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## LIFE AND SUFFERING FROM JEWS IN GALICIA 1914-1918. SYNTHETIC HISTORICAL STUDY

The subject of this study will be a synthetic approach to the situation of Jews living in Galicia from 1914-1918. Processes and historical changes will be included in a wider time frame in order to better illustrate the statistical and economic situation prevalent at that time. The author deliberately omits references to the complex political situation of the discussed period; remaining only at selected historical events necessary for a better presentation of the functioning of the Jewish community of that period.

The presence of jews in the geographic region of modern day Poland dates back to the first half of the 11th century in Krakow<sup>1</sup>. However, the oldest report of a Jewish community comes from the third decade of the 11th century and points to Przemyśl<sup>2</sup>. Czech chronicler Kosmas also wrote about the persecution of Jews in the 11th century in Prague, which forced them escape to Poland and Hungary<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1.</sup> Por. Atlas historii Żydów polskich, Warszawa 2010.

J. Wyrozumski, Żydzi w Polsce średniowiecznej, [w:] Żydzi w dawnej Rzeczpospolitej, Wrocław
-Warszawa-Kraków 1991, p. 129.

<sup>3.</sup> Die Chronik der Böhmen des Cosmas von Prag, ed. H. Bretholz, MGH SS, new t. II, Berlin 1923, p. 166.

The influx of Judaism's followers to Poland continued throughout the Middle Ages and it was the catalyst for their persecution in Western Europe. They were expelled from England (1290), France (1189), Spain, the Kingdom of Sicily (1492), Portugal (1498), the Principality of Lithuania (1495-1503) and Hungary (1360-1364). During the 15th century, until 1519, they were purged from all significant cities of the Reich.

### About the geographical borders Galicia in XIX century

Galicia in the 19th century occupied the territory of south-eastern Poland; covering the lands of the present southern Poland and western Ukraine. On the political map, it existed as one of the provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire under the name of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria together with the Principality of Krakow and the Principality of Oświęcim and Zator<sup>4</sup>. It was the second largest province of the Austrian state, covering an area equal to 78.5 thousand km<sup>2</sup>, located in the basin of two large rivers: the Vistula and the Dniester. The southern border of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria was the chain of the Carpathians. The province's meridional extent (together with Bukovina) reached 400 km (47 ° 34'-50 ° 80'N), and the latitudinal extension was as much as 570 km (19-26 ° 50'E). Galicia, as the crown country of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was created by the treaty of September 18, 1773. Ultimately, the boundaries of Galicia were established at the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815). Galicia included areas of Red Russia, Podolia, Pokucie, Lodomeria, the Principality of Oświęcim, Zator and Bukovina. In 1846, the borders of Galicia were extended to the lands of the Principality of Krakow. Until 1849, Galicia was divided into 19 districts (circuses) with an administrative headquarters in Lviv. From then on, a second administration for Krakow was created with 7 districts (the so-called Western Galicia), which in April 1854 was changed into a separate national government. However, already in August 1860, this separation was abolished for the benefit of Lviv (the so-called Eastern Galicia). In 1868, the district office was established. In all of Galicia, 79 were created with two cities with their own statutes: Lviv (statute from 1870) and Krakow (statute from 1901 to 1905). Districts were directly subordinated to the lowest administrative units of the commune and manorial areas<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4.</sup> H. Stupnicki, Galicya pod względem topograficzno-geograficzno-historycznym, Lwów 1869, pp. 1-2.

<sup>5.</sup> Hołub B., *Studium historyczno-geograficzne narodowości w Galicji Wschodniej w świetle spisów ludności w latach 1890-1910*, Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Sklodowska, vol. LXVIII, 2, Lublin 2013, pp. 21-22

The border between West and East Galicia ran along the San River and its tributary: the Wisłok. In general, it corresponded to the ethnographic border between the Polish population and the Russian population. Western Galicia consisted of 29 districts which constituted 29.5% of the total area of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria. Eastern Galicia counted as many as 50 counties, covering 70.5% of the entire Galicia area.<sup>6</sup>

# Statistical data about the Jewish population in Galicia between the years 1869-1910

The first general census in Galicia was carried out - as reported by Bohdan Wasiutyński - in 1869<sup>7</sup>. His research data show that the overall percentage of Jews in this area increased until 1890 and then gradually decreased<sup>8</sup>. Areas of western Galicia - as it further shows - were less populated by the Jewish community than the areas of eastern Galicia<sup>9</sup>, which manifested greater diversity in terms of nationality. The term western Galicia meant the district of the court of appeal in Krakow, which in the interwar period, apart from the Krakow province, included eight districts of the Lviv, i.e. district Kolbuszowski, Krośnieński, Przeworski, Łańcucki, Rzeszowski, Strzyżowski, Tarnobrzeski and Niski<sup>10</sup>.

Statistical data on population distribution in West Galicia 1880-1910 according to Bohdan Wasiutyński  $^{\rm 11}$ 

Year	Total population	Jewish population	The percentage of the Jewish population
1880	2 114 137	169 684	8.0
1890	2 299 665	183 392	8.0

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem

<sup>7.</sup> B. Wasiutyński, *Ludność żydowska w Polsce w w. IX i XX*, Warszawa 1930, p. 90. The general census in Galicia, carried out in 1869 and 1921, included civilians without army. The number of armies included in the 1880 and 1910 censuses did not affect the percentage of Jews in Galicia. It is also worth noting that until 1857, famine and epidemics exerted a significant influence on the population development in Galicia., Por. J. Buzek, *Pogląd na wzrost ludności ziem polskich w wieku XIX*, Kraków 1915, p. 6.

<sup>8.</sup> B. Wasiutyński, *Ludność żydowska w Polsce w w. IX i XX*, Warszawa 1930, p. 90. Por także, J. Buzek, *Pogląd na wzrost ludności ziem polskich w wieku XIX*, Kraków 1915, p. 59; B. Hołub, *Studium historyczno-geograficzne narodowości w Galicji Wschodniej w świetle spisów ludności w latach 1890-1910*, Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Sklodowska, vol. LXVIII, 2, Lublin 2013, pp. 15-40.

<sup>9.</sup> See, the concept of Eastern Galicia, L. Mroczka Spór o Galicie Wschodnia 1914-1923, Kraków 1998.

<sup>10.</sup> B. Wasiutyński, Ludność żydowska w Polsce w w. IX i XX, Warszawa 1930, pp. 91-92.

<sup>11.</sup> Ibidem, p. 91.

1900	2 501 768	192 382	7.7
1910	2 689 854	213 173	7.9

Statistical data on population distribution in Eastern Galicia 1880-1910 according to BohdanWasiutyński <sup>12</sup>

Year	Total population	Jewish population	The percentage of the Jewish population
1880	3 844 770	516 912	13.4
1890	4 308 151	585 453	13.6
1900	4 814 171	618 801	12.9
1910	5 335 821	658 722	12.3

According to Wasiutyński's research data, the Jews living in the western part of the district were mainly concentrated in the eastern and southern districts of the later Krakow province. In eastern Galicia, Jews were more numerous and more evenly distributed. In the eastern part of the district there was also a higher percentage of Jews among inhabitants of villages. The main difference between the Western and Eastern part of Galicia was the increase in the number of non-Jewish communities. The described process of Jewish population movement was more intensified in 1880-1900 in Western Galicia. However, at a later time (1900-1921), as a result of the emigration of Jews to other countries it was also much more visible in the eastern part of Galicia. Generally a higher percentage of communities without Jews concerned Western Galicia - 29.7%, not Eastern Galicia - 9.8%<sup>13</sup>.

In the ethnic structure of the quarter, Jews constituted the third largest group by population, then Poles, 50% and Ukrainians 42%.

<sup>12.</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>13.</sup> K. Zieliński, *Galicyjscy Żydzi w latach Wielkiej Wojny 1914-1918*, Studia Żydowskie Almanach, Zamość, pp. 146-155.

#### About Jewish settlers in Galicia

As shown by historical sources there was poor industrial development, and most Jews dealt with trade and craft<sup>14</sup>. Only a small group worked on the cultivation of land. The class of Jewish workers was employed in the oil industry.<sup>15</sup>

Konrad Zieliński shows that the Jewish population often lived in degraded city districts, deprived of basic urban infrastructure. Due to the excessive concentration of residential rooms, the population often fell victim to infectious diseases, despite the theoretically easier access to a doctor or surgeon<sup>16</sup>.

The economic situation of Jews in Galicia was very hard, hopeless and prevailed until the outbreak of war <sup>17</sup>.

The multicultural nature of this area together with the traditions of political life and the formal (later) equality of Jews favored religious diversity also within the Jewish community itself. Quite influential, though not too numerous were representatives of Reform Judaism, represented by wealthier, assimilated so-called Polish people of the Mosaic religion, often the descendants of the maskil, with strong center in Krakow, Lviv and Przemyśl<sup>18</sup>.

During 41 years (from 1869 to 1910), the Roman Catholic population in Western Galicia increased by 647,669 faithful and Eastern Galicia by 597,177; Greek Catholic in Western Galicia by 13.139, in Eastern Galicia by 1,053,403. The denominational composition of the population of West Galicia did not change much, in 1910 there were 88.6% of the Roman Catholic population, only 3.2% Greek Catholic, and 7.9% of the Israeli religion. In Eastern Galicia in 1910, Jews constituted 12.4% of the population, i.e. exactly the same as in 1869, while large changes occurred in the ratio of the Roman and Greek Catholic population; The percentage of Roman Catholic population increased here from 21.8 to 25.3%, that is by 3.5%, while the percentage of Greek Catholic population withdrew from 64.9 to 61.7, i.e. by 3.2%. This strong increase in the percentage of Roman Catholic population in Eastern Galicia undoubtedly belongs to the most important statistical and research phenomena in its development<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>14.</sup> I. Schiper, Dzieje handlu żydowskiego na ziemiach polskich, Warszawa 1957.

<sup>15.</sup> B. Garncarska-Kadary, Żydowska ludność pracująca w Polsce 1918-1939, Warszawa 2001, p. 67.

<sup>16.</sup> K. Zieliński, *Galicyjscy Żydzi w latach Wielkiej Wojny 1914-1918*, Studia Żydowskie Almanach, Zamość, p. 20.

<sup>17.</sup> However, it should be remembered that in this case we can't talk about a fixed rule, there were groups of Jews who lived well.

<sup>18.</sup> K. Zieliński, *Galicyjscy Żydzi w latach Wielkiej Wojny 1914-1918*, Studia Żydowskie Almanach, Zamość, p. 22.

<sup>19.</sup> Por. J. Buzek, Pogląd na wzrost ludności ziem polskich w wieku XIX, Kraków 1915, p. 58.

Despite the fact that the existence of the Jewish nation was also determined by important national-forming factors, of a cultural nature as common ethical and mental principles, and values, they were not able to integrate completely with the nation around them. The Jewish survival after 1918 in the area of Galicia was intensified by anti-Semitism<sup>20</sup>, which was undoubtedly caused by the complex political situation and socio-cultural factors such as differences in dress in the Jewish community, speech and appearance, inherent racial and religious hatred, mania of persecution and exploitation of economically exploited people trade cunning and dishonesty of Jews<sup>21</sup>.

#### About difficult situation of Jews in Galicia, 1914-1918

The Austro-Hungarian war with Russia broke out on August 6, 1914, taking an adverse turnover for the Habsburg monarchy. Less than a month after the beginning of the war, the tsarist army occupied the capital city of Lviv and approached Krakow at a distance of 12 km. In December, as a result of counterattack, the front line moved about 80 km and stopped at the altitude of Tarnow, towards the east along the Carpathian line. The above events caused that for the following months, until May 1915, about 80 percent of Galicia's territory was under Russian occupation.

The defeat of the Austro-Hungarian in Galicia in the initial phase of the war was a complete surprise for the Jewish population. Statistics show 400,000 Jewish refugees to other countries. They escaped from the Russians outside the front line to Austria (Vienna) to Hungary, the Czech Republic, Cieszyn Silesia and Moravia<sup>22</sup>.

The Jews found themselves in a difficult situation. Zieliński shows to the brutal treatment of Jews (often forced) at the mercy of the Russians. They were deprived of civil rights, removed from self-government and education, banned from settling in the villages and prohibited from travelling outside the district. Moreover, their places of worship were desacralized, and religious feelings were raped. And the worst was probably the fact that Russian troops, most often those of Cossacks, murdered Jews under any pretext, "hanging them" without sparing women, children and the elderly. Their violent behavior also involved

<sup>20.</sup> At the same time, it should be noted that anti-Semitic excesses occurred in Galicia, but pogroms on a mass scale did not occur for a long time (until 1918).

<sup>21.</sup> A. Nossig, Próba rozwiązania kwestii żydowskiej, "Przegląd Społeczny", number 11, XI 1886, p. 290.

<sup>22.</sup> K. Zieliński, *O tułactwie inaczej. Przymusowe migracje Żydów w latach I Wojny Światowej jako czynnik sprzyjający emancypacji*, Document of the Committee on Political Science and International Relations 2009, 4, pp. 150-164.

plundering Jewish property, raping women and girls, often in front of fathers, husbands and children<sup>23</sup>.

In the later period (in 1918), written by Nathan Michael Gelber, the reluctance towards the Jewish community intensified, and thus also fueled, information coming from revolutionary Russia that would concern their involvement in the affairs of the Bolshevik government. Political situation and within its framework drastic reduction in the living standard of the population, inflation etc. they also affected Polish and Jewish relations<sup>24</sup>.

At the beginning of 1918, Galicia was overwhelmed by protests against the central state coalition. Food shortages have picked up the authority of the administrative authorities, which led to the outbreak of the so-called hunger riots, often ending in pogrom actions.

Frank Golczewski sees a clear difference in the degree of intensification of the brutalization of pogroms between Eastern Galicia (Lviv pogrom 22-24 November 1918) and Western Galicia, where only the plunder of Jewish property was limited<sup>25</sup>. Galician Jews who were believed to be spokesmen for the policy of the Austrians suffered the most. Jews in Galicia also "served" the speeches of their Austrian co-religionists: the Viennese weeklies they published congratulated the Ukrainian People's Republic of deserved liberty, the more so as it guaranteed unlimited national rights and appropriate influence in the government of other Ukrainian nations, consequently in many Galician cities anti-Jewish excesses took place, in some of them serious riots, and both school students and students in Lviv, as well as peasants in a small Narol in Przemyśl, were attacked against Jews, and Jews travelling on the Przemyśl-Mszana railway line were attacked. In Stryj there was also the plundering of shops in the Jewish quarter. However, the largest range and the most serious consequences were the anti-Jewish riots in Krakow from 17 to 18 April. The stores, workshops and houses in Jewish Kazimierz were looted and destroyed; the result of the incidents were also cases of severe bodily injury and fatalities<sup>26</sup>.

The worst thing was - as Jan Marian Małecki points out - that in the Christian "Voice of the Nation" it was emphasized that the relations in the Viennese

<sup>23.</sup> K. Zieliński, *Galicyjscy Żydzi w latach Wielkiej Wojny 1914-1918*, Studia Żydowskie Almanach, Zamość, p. 26.

<sup>24.</sup> N. M. Gelber, *The National Autonomy of Eastern-Galician Jewry in the West Ukrainian Republic 1918-1919* [w:] A History of Polish Jewry during the revival of Poland, New York 1990, p. 226.

<sup>25.</sup> F. Golczewski, *Polnisch Jüdische Beziehungen 1881-1922*, Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Antisemitismus in Osteuropa, Wiesbaden 1981,14, p. 205

<sup>26.</sup> F. Golczewski, *Polnisch Jüdische Beziehungen 1881-1922*, Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Antisemitismus in Osteuropa, Wiesbaden 1981, 14, pp. 170-171.

press were maintained in a way unfriendly towards the Poles, and described the riots in Krakow only as anti-Semitic excesses on the pattern of pogroms organized in Russia<sup>27</sup>. In this context, mention was made of the bestial beating of Jews dragged from trams, assaults on their shops, smashing Jewish stalls on the market, etc. In general, the above phenomena were highly exaggerated and cognitively untrue.

The Polish-Ukrainian conflict was also important, although the last factor concerned Eastern Galicia. The dispute with the Ukrainians also became another point in Polish-Jewish relations. The Jews didn't want to play the role of a "third force" in the conflict and adopted a neutral attitude, but despite this they didn't avoid accusations of treason, both from the Polish and Ukrainian side. The accusations of Jews to support Ukrainians were to be a direct reason for the repression taken by the legionnaires, a similar situation occurred in Przemyśl, where the number of victims reached 15. The result was not only high-profile events in Lviv on November 22-24 and several dozen victims of a pogrom in the city and several hundred wounded. Also in Sądowa Wisznia, accusations of Jews to support Ukrainians were to be a direct reason for the repression taken by the legionnaires; similar the situation took place in Przemyśl, where the number of victims reached 15 people. Voices that Jews in Galicia favor Ukrainians and "Polish soldiers shoot in the back", one more thing added to traditional charges against Jews, which quickly spread to other Polish lands<sup>28</sup>.

In turn, a few weeks after the signing of the Brest Treaty, in many regions of the Kingdom of Poland, the action under the slogan "Let's not buy out" intensified.

The newspapers printed "black lists" of Polish people who sold their property to Jews and called for an economic and social boycott of "sellers" In Galicia, the greatest advocate of this action was the Krakow "Voice of the Nation", which once published hysterical texts bearing the following titles: In foreign hands; Against sellers; For Polish land; In Jewish hands; Jews buy houses. From various sides, information about getting rid of landed estates and agricultural land, land properties, and even suburban vegetable gardens came in. Without a pardon, both townspeople and peasants were attacked, as well as titled landowners and

<sup>27.</sup> J. M. Małecki, *Życie gospodarcze Krakowa w czasie wielkiej wojny 1914-1918*, [w:] Kraków w czasie I wojny światowej, Kraków 1990, p. 67.

<sup>28.</sup> A. J. Leinwand, *Walka dyplomatyczna Polski o Galicję Wschodnią 1918-1923*, Studies in the history of Russia and Central - Eastern Europe XLVI, pp. 85-98.

<sup>29.</sup> K. Zieliński, Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na ziemiach Królestwa Polskiego w czasie pierwszej wojny światowej, Lublin 2005, pp. 365-369.

Catholic priests, if this happened to lease a parish orchard to a Jew. As a result, Jews were considered unworthy of buying Polish land, and thus they were denied the right to live on it<sup>30</sup>.

Zieliński, referring to the original materials, the American-Jewish Joint Distribution Committee reports that in Galicia in October, November and December 1918, anti-Semitism erupted on an unprecedented scale. For example, in Ropczyce, Jewish councilor Pinkas Friedrich, then about 70 years old, he was ordered to undress, after which he was punished with flogging for dealing with the fencing. In Raniżów, on November 7, the burgomaster stood at the head of a crowd of peasants plundering Jewish property; On the same day, the burgomaster of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska refused to defend the Jews from the peasants who came from not far away Wadowice; the mayor of Kolbuszowa only after three days agreed to form a branch of Jewish self-defense (1-4 November); in Radomyśl Wielki the commander of the gendarmerie and the magistrate forbade the local militia to intervene in the event of assault on the Jewish population. In Iwonicz, the commander of the local militia himself became the head of over 100 men's armed peasants who attacked Jewish residents on November 2 Soldiers took part in many places in riots and plunder. In Pruchnik, Legionnaires from Jaroslaw demanded a fee of 500 kronor from the owner of each Jewish shop, and in Nisko, where monthly residents were demanded for a monthly contribution for protection, etc. It is difficult to ascertain how much looting and impunity, and how much anti-Semitic propaganda has contributed to attack the Jewish population.<sup>31</sup>

#### Conclusion

The general historical analysis of the functioning Jewish communities in the areas of former Galicia (in the years 1914-1918) shows the complex issues of broadly understood antisemitism, manifested through various anti-Jewish incidents and excesses. In this also research approach one can speak about the persecution and suffering from this minority, often conditioned by political, cultural and economic contexts.

The outbreak of the First World War and the events connected with it had a decisive influence on the worse treatment and perception of Jews living in the areas of Eastern and Western Galicia. Eventually, a series of antisemitic

<sup>30.</sup> K. Zieliński, *Galicyjscy Żydzi w latach Wielkiej Wojny 1914-1918*, Studia Żydowskie Almanach, Zamość, pp. 33-34.

<sup>31.</sup> Ibidem.

speeches and pogroms of Jews in 1918 and 1919 completely destroyed the picture of mutual multicultural relations in these areas. The hopeless situation for these communities radicalized and continued after 1918. It reached its apogee during World War II, during which the majority of Jews, not only Galician but also European, were bestially murdered.

## ŻYCIE I CIERPIENIE ŻYDÓW W GALICJI 1914-1918. SYNTETYCZNE STUDIUM HISTORYCZNE

Niniejsze opracowanie dotyczy sytuacji społeczno-gospodarczej Żydów zamieszkujących tereny Galicji Wschodniej i Galicji Zachodniej w latach 1914-1918. Ukazanie złożonej problematyki badawczej w tym okresie, popartej konkretnymi faktami historycznymi, wskazuje na wieloaspektową problematykę szeroko rozumianego antysemityzmu, uwarunkowanego często różnymi czynnikami politycznymi, ekonomicznymi i kulturowymi.

**Słowa kluczowe**: antysemityzm, Żydzi, Pierwsza Wojna Światowa, Galicja Wschodnia, Galicja Zachodnia

**Key words:** anti-Semitism, Jews, World War I, Eastern Galicia, Western Galicia

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