The violence was directed against the Jews, although Christians were also robbed during the riots. For example, in the village of Bestwina in the Bielski County, the storehouse of the local Farmers' Circle run by a Christian entrepreneur Stanisław Niżański was looted. The losses suffered by Niżański were estimated at 1,500 koronas<sup>44</sup>. On another occasion, in Grębów, in the court district of Tarnobrzeg, the flat of the local estate manager, Seweryn Dolański, was ransacked<sup>45</sup>.

It is worth noting that the Polish authorities approached the November anti-Jewish riots and pogroms very seriously. As a result of the investigations they carried, wherever it was possible to identify suspects, court proceedings were initiated for beatings, robberies, and murders. To confirm the above, let me only mention that it was possible to arrest, among others, 28 participants of anti-Jewish speeches that took place near Kęty in November<sup>46</sup>. Similar actions were taken, with varying success, in other counties of Galicia. Sometimes up to a hundred people sat in the dock.

42 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 108: A list of damages caused by riots and robberies in the Wadowicki County in November 1918, k. 17, 20; CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 143: Reports of the Inspectorate of Guards for Western Galicia in Kraków, k. 16; CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 233: Reports of county commissioners, county courts, etc. regarding losses incurred as a result of anti-Jewish riots, k. 49; M. Przeniosło, *Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna*, pp. 234–235; K. Meus, *Anti-jewish Riots*, p. 379.

43 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 233, k. 18.

44 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 104, k. 3.

45 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 234, k. 49.

46 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 233, k. 8, 19, 71.

This was the case, for example, in the Milówka court district, where up to 169 people were indicted<sup>47</sup>. However, as the above-mentioned Adolf Gross argued in 1918, the Polish Liquidation Commission leadership allowed itself to make controversial accusations against Galician Jews, in a way blaming them for negative articles and comments appearing in foreign press about the pogroms and Poland in general<sup>48</sup>.

## Stabilisation

In order to prevent the escalation of violence in cities and towns, district security guards (also called land guards) were established locally. As Marek Przeniosło noted in his monograph on the Polish Liquidation Commission, the process of their formation began on 31 October 1918<sup>49</sup>. However, the main decisions on their functioning were, in fact, taken in Kraków in the first days of November. It was then that it was decided to appoint commanders for the new formation in the counties subject to Polish Liquidation Commission authority. By mid-November, 23 such positions had been filled<sup>50</sup>. In military matters, they reported directly to the military command in Kraków. In administrative matters and those related to public safety, they were supervised by the Polish Liquidation Commission county commissioner<sup>51</sup>. The guards were composed of professional gendarmes and newly-recruited volunteers. The conscription was carried out by county officials together with army officers, most often including the local guard commander<sup>52</sup>. It was assumed that there should be two county guards for every five hundred residents. In cities with their own military staff, it was possible to appoint a smaller number of gendarmes. For example, in Rzeszów, the needs of the gendarmerie were calculated at 600 people, but due to the presence of the army in the city, the number of 310 guards (31 posts with ten-person crews) was considered sufficient. Yet even that figure proved difficult to achieve. It is sufficient to point out that, the headcount of the Rzeszów security guard

47 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 234, k. 50.

48 C. Brzoza, *Reprezentanci społeczności żydowskiej*, p. 184.

49 M. Przeniosło, *Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna*, p. 157.

50 M. Przeniosło, *Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna*, p. 158.

51 M. Przeniosło, *Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna*, p. 158; *Narodziny niepodległości w Galicji (1918–1919)*, pp. 119–120.

52 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 108, k. 20.

at the end of November 1918 was 51 (sic) men<sup>53</sup>. Unfortunately, the guards in the counties suffered from financial shortcomings<sup>54</sup>. The gendarmes themselves expressed grievances about the low pay, yet recruitment efforts began to yield tangible results. For example, in the Łańcucki County 133 people were recruited into the forces, for three weeks in December 1918 alone<sup>55</sup>. Nevertheless, the shortage of personnel was considerable. To illustrate the problem, let me quote the example of the Bocheński County, where there were only 3 gendarmes for every 1,000 inhabitants, not all of whom were equipped with firearms (see the table below). The armament and uniforms at the disposal of the guards often left much to be desired<sup>56</sup>. In addition to post-Austrian weapons, it was quite common for guards to use Russian rifles of various types that had been taken from the civilian population<sup>57</sup>. The proper provision of public safety in the smaller towns of Galicia required the reinforcement of the local law enforcement forces with military troops arriving from the larger urban centres. This was the case, for example, in Brzozów, where the commander of the Rzeszów military district, Colonel Ludwik Zawada, arrived with troops on 1 December 1918. By his decision, a county military command was established in the Brzozowski County under the command of Lieutenant Jan Gabryła. The steps taken by Zawada brought the expected results. Already on 4 December, the local Polish Liquidation Commission commissioner reported to Kraków: “since 2 December there has been peace and public safety in the county, but military assistance is necessary for the time being”<sup>58</sup>. Actions similar to those described in Brzozów were also taken in other Western Galician cities and towns. This was the case, for example, in Alwernia, where an army assistance company arrived from Chrzanów on 19 December to prevent possible riots. Eventually, no riots took place in Alwernia<sup>59</sup>.

53 *Narodziny niepodległości w Galicji (1918–1919)*, pp. 121–122; M. Przeniosło, *Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna*, p. 160.

54 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 97, k. 8.

55 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 234, k. 62.

56 M. Przeniosło, *Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna*, pp. 159–160.

57 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 143, k. 13, 17.

58 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 97, k. 7.

59 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 234, k. 75.



## Security guard posts in the Bocheński County as of 10 December 1918

NO.	POST	PROFESSIONAL GENDARMES	VOLUNTEERS	NUMBER OF GUNS
1.	Bochnia	11	5	8
2.	Bogucice	2	3	8
3.	Chrostowa	2	14	12
4.	Gierczyce	1	20	13
5.	Groble	2	14	4
6.	Kłaj	1	19	13
7.	Królówka	1	15	15
8.	Lipnica Murowana	2	3	5
9.	Łapanów	2	38	33
10.	Niegowić	2	22	20
11.	Niepołomice	3	9	7
12.	Rączków	2	11	12
13.	Rzegocina	1	14	15
14.	Rzezawa	2	29	22
15.	Staniątki	2	12	13
16.	Uście Solne	21	17	13
17.	Uspina	1	10	3
18.	Wiśnicz	4	22	15
19.	Wola Zabierowska	1	17	12
TOTAL		63	294	243

Source: CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 143, k. 12–13.

As the following weeks passed, the presence of military and gendarmerie units had the expected effect. In Brzesko, where the pogroms took an exceptionally dramatic course, it was reported to Kraków as early as on 20 November that “the peasants, after the riots, are again trading with the Jews, who are returning [to their houses and flats]”<sup>60</sup>. This state

<sup>60</sup> CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 143, k. 3.

of affairs was precisely the result of the presence of military troops and the proper functioning of the security guards<sup>61</sup>. However, the gendarmes were not always able to ensure public order due to the thinness of their forces. The number of gendarmerie posts in rural municipalities usually ranged from two to three<sup>62</sup>. In towns, the situation was more favourable in this respect, but even so the forces of law and order remained inadequate. Let me quote an example from Niepołomice, where, during a riot on 5 November 1918, a dozen or so soldiers under the command of Wiktor Zechetgruber were disarmed by the swelling crowd of demonstrators, despite firing a warning salvo<sup>63</sup>.

In the first half of November 1918, the Polish Liquidation Commission authorised the formation of a “voluntary reserve of Jewish soldiers” to maintain public order and, above all, to ensure the safety of the Jews<sup>64</sup>. The Jewish guards had to meet the relevant criteria imposed by the Commission. According to a letter preserved in the resources of the Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie [National Archives in Krakow], which was received by the county authorities in Wadowice on 12 November, the newly-formed Jewish self-defence units were obliged to comply with the following conditions:

1. This Guard is to be unconditionally subordinate to the Supreme Command of the Polish Army.
2. It is to be provided with external badges indicating that it belongs to Poland.
3. It is to be used to perform security service not only in the interests of the Jewish but also Christian population.
4. It is to be used to relieve in its work the military detachments<sup>65</sup>.

In some towns, the initiatives of local Jews to set up their own militias were torpedoed by local Polish Liquidation Commission structures. A letter of 13 November 1918 addressed to the Jewish communities in Nowy Sącz pointed out that creation of a local Jewish militia was unjustifiable. In doing so, it argued that Jews, like Christians, could supply the

61 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 143, k. 3-4.

62 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 234, k. 9.

63 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 99, k. 2.

64 National Archives in Kraków, C.k. County offices of the starosty – collection of team remains 1862–1918 [1936], ref. 29/234/33, no pagination.

65 National Archives in Kraków, C.k. County offices of the starosty – collection of team remains 1862–1918 [1936], ref. 29/234/33, no pagination.

ranks of the already existing Polish militia<sup>66</sup>. In the end, all discussions and actions centred on the establishment of their own police formation by the Jews proved groundless, because, following the appearance of information about the Jewish guards supporting the troops of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic in the battle against the Poles for Przemyśl, the leadership of the Polish Liquidation Commission decided to disband the existing Jewish guards and "allow their members to join the general guards or the army"<sup>67</sup>.

The formation of law enforcement forces, supported by military units, was a key factor in stabilising the social situation in Galicia<sup>68</sup>. However, the second half of November 1918 was a period of continuing social and political tensions, exacerbated by the difficult economic situation and the ongoing war between Poles and the West Ukrainian People's Republic over eastern Galicia, headed by Lviv and Przemyśl. In addition, violence against local Jews, often accused of supporting the Ukrainians in the east, continued to escalate in some county Galician cities and towns. Sometimes, these assaults took on a mass character, while at other times there were just individual incidents<sup>69</sup>. Despite this, a period of slow normalisation can be observed in many county towns in Western Galicia after 15 November. A major contribution to this came from the appointed county commissioners and the Polish Liquidation Commission itself, as they began to dissolve the powerful county liquidation committees to smooth over any disputes over competences. Instead, the so-called "commissioners' subsidiary boards" were appointed with the intention to provide advisory and controlling bodies<sup>70</sup>. According to a resolution of the liquidation commission, these were made up of existing members of the county departments and elected representatives of local

66 M. Przeniosło, *Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna*, p. 229.

67 L. Mroccka, *Galicji rozstanie z Austrią*, p. 169.

68 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 234, k. 21.

69 CDIAL, fond 212: Governing Commission for Galicia, Cieszyn Silesia and Upper Orava and Spiš, description 1: Administrative Department, case 221: Documentation concerning the decoration for county gendarmes serving at the Wadowicki County posts (reports, correspondence and etc.), k. 3–6.

For example, renewed attacks occurred in Brzozów from 25 to 26 November. CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 97, k. 23–25.

70 L. Mroccka, *Galicji rozstanie z Austrią*, pp. 150–151.

communities<sup>71</sup>. The latter were entitled to 10 seats in each county after the council was increased. In some regions, this number proved to be insufficient. The problem was particularly acute in larger urban centres. On 30 November the civic committee (known as Powiatowa Rada Narodowa that is County National Council) of Nowy Sącz passed a resolution to apply to the Polish Liquidation Commission for an increase of the local subsidiary council to 14 people. A further 4 seats were planned to be distributed among urban or railway workers, rural workers, and one representative of the “towns” within the boundaries of the then Nowosądecki County<sup>72</sup>. These efforts were unsuccessful, as the Administrative Department considered the additional elections to be incompatible with the existing Polish Liquidation Commission resolution<sup>73</sup>.

The election of subsidiary councils was intended to lead to the “democratisation” of political life at local level. The initiators wanted to prevent the radicalisation of public sentiment (mainly among the poorer strata), which de facto led to the strengthening of temporary state bodies (Polish Liquidation Commission commissioners) in the region. The subsidiary councils, which had been meeting since December 1918, worked alongside the commissioners in a mostly non-collusive manner<sup>74</sup>, although there were also some conflicts resulting, for example, from the unclear scope of council competences.

At the end of November, those in charge of the municipal offices in the county towns of Western Galicia drew their attention to the particular interests of the municipalities they represented. There are even known cases of rivalry between towns to take over administrative functions in the reborn state. Interestingly, there were cases whose origins went back to the years before the outbreak of the First World War. Such a situation occurred in Maków (currently Maków Podhalański) and Sucha (currently Sucha Beskidzka), the towns whose authorities initiated a campaign to establish the seat of a new county in either of these towns in November 1918. The cession to Maków was to take place at the expense of the Myślenicki County. On 26 November, the heads of the municipalities and manorial

71 L. Mroccka, *Galicji rozstanie z Austrią*, p. 151.

72 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 173: Correspondence of the county administration in Nowy Sącz on the issue of the expansion of the appurtenant council, k. 1.

73 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 173, k. 2.

74 In Nowy Sącz, the first council meeting did not take place until the 19th of December 1918. CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 173, k. 3.

estates around Maków and Sucha made an appeal to the Liquidation Commission in Kraków, in which they argued for the need to establish (“in the shortest time possible”) an outpost of the Myślenicki County Polish Liquidation Commission in Maków<sup>75</sup>. Maków was of, not an justified, opinion that the town’s approximately seventy-kilometre distance from the county administration centre was one of the causes of the social unrest noted in this part of the Myślenicki County early in November. Moreover, the arguments intended to convince the members of the Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych [Administrative Department of the Polish People’s Party] to set up an office of the Commission, and later of the county administration, in Maków, included the claim that the Austrian Ministry of Internal Affairs had issued a rescript on the creation of a new county with its seat in Maków as far back as 2 August 1913. As indicated by the signatories of the aforementioned appeal, even the buildings intended for the new office had been adapted for this purpose<sup>76</sup>. On 27 November, a similar initiative was taken by representatives of the local community, who wrote a letter in a rather indecorous tone to the Kraków authorities, concluding that “the Starosty in Myślenice has no purpose, its seat should be Maków or Sucha”<sup>77</sup>. The authors of the letter were Emil Ulrich, the co-founder of the Oddział Babiogórskiego Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego [Babia Góra Branch of the Tatra Society], and Jan Matusik, the headmaster of the local school<sup>78</sup>.

Paradoxically, initiatives like the one quoted above confirmed that social, economic and political relations in Galicia were slowly but steadily moving towards normalisation. Problems such as those that had hitherto been associated with victualling, anti-epidemic measures or the safeguarding of public peace were being replaced by matters typical of local government. These were issues that had determined their actions even before the outbreak of the First World War.

The “extension of the electoral law” for municipal councils, which was announced by the Administrative Department of the Polish Liquidation

75 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 164: Correspondence of the offices of the municipalities of the Myślenicki County on the establishment of a branch of the starosty in Maków, k. 1–2.

76 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 164, k. 1–2.

77 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 166: Complaint of a Maków citizen Ulrich against the negative work of the Myślenice starosty, k. 2.

78 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 166, k. 2.

Commission by a rescript of 11 December 1918, should be regarded as a symbolic moment defining relative stability in the Western Galician province<sup>79</sup>. The Commission's decision was a consequence of the arrangements made at the Polish Liquidation Commission plenary meeting on 23 November when, at a proposal from the socialists, the communal system was modified by the creation of a fourth electoral circle<sup>80</sup>. The whole process was to be based on the electoral law of 12 August 1866<sup>81</sup>. Thus, for the Galician municipalities, a period of preparation for the co-option of new councillors began in mid-December<sup>82</sup>. In accordance with the Commission's guidelines, it was left to the municipalities to decide how new councillors were to be elected, with elections only being allowed in exceptional circumstances. The Presidium of the Polish Liquidation Commission rather assumed that co-option would take place on the basis of resolutions of the municipal councils after prior consultation with industrial and social organisations (e.g., craft associations)<sup>83</sup>. Doubts of the county commissioners and the existing municipal authorities concerned, among others, the treatment of former Russian and German citizens during the elections. The Administrative Department was asked to clarify whether they were subject to Austrian or other (Russian, German) electoral law. Enquiries were also made about the definition of the "age limit" and how to deal with the smallest municipalities that only had two electoral circles<sup>84</sup>. Despite some loopholes, the replenishment of municipal councils in Galicia was carried out systematically from mid-December 1918 (the municipality of Balin in the Chrzanowski County)

79 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 106: Correspondence of the starosty of Wadowice on the completion of the composition of the municipal councils, k. 1.

80 L. Mroccka, *Galicji rozstanie z Austrią*, p. 164; M. Przeniosło, *Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna*, pp. 78–79.

81 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 106, k. 1.

82 Initially, the new Polish law on the functioning of communal self-government in force in Poland (by virtue of a decree of the Head of State of 4 February 1919) covered only the lands which had been part of the Russian partition before the war, hence in the case of Galicia the pre-war Austrian law was still applied. Dekret o samorządzie miejskim, "Dziennik Praw Państwa Polskiego" 1919, No. 13, item 140, pp. 161, 170–171.

83 L. Mroccka, *Galicji rozstanie z Austrią*, p. 164.

84 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 106, k. 1.

until the end of April of the following year (the town of Muszyna)<sup>85</sup>, which in a sense crowned the period of arduous stabilisation initiated in the second half of November 1918.

Last but not least comes the activity of “non-political” associations, which is worth mentioning in the context of stabilising the social situation in Galicia after Poland regained independence. These organisations operated in Austria-Hungary on the basis of the State Act of 15 November 1867<sup>86</sup>. The Galician society (regardless of nationality and religion) took advantage of this liberalisation of the law over the following decades, and the associations established in a grassroots effort throughout Galicia became the foundation for the formation of a modern “open” society. The assassination in Sarajevo, which resulted in the death of the heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand Habsburg and his wife Sophie von Hohenberg (Chotek), put an end to the free and unrestricted activities of social organisations. On 25 July 1914, the authorities in Vienna imposed a state of emergency throughout the country<sup>87</sup>. This among other things resulted in the suspension of the civil rights enshrined in the December Constitution of 1867, which in turn led directly to restrictions on the free operation of the aforementioned “non-political” associations<sup>88</sup>. The establishment of new organisations of this type was also prevented, although there were exceptions to this rule<sup>89</sup>. The situation in this respect

85 M. Przeniosło, *Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna*, pp. 83–88.

86 Ustawa o prawie stowarzyszeń z 15 listopada 1867 roku, w: *Przekłady Ustaw, Rozporządzeń i Obwieszczeń Prawa Państwa dla Królestwa Galicyi i Lodomeryi, tudzież Wielkiego Księstwa Krakowskiego*, Lwów 1867.

87 A few days after the declaration of the state of emergency, on 31 July 1914, by the decision of Emperor Franz Joseph I, martial law was imposed on the territory of Galicia, Bukovina and Austrian Silesia from 1 August. K. Grzybowski, *Historia państwa i prawa Polski*, t. 4: *Od uwłaszczenia do odrodzenia państwa*, Warszawa 1982, pp. 387–389.

88 „Dziennik Ustaw Państwa”, 1914, No. 186, p. 891.

89 Recent research conducted on the basis of materials preserved in the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in Lviv makes it possible to conclude that there were cases when the Galician Governorship gave permission for the formation of a ‘non-political’ association after the outbreak of war. Such situations were rare, although they did occur. A case in point confirming this thesis can be found in Wilamowice, where the registration of the local Polish Gymnastic Society ‘Sokół’ took place in... October 1914. In the cited case, the Namiestnictwo’s favour was

changed only after the collapse of the monarchy and the seizure of power in Galicia by the Polish Liquidation Commission. At the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919, the social associations that had determined the phenomenon of Galician autonomy before the war began to revive. In addition, new organisations, whose legal basis reached back to Austrian legislation, were formed<sup>90</sup>. The Administrative Department of the Polish Liquidation Commission even reached for the pre-war model statutes of selected societies<sup>91</sup>.

## Conclusions

To conclude this discussion, it is worthwhile to ask the question whether it was really the case that power and independence lay in the streets of Polish cities in November 1918, and only needed to be picked up? Many contemporary historians claim that it was so. Józef Piłsudski only had to reach down for it, which he did midway through November. This claim has many apologists today. Perhaps this is due to the fact that, nowadays, researchers try to assess the events unfolding on Polish soil over a century ago from the perspective of Warsaw, the Regency Council, and such leading fathers of independence as Piłsudski, Witos, and Daszyński. A different picture of the birth of independent Poland emerges from reading archives on local and regional initiatives in Galicia in late October and early November 1918, i.e., even before Piłsudski's release from prison in Magdeburg. Particularly helpful here were the collections of the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in Lviv: analysing them made it possible to conclude that not only did the Kraków Polish Liquidation

probably due to the fact that the procedure for establishing the association was initiated in July, i.e., before martial law was imposed in Galicia. M. Fic, L. Krzyżanowski, K. Meus, *Wilamowice 1818–2018: miasto i ludzie*, Wilamowice 2018, pp. 113–115.

- 90 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 109: Status of the Jewish association “Mizrachi” (Orthodox) and petition of the committee of this association to the county office in Wadowice for registration, k. 1–4.
- 91 CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 116: Case concerning the organisation of an agricultural circle in Smęgorzów in the Dąbrowa district, k. 5–14 (Statut Towarzystwa Kółek Rolniczych przyjęty do wiadomości reskryptem c.k. Namiestnictwa z dnia 8 sierpnia 1913 r., Lwów 1918); CDIAL, fond 211, description 1, case 136: Correspondence with the Union of Judges of the Kraków District concerning the approval of the statute, k. 1, 3–5.



Commission organise the structures of Polish statehood in Western Galicia at the end of 1918 successfully (even if not without problems) but also all the activities undertaken by its leadership clearly limited the negative impact of the chaos that in that post-Austrian province followed after the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy.

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## Abstract

Konrad Meus

*When cordons broke and borders were born... Western Galicia Province in November 1918*

The 19th century, referred to by historians as the “long century”, as it lasted from the beginning of the French Revolution (in the case of Poland, to the time of the Partitioning) to the collapse of the “old” European order in the wake of the Great War. For Poles living in the Austrian partition, the twilight of the old era came in November 1918, a month that can unquestionably be regarded as the “longest month” of the “long 19th century”. It was a month in which the situation in the counties of Western Galician changed like a kaleidoscope: from euphoria, through critical moments, to relative stability.

Euphoria took hold in Polish homes in late October and early November 1918, when Poles took control of the cities and towns scattered across Western Galicia. The euphoric state associated with regaining independence passed very quickly, and if it persisted, it was rather among those with a strong national and political consciousness. Nevertheless, for the majority of inhabitants of Western Galicia, November was a time of particular concern about what the following day would bring as issues of food, clothing, and energy shortages came to the fore. Food prices “skyrocketed”, reaching dizzying levels in the autumn of 1918. Common violence, affecting mainly the Jewish population, became a plague. Midway through November 1918, thanks to the actions taken by the Polish Liquidation Commission, a process of stabilising the social and political life began, which was reflected in the successive revival (or organisation) of “non-political” associations and the reorganisation of municipal (communal) self-government in the counties.

### **Keywords:**

Galicia, November 1918, independence, Polish Liquidation Commission, Galician province, Galician Jews

# Abstrakt

Konrad Meus

*Gdy pękały kordony, a rodziły się granice... Prowincja zachodniogalicyska w listopadzie 1918 roku*

Wiek XIX nazywany przez historyków „długim wiekiem”, sięgający swoimi korzeniami początków rewolucji francuskiej (w przypadku Polaków okresu rozbiorowego), dobiegł końca wraz z upadkiem „starego” europejskiego ładu u schyłku Wielkiej Wojny. Dla Polaków zamieszkujących ziemie zaboru austriackiego zmierzch dawnej epoki nastął w listopadzie 1918 roku – miesiącu, który bezsprzecznie można traktować jako „najdłuższy miesiąc” „długiego XIX wieku”. Miesiącu w którym sytuacja na prowincji zachodniogalicyskiej zmieniała się niczym w przysłowiowym kalejdoskopie: od stanu euforii przez momenty krytyczne po względną stabilizację.

Euforia zagościła w polskich domach na przełomie października i listopada 1918 roku, gdy Polacy przejmowali kontrolę nad miastami i miasteczkami rozszanymi w Galicji Zachodniej. Euforyczny stan związany z odzyskiwaniem niepodległości bardzo szybko minął, a jeśli się utrzymywał, to raczej wśród osób o silnej świadomości narodowej i politycznej. Niemniej dla większości mieszkańców Galicji Zachodniej listopad był czasem szczególnej troski o to, co przyniesie kolejny dzień. Na pierwszy plan wysunęły się kwestie związane z niedoborem żywności, odzieży oraz surowców energetycznych. Ceny żywności gwałtownie rosły, osiągając jesienią 1918 roku zawrotne kwoty. Plagą stała się pospolita przemoc, która dotykała przede wszystkim ludność żydowską. W drugiej dekadzie listopada 1918 roku dzięki działaniom podejmowanym przez Polską Komisję Likwidacyjną rozpoczął się proces stabilizacji życia społeczno-politycznego, a jego wyrazem było m.in. sukcesywne odradzanie się (lub organizowanie) na prowincji stowarzyszeń „niepolitycznych” oraz reorganizacja samorządu miejskiego (gminnego).

## **Słowa kluczowe:**

Galicja, listopad 1918 roku, niepodległość, Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna, prowincja galicyjska, Żydzi galicyjscy

