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THE IMPACT OF UKRAINIAN AND GERMAN MINORITIES IN POLAND ON THE SECURITY OF THE STATE IN THE YEARS 1919-1939

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Abstract:

This article attempts to look at the impact of the Ukrainian and German minorities in Poland on the national security in the years 1919-1939. In the study, the thesis was adopted that in the years 1919-1939 the Ukrainians and the Germans were two minorities that affected the security of Poland more than any other ethnic group. This impact was destabilizing. It was decided to rely on variable literature in order to prove the above thesis. The source documents from the Archives of the Józef Piłsudski Institute in NYC, the USA, were important research material as well. The analysis and evaluation of these source documents had an additional input in the matter of research on how the national minorities had affected the internal security of the Second Republic of Poland. The content provided suggests that the influence of many actions of the Ukrainian and German minorities actually destabilized the inner situation in the Second Republic. The nature of activities of the both minority groups, however, was fundamentally different. The Ukrainian minority often referred to the paramilitary operations and assistance of military organizations for spreading terror and political forcing of their demands. Whereas, the German minority benefited from measures of political propaganda and agitation inspired from Germany. Its political parties and various associations often smuggled anti-Polish contents, in the spirit of the German policy of revisionism.

Keywords:

internal security, Ukrainian minority, German minority, national policy



INTRODUCTION

This article assumes the initial thesis, according to which in the years 1919-1939 the Ukrainians and the Germans constituted two minorities that affected the Polish internal security the hardest of all ethnic groups. This impact was destabilizing. Attempting to rely this thesis upon reliable sources and statements presents a challenge, so that it will be possible to determine the actual impact of the Ukrainian and German minorities on the internal security of the Second Republic. The state in its efforts related to the organization of the stable statehood and internal structures had to take account of the potential centrifugal forces in the form of the impact of numerous representatives of national and ethnic minorities after the World War I.

The choice of the theme was dictated by the desire and the need to establish the actual impact of the representatives of the Ukrainian and German minorities on the Polish security in the described interwar period. On the basis of the query carried out, it turned out that the Ukrainian and the German minorities were the sources of threats that the authorities of the Polish state had to be aware of. It was because internal security depended upon the stable coexistence of different minority groups in the Second Republic. The authorities constantly monitored their activities, including mainly the Ukrainians and the Germans¹.

1. THE OVERALL NATIONAL SITUATION IN POLAND DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD

It should be borne in mind that after Poland regained independence the state had a multi-national character². This situation naturally had to meet with the reaction from

¹ In the case of different political groups of that period, there were various concepts to regulate the national and ethnic issue in the Second Republic. The indicated issue grew into a problem, which was to be tackled through actions both legislative and procedural. The issue of the functioning of members of national, ethnic and religious minorities in the Second Republic, however, was treated by the authorities in a much more complex way. It is difficult to fully agree with Tadeusz Kowalski, who believes that these minorities were classified in general as 'anti-state environment, pro-neighboring that had to be Polonized'. T.A. Kowalski, *Mniejszości narodowe w Siłach Zbrojnych Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 1918-1939*, Adam Marszałek, Toruń 1998, p. 97. Throughout the period 1919-1939, the Polish authorities demonstrated a much more complex approach to particular minorities, considering varied activities serving both Polonization and assimilation, as well as supporting the peaceful coexistence of different minority groups. For example, the Polish Socialist Party opposed to Polonization, which forced denationalization of minorities, and unequivocal postulates of imposed assimilation faced strong ethical concerns in the circle of national-democratic journalism. For more see: B. Halczak, *Publicystyka narodowo-demokratyczna wobec problemów narodowościowych i etnicznych II Rzeczypospolitej*, Wydawnictwo WSP, Zielona Góra 2000, p. 31.

² This kind of "heredity of history" of multinationality on the example of the Polish state seems to be interesting. The Republic of Both Nations was already a multinational state, and under the partitioners the old Polish lands were also inhabited by representatives of different nationalities and ethnic and religious groups, including not only citizens of the occupying powers. Namely, in the course of historical development the Polish territory was a place for development especially of representatives of the Russian, Lithuanian, German minorities, the Cossacks, the Jewish, or different Slavic nations. This situation contrasts sharply with the nature and composition of the population in Poland after 1989. The latter clearly underlines the fact that at the beginning of the twenty-first century 97% of Polish citizens on average declared affiliation to the Polish nationality. Cf. *Wyniki Narodowego Spisu*



the authorities on the attempted peaceful stabilization of the internal situation in the highly nationally and ethnically diverse state. In other words, good social policy was necessary, which would stabilize various minorities' influence on life, especially on the internal security of the state.

What is more, the Second Republic of Poland was unique in Europe in terms of the number of national minorities in the period 1919-1939. Data published already in 1945 evidenced that during the peak of the interwar period minorities accounted for nearly 31% of the whole population in the Second Republic. For comparison, in such multinational countries of that period like Romania, Latvia, and Czechoslovakia, this share was estimated within the range between 25.5% and 28%. In Bulgaria, national minorities constituted almost 19% of the population, in Yugoslavia more than 17%, while in Lithuania - 15%. The relatively high share of national minorities was also recorded in Estonia (over 12%) and Hungary (less than 10.5%)³.

Participation of representatives of various minority groups in Poland on the basis of two official censuses of population is reflected in Table 1.

When interpreting the content presented in the attached table, it is clear that the Ukrainian minority was the largest of all the minorities in Poland, both in the 20s and the 30s of the twentieth century. The share of the Ukrainians ranged from 14% to 15% of the entire population. Their impact on the internal situation in the country and the society naturally had to be significant. Whereas the Germans in the period considered constituted from 2.3% to 3% of the population of the Second Republic. Their number was not especially large compared with the Ukrainians, but the German minority was characterized by very clear national consolidation and the relatively good economic situation, which was repeatedly emphasized in the literature⁴. Hence, potentially the

Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań 2002, GUS (Eng. *Results of the National Population and Housing Census 2002*, the Central Statistical Office), Warsaw 2003, p. 36; *Wyniki Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań 2011*, GUS, Warsaw 2012, p. 15.

³ O.I. Janowski, *Nationalities and national minorities*, The Macmillan Company, New York 1945, p. 111. These figures are all the more interesting that they are derived from one of American studies, and at the same were developed shortly after the end of the interwar period. Generally, similar data on the number of national and ethnic minorities in Poland from that time has appeared in different Polish studies, See: M. Kallas, *Historia ustroju Polski*, PWN, Warsaw 2005, p. 98; T. Kisielewski, *Heroizm i kompromis. Portret zbiorowy działaczy ludowych*, p. 2, *II Rzeczpospolita, wojna i okupacja, Polska Ludowa*, Książka i Wiedza, Warsaw 1979, pp. 47; W. Paruch, *Od konsolidacji państwowej do konsolidacji narodowej. Mniejszości narodowe w myśli politycznej obozu piłsudczykowski (1926-1939)*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 1997, p. 11; J.Tazbir, *Polskie przedmury chrześcijańskiej Europy. Mity a rzeczywistość historyczna*, Interpress, Warsaw 1987, p. 139; D. Waniek, *Mity założycielskie - mity polityczne. Ich znaczenie w procesie kształtowania współczesnych podziałów społecznych*, „Państwo i Społeczeństwo” 2011, no. 4, p. 34.

⁴ H. Chałupczak, T. Browarek, *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce 1918-1995*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 1998, p. 157; A. Czubiński, *Historia Polski XX wieku*, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 2007, p. 137; R. Dąbrowski, *Położenie ekonomiczne mniejszości niemieckiej w Polsce w okresie międzywojennego dwudziestolecia (1918-1939)*, Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Szczecinie, Szczecin 1977, passim; G. Radomski, *Narodowa Demokracja wobec problematyki mniejszości narodowych w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1918-1926*, Adam Marszałek, Toruń



two mentioned national minorities could most clearly affect the internal security of the Polish state in the period of 1919-1939.

Table 1. The national structure of the population of the Second Republic of Poland based on the First (1921) and the Second National Census (1931)

Nationalities	First National Population Census		Second National Population Census	
	in thousand	in %	in thousand	in %
Poles	17 789	69,3	21 932	68,9
Ukrainians	3 898	15,2	4 442	13,9
Jewish	2 048	8,0	2 733	8,6
Belarusians	1 035	4,0	990	3,1
Germans	769	3,0	741	2,3
Others (including "Locals" from Polesie)	72	0,3	795	2,5
Russians	48	0,2	139	0,4
Lithuanians	24	0,1	83	0,3

Source: Own study based on: *Rocznik statystyki Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 1925-1926*, the Central Statistical Office of the Republic of Poland, Warsaw 1927, pp. 26; *Mały rocznik statystyczny, r.10, 1939, 1926*, the Central Statistical Office of the Republic of Poland, Warsaw 1939, p. 26.

2. THE UKRAINIAN MINORITY IN POLAND AND THE SECURITY OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC

As noted earlier, the Ukrainian minority accounted for 14-15% of all the people living in Poland in the years 1919-1939. Such a large social representation of the Ukrainians allowed for initiating nationalistic actions, which were strongly opposed by the reborn Polish state⁵. Ukrainian nationalism threatened not only the Second Republic's internal stabilization, but above all undermined the idea of the political and social unification of the multinational state. In other words, it should be assumed that the potential growth of the Ukrainian minority's extremist and nationalist aspirations could give an impetus for similar trends also among representatives of other minorities after 1919⁶.

2000, p. 91; J. Tomaszewski, *Ojczyzna nie tylko Polaków. Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce w latach 1918-1939*, Młodzieżowa Agencja Wydawnicza, Warsaw 1985, p. 129; E. Waszkiewicz, *Doktryna hitlerowska wśród mniejszości niemieckiej w województwie śląskim w latach 1918-1939*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2001, p. 14 i 85.

⁵ W. Kozyra, *Polityka administracyjna ministrów spraw wewnętrznych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w latach 1918-1939*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2009, p. 198.

⁶ Extremist and nationalist aspirations of the Ukrainian minority were noted clearly already in the autumn of 1919. In one of the surviving documents sent by the Chief of Section I Division IV of the General Staff of the Polish Army to the Command of the Galician front in Brzeżany there was a note on a very high threat of armed diversion on the part of the Ukrainian minority on the area of Eastern



Undoubtedly, one must agree with the statement appearing in the literature that the Polish state struggling with many economic, political and ethnic problems could not ignore the emerging Ukrainian irredentism in the early 1920s⁷. Importantly, the latter was used, and sometimes even supported by neighboring countries, especially by Germany, the USSR and Czechoslovakia, in order to weaken the internal Poland. The Ukrainian emigration and the nascent nationalist movement among that minority in Poland were treated as two important factors potentially threatening the internal security of the Second Republic. The broadly understood Ukrainian matter had to be addressed not only by law enforcement services acting on behalf of security, including the Police, the Border Protection Corps and later the Border Guard, but also the Polish military intelligence represented by the Division II of the General / Chief Staff of the Polish Army⁸.

One could risk saying that the main factor destabilizing the internal situation in the Polish state in the period 1919-1939 was the impact of activities of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). This organization founded in 1929 in Vienna had a political and military character⁹. Internal security bodies of the Second Republic had to take interest in activities of such a consolidated group, which not only sought to expand its political influence in Poland, but also it had an armed wing at disposal. The set-up of the OUN was the exemplification of radical slogans proclaimed in the environment of numerous Ukrainians in Poland, as well as Ukrainian emigrant communities in other

Galicia. Attention was also paid to the significant risk of nationalist demonstrations among the representatives of the above national minority in Poland. In order to effectively prevent the occurrence of the Ukrainian armed movement it was instructed to strengthen the manning of the less staffed Polish garrisons in Borszczowski, Zaleszczucki, Czortkowski, Drohobycz and Stryjski districts. Cf. Report on the threat posed by Ukrainian armed movement of 10 October 1919, the Archive of the Józef Piłsudski Institute of the USA, File: 701/2/20 (September-November 1919).

⁷ Polish political and military circles were well aware of that having been initiated, which is reflected in one of the documents sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Warsaw by the Presidium of the Directorate of Police in Lviv in May 1920. Namely, it was emphasized in this document, that prominent Ukrainian politicians seeking to separate the eastern part of Lesser Poland and create the self-governing Ukrainian state blocked the possibility of the Polish-Ukrainian agreement. For this purpose, nationalists from political circles were to lead the widespread agitation, including the establishment of semi-official contacts with Russian groups. Anti-Polish sabotage actions were also considered during the ongoing border war between Poland and Czechoslovakia. Cf. A copy of the Report of the Presidium of the Directorate of Police in Lviv on the negative Ukrainians' attitude towards the Polish-Ukrainian agreement of 8 May 1920, the Archive of the Józef Piłsudski Institute of the USA, File: 701/2/23 (May-June 1920).

⁸ M. Jarnecki, *Ukraińska emigracja i ruch nacjonalistyczny oczyma polskiego wywiadu w latach trzydziestych*, [in:] *Za kulisami wywiadu i dyplomacji. Polski wywiad wojskowy 1918-1945. Materiały*, ed. by P. Kołakowski, A. Peplowski, Avalon, Kraków 2014, p. 194.

⁹ In the literature, it is added that the organization had strictly outlined organizational structures, and it also conducted outbound political activities, among other things, organizing conferences in the capitals of countries neighboring Poland. Its members also tried to merge divergent yet in many respects ideological tendencies among the various organizations of the Ukrainian minority. Cf. V. Polishchuk, *Bitter truth. The criminality of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). The testimony of a Ukrainian*, the author edition, Toronto 1999, p. 114.



Central European countries. Moreover, it was a manifestation of extremism, before which the representatives of the indicated minority were not going to shy away. The fact that Poland's south-eastern provinces were the main areas of activity of the OUN members additionally highlighted the threat that this organization posed to the internal security of the reborn Polish state¹⁰.

It is worth pointing out that the Polish authorities, treating the OUN as another formation of solely ideological nature downplayed the first actions of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists¹¹. However, the creation of the armed wing and large-scale political and propaganda activities had to contribute to a radical change in the approach of the Polish authorities to the organization. The latter owned its program and conducted ongoing activities primarily in the territory of south-eastern Poland as well. From the point of view of the issue adopted in this article, it is crucial to indicate that members of the OUN treated the perpetration of terrorist acts against the Poles as one of the ways to achieve the program objectives. After the organization moved underground and kept its structures confidential, decisive legal and organizational steps had to be taken in order to improve the effectiveness of the fight against Ukrainian terrorism as being detrimental to the internal security of the Polish state¹².

In the years 1920-1933 the Ukrainian Military Organization (UMO) also acted in Poland and constituted undoubtedly another factor flowing from the Ukrainian community, which was destabilizing for the internal security of the Second Republic. Similarly to the OUN, the organization had clearly anti-Polish aims and program objectives, working out of which remained the practice of various security and public order services. The main objectives of the UMO's activities primarily included¹³:

¹⁰ W. Wróblewski, *Działania militarne w Polsce południowo-wschodniej*, Comandor, Warsaw 2000, p. 393.

¹¹ At least Roman Wysocki put forward this thesis, which is extremely interesting from the point of view of the evolution of the Ukrainian minority's role in the Polish society in the perception of the Polish authorities. Cf. R. Wysocki, *Inwigilacja i przeciwdziałanie Organizacji Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów poza granicami II Rzeczypospolitej przez organy bezpieczeństwa władz polskich w latach 1929-1939*, [in:] *Wywiad wojskowy II Rzeczypospolitej*, ed. by P. Kołakowski, A. Peptłowski, Avalon, Kraków 2011, p. 173. The first serious records mentioning the harmful effects of Communist groups' operations, including minority communities, to the Polish internal security appeared in October 1922. At the meeting of the Political Committee of the Council of Ministers it was decided to adopt a variety of measures aiming to paralyze in the election period the activities of communist parties, with the Polish Communist Party at the forefront. The authorities were to issue, for example, orders on the ban on the organization of pre-election rallies, confiscate the Communist proclamations, review members of electoral committees, as well as arrest representatives of minority groups identifying with communist ideology. Cf. The minutes of the 28th meeting of the Political Committee of the Council of Ministers (part b, 3 October 1922), [in:] *O Niepodległą i granicę. Protokoły Komitetu Politycznego Rady Ministrów 1921-1926*, ed. by M. Jabłonowski, W. Janowski, Uniwersytet Warszawski-Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. A. Gieysztora, Warsaw-Pułtusk 2004, p. 101-103.

¹² R. Wysocki, *Organizacja Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów w Polsce w latach 1929-1939. Geneza, struktura, program, ideologia*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2003, p. 189.

¹³ R. Drozd, B. Halczak, *Dzieje Ukraińców w Polsce w latach 1921-1989*, Tyrsa, Warsaw 2010, p. 24-25. Lucyna Kulińska's view, that one of the key objectives of the UMO' activity was to be the elimination of non-Ukrainian nationalities of the Eastern Borderlands, seems polemical. Cf. L. Kulińska, *Działal-*



- preparation of the Ukrainian masses to continue the struggle for the independence of Ukraine by breaking away three provinces: Ternopil, Lviv, and Stanislawow from the Second Republic;
- carrying out terrorist attacks on prominent people in the Polish state¹⁴;
- conducting sabotage and diversion against Poland;
- organizing spy actions (and with time, as practice showed, also paid espionage in favor of Germany);
- carrying out military training for the Ukrainian youth;
- taking activities to destabilize the internal situation in Poland in order so as to prevent building consensus in relationships between the Poles and the Ukrainians, as well as in the relations between Poland and the Soviet Union, including the elimination of Ukrainian politicians working towards an agreement with Poland.

The outlined above - and in practice secret - objectives of the Ukrainian Military Organization nullified the possible legalization of the organization on the grounds of Polish political and social life. However, its activity was contrary to the territorial integrity of the Polish state. Also many points touching the UON operations characterized it. Its significant manifestation was even cooperation with Germany, seen in contacts with

ność terrorystyczna i sabotażowa nacjonalistycznych organizacji ukraińskich w Polsce w latach 1922-1939, Księgarnia Akademicka, Kraków 2009, p. 59. It seems that such a demand had little chance of success, which undoubtedly people in decision-making structures of this organization were aware of. In addition, from the beginning of the 1930s the feasibility of the postulate being weakened, in particular due to the impact of two important factors. The first was the adoption of the firm position by the Polish security services and the government on the liquidation of structures and elimination of the UMO members out of public space. The second reason, in turn, can be the USSR's evolving away from the so-called korenization policy, namely the nationalization policy of support for limited autonomy of nations belonging to the Soviet Union. The Ukrainization Policy in relation to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic collapsed already in the late 1920s, which resulted in the polarization of threats to the Ukrainians. On the one hand, nationalist environment still perceived Poland as the enemy, on the other hand they had to reckon with the possessive policy of the USSR in the Borderlands. The rationale for this view may be more accurate analyses on the korenization policy shown, for example, in the book by Nikolai Ivanov and Krzysztof Tyszka. Cf. N. Iwanow, *Zapomniane ludobójstwo. Polacy w państwie Stalina*, Znak, Kraków 2014, p. 63 and next, K. Tyszka, *Nacjonalizm w komunizmie. Ideologia narodowa w Związku Radzieckim i Polsce Ludowej*, PAN, Warszawa 2004, p. 103 and next.

¹⁴ It should be emphasized that the Polish authorities were aware of the reality of the terrorist threat stemming from the Ukrainian organization. For example, in 1924, the Head of the Ministry of Defence, General Władysław Sikorski, in the letter of 5 August of the same year to the Prime Minister Władysław Grabski wrote about the weakness of the Polish action consisting in combating terrorism and sabotage and diversion activity on the part of both the Ukrainian nationalists and the Soviets in the eastern part of the country. See: The Letter from the Minister of Military Affairs Major General Władysław Sikorski to the Prime Minister Władysław Grabski – the Annex to the minutes of the Political Committee of the Council of Ministers of 6 August 1924. (5 August 1924), [in:] *O Niepodległą i granice. Korpus Ochrony Pogranicza 1924-1939. Wybór dokumentów*, developed by M. Jabłonowski, Uniwersytet Warszawski-Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. A. Gieysztora, Warsaw-Pułtusk 2001, p. 15.



representatives of the German intelligence headquarters and the counterintelligence Abwehr¹⁵. What is more, the UMO and the OUN sought to extend the anti-Polish activity over other neighboring countries, and to receive funds from them¹⁶. In addition, there is evidence of the presence of Ukrainian nationalists even in Canada or the USA¹⁷. There also exists the top-secret document signed at that time, attesting to the financial assistance, which they received from the UMO members of nationalist government of Lithuania from the period 1926-1929 under the leadership of Augustinas Voldemaras¹⁸.

The two previously described environments of Ukrainian nationalism in the interwar period found strong political and ideological support from the Ukrainian National Democratic Alliance (UNDO). It was a political party of the Ukrainian minority operating in Poland from 1925. Its nature was clearly center-right, acting not only for the institutionalization of the rights of the Ukrainians in Poland, but also in favor of independence of intended for the future a democratic Ukrainian state¹⁹. The attitude of its politicians towards the Polish state was clearly hostile until 1931, and the instantane-

¹⁵ It should be noted, however, that the Ukrainians tried to contact also with the French government and mediate support for the concept of breaking away Eastern Galicia from Poland in order to create the sovereign and internationally neutral Ukrainian state. The potential of such mediation was reported, inter alia, in the document passed by the Polish Legation in Paris to the Chief of the General Staff, Lt-Gen Tadeusz Rozwadowski on 25 February 1920. Cf. The Report of the military attaché in Paris on political activity of the Russians and the Ukrainians on the Parisian ground - sent by letter to the Chief of the General Staff Lt-Gen Tadeusz Rozwadowski, the Archive of the Józef Piłsudski Institute in the USA, File: 701/2/35 (February-March 1921).

¹⁶ Preserved archival records confirm, for example, the concern of Czechoslovakia for the Ukrainians seeking to realize the right to self-determination in Eastern Galicia. Namely, the Czechoslovaks were to help the Ukrainians, among others in the organization of political and military propaganda against Poland, as well as 'zealously focused on the organization of cadres of the Ukrainian army'. The Polish report on the action of the Ukrainians on the Czech ground [the unknown author, the presumed date of 1920/1921], the Archive of the Józef Piłsudski Institute in the USA, File: 701/2/36 (March-April 1921).

¹⁷ In Canada, during the interwar period there were maintained approximately 2000 members of the OUN, acting as the anti-Polish armed underground. See: R. Wysocki, *Inwigilacja i przeciwdziałanie...*, op. cit., p. 174. Another less known fact is that after the outbreak of the World War II in the United States, as shown by the preserved archives, there was operating the organization under the name *Ukrainian American League*, which was suspected of communist sympathies, and hence potentially subversive from the point of view of the Polish security. Cf. The Report of the Independent Intelligence Post Estezet on The establishment of contacts with the Ukrainians of 8 September 1942, the Archives of the Józef Piłsudski Institute in the USA, File: 701/111/3 (1942-1945). This may indicate the presence of anti-Polish Ukrainian propaganda in relatively remote regions of the world. Consequently, it is believed that the security threat from the Polish Ukrainian nationalism by no means was limited only to the territorial boundaries of the Second Republic and Ukrainian organizations' activities in this area.

¹⁸ A copy of the Report of the Legation of the Polish Republic in Prague on the Ukrainian Military Organization of 3 March 1930, the Archive of the Józef Piłsudski Institute in the USA, File: 701/7/5 (1929-1932).

¹⁹ K. Wielgut, *Losy Polski w pierwszej połowie XX wieku*, Biblioteka „Niedzieli”, Częstochowa 2006, p.88.



ous upswing and the political agreement from the period 1935 - 1938 by no means contributed to the final solution of the Ukrainian nationalism problem in the Second Republic²⁰. The fact that some UNDO members clandestinely belonged to the UMO posed additional threat to the internal security of Poland²¹.

Furthermore, one cannot forget also about another organization of the Ukrainian minority communities operating within the Polish territory, i.e. the Communist Party of Western Ukraine. It initially functioned under the name of the Communist Party of Eastern Galicia, and its program objectives meant that it could not count on the legalization on the Polish political scene. Members of this group worked to separate Eastern Galicia from Poland and join this territory to the Ukrainian Soviet Republic²². Aspirations of the indicated organization were clearly contrary to the integrity of the Polish state. In addition, members of the Communist Party of Western Ukraine cultivated propaganda activity, thus trying to convince primarily the mass of Ukrainian youth about the need to promote socialism, as well as the need to refuse military service for Poland in the event of a war²³.

3. THE GERMAN MINORITY IN POLAND AND THE SECURITY OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC

The German minority in Poland was not as large as the Ukrainian minority in the inter-war period, although politico-economic arguments specified it as a group of a significant impact in the multinational society. The range of its influence in the restored Polish state was illustrated well by the press and publishing activities. The greatest range in comparison to the press issued by the other minorities characterized the German press. And the content that appeared in it often had anti-Polish character. Its opposition to the Polish government, disfavor to the Poles, and even the treatment of the Polish state as the so-called "seasonal state" is emphasized in the literature²⁴. In

²⁰ On the contrary, the members of the UNDO were repeatedly accused, among other things in the Polish press, of the establishment of numerous contacts with Germany with the aim to receive political and financial support for anti-Polish actions initiated by environments of the Ukrainian minority in Poland. See: E. Guz, *Zagadki i tajemnice kampanii wrześniowej*, Bellona, Warsaw 2009, p. 71.

²¹ Close ideological and actual relations of the UNDO and the UMO members were not the secret even in the period of research on the history of the interwar in Poland carried out at the end of the Polish People's Republic. See: R. Torzecki, *Kwestia ukraińska w Polsce w latach 1923-1929*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1989, p. 239.

²² Indeed, the UNDO's operations primarily in the area of Eastern Galicia brought somewhat expected results. Preserved archival records confirm that in November 1920 in Rachów in the Subcarpathian region there was created the Ukrainian military point, owing to the considerable help of the Czechs. A proclamation was issued to the citizens of Eastern Galicia while conducting propaganda activities. Cf. The Copy of the minutes of Meetings of the officers from the Galician Republic in Vienna, the Archive of the Józef Piłsudski Institute in the USA, File: 701/2/34 (January 1921).

²³ J. Radziejowski, *Komunistyczna Partia Zachodniej Ukrainy 1919-1929. Węzłowe problemy ideologiczne*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1976, p. 10-20.

²⁴ W.M. Kolasa, *Kierunki badań nad prasą mniejszości narodowych 1918-1939*, [in:] "Klio. Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Polski i powszechnym" 2012, vol. 22, p. 61.



such conditions the destabilizing effect of the German minority in Poland in the years 1919-1939 was undoubtedly born and had to grow.

The activities of the German minority in Poland in the indicated period developed in the atmosphere of mistrust of the Poles and their country, and were the derivative of the previous territorial status of lands that had been granted to Poland after the World War I. This means that many representatives of this minority relatively easily committed themselves to all kinds of initiatives, which were detrimental to the internal security system of the Second Republic. People did so under the influence of, among others, unwillingness to the social policy of "de-Germanization" (*Entdeutschung*), especially with regard to the area of Gdansk Pomerania and Greater Poland, propagated in Poland²⁵.

It should be recognized that even after the action of emigration to Germany, in the territory of the Second Republic there was still a sufficient number of the German minority capable of inducing social centrifugal tendencies. These trends can be regarded as a derivative of the idea of cultural nation (*Kulturnation*), which was popular among the representatives of this minority. It assumed a need to build a nation that would possess their country and base to a great extent on a nationalist content. It found roots in dissatisfaction of the relatively large number of the Germans who were forced to live after the war in a foreign country, that is Poland. The idea of cultural sovereignty argued naturally with the idea to get submitted to the Polish political and administrative authority. The idea of *Kulturnation* was used by Nazi Germany in the 30s of the twentieth century to justify their territorial claims against Poland. It was to give a legitimate ground, among others for the German efforts to obtain the Free City of Gdańsk, Greater Poland, Pomerania and Upper Silesia.²⁶

The anti-Polish propaganda among the representatives of the German minority, as well as more broadly - throughout the society, was the permanent element of destabilization of internal security in the indicated regions of the Second Republic. Understandably, this largely resulted from the support received from the Weimar Republic and then the Third Reich. In one of the archival documents it is recorded that already in the early 1920s the share of German propaganda in Poland was assessed as significant in

²⁵ The representatives of the German minority in Poland were highly susceptible to propaganda that came first from the Weimar Republic, and later the Third Reich. This, in turn, clearly emphasized the hostility of the Polish nationalist policy towards the Germans. Even beliefs about the Polish terror against the minority appeared, and the contents of this kind certainly fueled the reluctance of the Germans living in Poland to the authorities, and also encouraged many of them to mass departures to Germany. See: P. Kacprzak, *Niemiecka mniejszość narodowa w Polsce w latach 1919-1939*, „Studia Lubuskie. Prawo, Administracja, Regionalistyka, Zarządzanie” 2007, no. 3, p. 153. On the other hand, it is difficult to agree with Janusz Sobczak's thesis that they were driven primarily by the impact of the content of propaganda inspired from Germany. Cf. J. Sobczak, *Propaganda zagraniczna Niemiec weimarskich wobec Polski*, Instytut Zachodni, Poznań 1973, p. 293 and next. No less important motivation for the Germans leaving Poland during the whole interwar period were the economic reasons, as well as the desire to maintain citizenship in their home country, rather than functioning as part of the minority group.

²⁶ H. Zieliński, *Polityka zagraniczna Polski 1924-1926*, [in:] *Historia Polski*, vol. IV, p. 2: 1921-1926, [ed.] by T. Jędruszcak, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warsaw 1984, p. 317-322.



some regions, particularly in plebiscite areas. In Upper Silesia, for example, attempts to use the German minority for propaganda purposes manifested themselves in getting paid agitators, organizing meetings, issuing magazines, booklets, proclamations and posters in German, and even organizing visits from house to house. The mentioned document also highlights a very strong influence of the German propaganda press, possible owing to the substantial financial support from the German government²⁷.

The activities of political parties of the German minority, which stood in clear opposition to the assimilation proposals, posed a threat to the internal security of the Second Republic flowing from. It should be remembered that after the elections of 1928 the German minority received 21 seats in the Polish parliament, which gave them real influence power, and by the way the opportunity to the clearer manifestation of their dissatisfaction²⁸. This strengthened the framework for action of members of groups like the German Party, the German Reunification or the Young German Party. Also the following political parties: *Deutschtumsbund zur währung der Minderheitsrechte in Polen* and the German People's Union chose counteracting assimilation of the Germans into the Polish society as the program objective²⁹. Importantly, the program contents oftentimes mentioned anti-Polish slogans, tending towards nationalism³⁰.

The radicalization of attitudes of the representatives of the German minority towards the Polish state and the Poles in general took place in 1933. It is not difficult to find the main cause of this state of affairs, because it was unquestionably after Adolf Hitler's coming to power when the process of implementing the concepts of ideology of Nazism was initiated. Starting with the year 1933 there was recorded in Poland the growth of enthusiasm among the National Socialists, who represented the interests and rights of the German minority in the Second Republic. This was evident especially

²⁷ The Report of the General Staff of the Polish Army of 24 January 1920 on Description of propaganda activities undertaken by the German in Upper Silesia, the Archive of the Józef Piłsudski Institute in the USA, File: 701/2/48 (December 1919-March 1920).

²⁸ K. Grünberg, *Niemcy i ich organizacje Polityczne w Polsce międzywojennej*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1970, pp. 29. However, after taking into account the results of the parliamentary elections in Poland in 1930 one can express the idea polemical against that view. Then the German minority received only 5 seats in the Polish parliament, and in the elections of 1935 earlier regulations deprived the minority of the possibility of having the representation in the Polish Sejm. It had to content itself with only 2 Senate mandates. See: J. Jachymek, *Mniejszości narodowe w polskiej myśli politycznej XX wieku*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej Lublin 1992, p. 18. On the basis of these facts it is clear that the Polish state passed to an effective counteroffensive against the centrifugal tendencies arising from the activities of representatives of political and propaganda activities of the German minority.

²⁹ P. Kacprzak, *Niemiecka mniejszość...*, op. cit., p. 155.

³⁰ It is interesting to mention that already in the 20th century some political parties of the German minority operated in Poland, which were in favor of assimilation and subordination of the Germans to the political and administrative authority of the Poles. After Hitler came to power, such groups focused on the proclamation of the anti-Hitler slogans, aiming to prohibit the spread of German propaganda among the representatives of their minority in Poland. Subsequent examples might be the activity of the German Christian People's Party, as well as the German Socialist Labor Party. See: J. Jachymek, *Mniejszości narodowe...*, op. cit., p. 18.



in Silesia, Greater Poland as well as in the area of Gdansk Pomerania, and to a lesser extent in the central part of Poland as well³¹. The German inspiration of anti-Polish nature in relation to German citizens living in the Free City of Gdańsk was one of the flagship elements. It is emphasized that Berlin issued decisions that affected the political and administration situation in the region, which had been created under the Treaty of Versailles. Pro-German sympathies in the Free City of Gdańsk threatened the stability in the Pomerania region, as part of Poland particularly vulnerable to all kinds of local sabotage and diversion actions, as well as the German propaganda manifested, for example, in the press of the German minority³².

The German intelligence inspiration of the representatives of the German minority in Poland throughout the interwar period can be a matter of separate interest. It is worth noting that the relatively favorable economic situation and the large degree of freedom of political and cultural activity (at least until the mid 30s) allowed the German minority to form stable organizational structures in the Second Republic. Such a state of affairs they wanted to use in Berlin, thus aiming at permanent and systematic propaganda inspiration and anti-Polish activation of the representatives of the German minority. The possibilities of cooperation between the latter with national organizations like the Abwehr, the Gestapo, *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD), the NSDAP, or *Auslandsorganisation* (the foreign branch of the NSDAP) can be assessed as widespread after 1933³³.

The question of how the Berlin inspired the German minority in Poland for activity against the internal security of the Second Republic of Poland must take account of the detailing of the essentially different forms of action. The aforementioned Nazi organizations, in particular the Abwehr, had to use the German minority in Poland to imple-

³¹ In the literature one can meet with the opinion that the said radicalization of attitudes did not stop (or was superficial in nature) in spite of signing the Polish-German declaration on non-violence in January 1934. Cf. P. Kacprzak, *Niemiecka mniejszość...*, op. cit., p. 156.

³² From the point of view of the Polish internal security the matter was complicated by the fact that throughout the interwar period in the Free City of Gdańsk there was kept up the German-Soviet cooperation of clearly anti-Polish character. See: A. Jendrzejewski, *Współpraca niemiecko-radziecka w rejonie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska i Morza Bałtyckiego w latach 1920-1933 w świetle dokumentów polskiego wywiadu wojskowego*, [in:] *Za kulisami wywiadu i dyplomacji...*, op. cit., p. 34-38.

³³ It is confirmed in the literature, where one can meet opinions that: "German nationalist organizations, undergoing total Hitlerization, were preparing the German minority to fulfill the role of the Fifth Column, getting ready to the territorial expansion of German imperialism". S. Osiński, *V kolumna na Pomorzu Gdańskim*, Książka i Wiedza, Warsaw 1965, p. 5. On the other hand, it can be argued that all members involved in the maintenance of contacts with the abovementioned German organizations took on the functions traditionally assigned to the Fifth Column. Such a polemic can be justified by the earlier recalled assimilation activity postulated by some German groups, and also anti-Nazi slogans present among some of the representatives of the German minority. Similar doubts, moreover, are expressed in the recent literature. See: H. Chałupczak, T. Browarek, *Mniejszości narodowe...*, op. cit., p. 152; P. Kacprzak, *Niemiecka mniejszość...*, op. cit., p. 158; A.S. Kotowski, *Lojalizm czy irredenta? Mniejszość niemiecka wobec państwa polskiego w latach 1919-1939*, [in:] *Polska - Polacy - mniejszości narodowe*, red. E. Grześkowiak-Łuczyk, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1992, p. 52-63. D. Matelski, *Przydatność zasobu archiwów polskich w badaniach nad dziejami Niemców w Polsce (1919-1939)*, „Archeion” 1997, vol. XCVII, p. 166.



ment the concepts of revisionism and political revenge against the Polish state. The examples of specific inspirational actions were³⁴.

- financing of anti-Polish propaganda in the press of the German minority, especially the proclamation of deceitful slogans about the resettlement of the German population from the border area;
- supporting combat and sabotage actions of the organization of latent anti-Polish character, for example *Deutschtumsbund*³⁵, and later and groups working to promote Nazi slogans;
- recruiting representatives of the German minority to German diversion organizations, as well as co-workers for agencies of the German military intelligence in Poland;
- recruiting agents from among the members of the German minority, who had to infiltrate the structures of the Polish Army;
- using the minorities to the organization of work of secret spy agencies, which had to fulfill information and intelligence functions;
- recruiting people to carry out attacks on the Polish critical infrastructure, especially on the eve of the World War II.

It can be indicated that all of the foregoing actions of some members of the German minority in Poland, strongly inspired by German intelligence, and often the government, indisputably threatened the internal security of the Second Republic. The scope of these activities can be assessed as diverse; hence it posed an additional risk from the point of view of the Polish security. If one also considers the possibility of significant financial support from Berlin to the German minority in Poland, the danger for the country from this kind of subversion as well as diversion and sabotage activity seemed greater.

The temporal proximity of the outbreak of the World War II also activated the anti-Polish attitude among many Germans living in Poland. It was expressed through the integration into the incidents and tensions on the Polish-German border, as well as joining secret sabotage and diversion groups. The activities of the latter were to serve the destabilization of the internal situation in the Second Republic, especially in border

³⁴ H. Kopczyk, *Niemiecka działalność wywiadowcza na Pomorzu 1920-1933*, Wydawnictwo Morskie, Gdańsk 1970, p. 73 and next.

³⁵ It is worth mentioning that the Polish authorities treated the organization as so dangerous that it was necessary to resolve it in 1923. In archival documents there are references evidencing that the government of the Second Republic was aware of the fact that the activities of the organization *Deutschtumsbund* was directed from Berlin. There are also distinguished indications that the organization executed "some intelligence tasks in favor of the Government of the German Third Reich". Report of the Ministry of Military Affairs of 21 August 1922 *Deutschtumsbund in Poland*, the Archive of the Józef Piłsudski Institute in the USA, File: 701/2/53 (May 1921-December 1922); The minutes of the 45th meeting of the Political Committee of the Council of Ministers (part b, April 1923.), [in:] A. Chojnowski, *Mniejszości narodowe w polityce rządów polskich w latach 1921-1926*, „Przegląd Historyczny” 1976, no. 67, p. 605.



regions³⁶. Furthermore, inspiring border incidents was included in the Nazi policy of denying the order of the Treaty of Versailles and the revisionist efforts³⁷. It can be assessed that by using the German minority in this respect, the German state was to be better prepared when their army would enter the Polish territory. Therefore, the German minority became an important tool of Nazi border provocations.

CONCLUSION

To summarize the contents presented in this article, it should be emphasized that the thesis accepted in the introduction proved to be fully justified on the grounds of the current literature and cited source materials. It turned out that without a doubt the Ukrainians and the Germans could be considered as the two main minorities, which had frequent and essentially destabilizing impact on the internal security in the years 1919-1939. Destabilization of the internal situation in the Second Republic as a result of various activities of members of the Ukrainian and German minorities was characteristic for the entire interwar period³⁸. The will to find the Polish-Ukrainian agreement on the basis of national policy encountered a series of obstacles - political, economic, as well as ideological and cultural ones. The situation was not better in the case of the German minority subjected to strong propaganda in the spirit of revisionism and revanchism in the period of functioning of both the Republic of Weimar and the Third Reich.

The presented contents allow the better understanding of what specific manifestations marked the destabilizing impact of the many members of the Ukrainian and German minorities in the Second Republic. They show clearly how the national situation in the Polish state after gaining independence determined the dynamics of threats to internal security. The Ukrainians and the Germans constituted minority groups, which together accounted for almost 1/5 of the population of the Second Republic during the whole interwar period. Even if only for this reason the Polish government as well as the individual departments acting on behalf of internal security had to expect their impact on the security. The final conclusion can be formulated that the actions of the two selected minority groups destabilized the internal security of the Second Republic of Poland.

³⁶ M. Zgórnjak, *Europa w przededniu wojny. Sytuacja militarna w latach 1939-1939*, Księgarnia Akademicka, Kraków 1993, p. 447.

³⁷ S. Sierpowski, *Mniejszości narodowe jako instrument polityki międzynarodowej 1919-1939*, Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, Poznań 1986, p. 17.

³⁸ Such a conclusion can attest to the fact that the Polish State throughout the period 1919-1939 could not in any case work out the fully effective national policy, which would allow for counteracting the Ukrainian terrorism or propaganda and anti-Polish activities of the German minority. Thus, one can argue with the opposite thesis, expressed, among others, by Waldemar Paruch, who indicated that the problem of nationalities in the Second Republic was generally subject to effective regulations of the Polish authorities, as it never exceeded a certain level of conflict. See: W. Paruch, *Myśl polityczna obozu piłsudczykowskiego 1926-1939*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2005, p. 397.



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11. Raport Samodzielnej Placówki Wywiadowczej Estezet pt. Nawiązanie kontaktu z Ukraińcami z dnia 8 września 1942 roku, Archiwum Instytutu Józefa Piłsudskiego w Ameryce,teczka: 701/111/3 (1942-1945).
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