

*UKRAINIAN AND JEWISH VICISSITUDES, EAST
GALICIA: 1918 – 1923 OBJECT – SUBJECT
RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERSUBJECTIVITY
Existential Analysis*

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Abstract

This chapter attempts to reify the vicissitudes of Ukrainian and Jewish political paradigms in the Time of a Ukrainian strive for an independent state in East Galicia, 1918 – 1923. The article analyzes geo-political realities as they were perceived by the Ukrainian and Jewish political establishments and public opinion. The course of analysis follows the line of existential borderline situations pertaining to each of the given community. These existential situations overall relate to the call of choice with regard to political and military alliances, electoral support and acceptance or unacceptance of the governing power (Poland). In conceptual terms the article elicits paradigms of mutual Ukrainian and Jewish mistrust, lack of compassion and often implementations of typical but not reflective clichés. Proclamation of West Ukrainian National Republic, the Battle for Lviv in November 1918, the course of Polish-Ukrainian War in 1918, 1919, the electoral campaign of 1922 for Polish Parliament (Sejm) and the corresponding mutual reflections, all in all comprise the contextual background, presented in this article. The article draws on the periodical of the Time, personal statements and memoirs and on the interwar monographs and collective works with regard to the Ukrainian, Jewish and Polish mutual vexations. Modern secondary literature on the subject has also been taken into consideration.

Keywords: Eastern Europe; Ukraine; Austro-Hungary; collective memory; historical narrative

West Ukrainian National Republic. Vicissitudes of the Polish – Ukrainian War. The Jewish Neutrality as a Defense Mechanism in Commiseration for Ukrainian National Cause. Ukrainian – Jewish Multiple Subjectivities.

The proclamation of independent Ukrainian state in Eastern Galicia, Bukovina and in the other ethnic Ukrainian territories on November 1, 1918 and the ensuing Polish – Ukrainian war for the capital city of Lviv, exerted a series of political, military and ethnic multi-vectorial conflicts. In Lviv, Ukrainians and Poles commenced a preparatory course for assuming the power, at least since the mid - October of 1918. The two active subjects were the Ukrainian and Polish political entities led by the subsequent parliamentary representations. The Jewish political establishment did not perceive the involvement on their own in the post-Austrian affairs. Before the Polish – Ukrainian war broke out in Lviv (beginning of November 1918), the Jews as ethno-political and ethno-religious entity could still be regarded as a prospective ally by both belligerent sides. In the aftermath of the November struggle for Lviv, the both sides (Polish and Ukrainian) would rather regard the Jewish population as an object without geo-political vestiges.

It was a national awakening in Austro-Hungary and the Ukrainians treated the Jews amicably, if not cordially in October – November 1918, as a potential allies, it was the period of the rising Ukrainian national expectations. The Poles, however, did not perceive the Jews as a national entity of its own and did not expect of them any claims even for a cultural autonomy. The Polish side continuously manifested a historically rooted unacceptance to the rise of the Ukrainian nation. They were absolutely against the division of Galicia on to Polish (western) and Ukrainian (eastern) parts and even more ad hoc categorically they denied to the Ukrainian the rights for Lviv. The very notion of a Ukrainian independent state in Galicia was out of Polish consideration. As for the Jews, especially in the time of uncertainty, a pattern of prejudice, if not a hostility, was typical of the Polish perception and expectations of the East Galician Jews.

The Polish Liquidation Commission (a Polish proto-government for Galicia), initially was located in Cracow, admittedly temporary. In all eventuality it should relocate itself to Lviv. This Commission set its own agenda for the unification of Eastern Galicia with the Central Poland. The Polish Liquidation Commission saw the Ukrainian National Council (a Ukrainian proto-government) as nothing more than a geo-political and military obstacle to the Polish assumption of power in the region. Polish political elites had no sentiments for the

fading Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Correspondently, Polish Parliamentary Representation in Vienna demonstrated no intentions to support a new Austrian political project, notably a reformed and eventually federated, constitutional Monarchy.

For the Polish Liquidation Commission the task of the day was reunification of Austrian Galicia with the Central Poland in one resurrected independent state. In October 1918, Poland was still governed by the interim government namely, the Polish Regent Council, empowered by the German occupation administration. Factually it was a reflection of the status quo of the day, transient geo-political realities that would soon change with the surrender of the Central Powers. But by the end of October 1918, the Polish authorities de-facto held in control Central Poland, formally under the German auspices.

The East Galician Ukrainian parliamentary representation and the regional Ukrainian political elites, seemingly, remained the only loyal subject of the scrambling Austro-Hungarian state. In the end of October of 1918, Austro-Hungary was still formally a dual Empire governed by the Emperor Karl I (Charles I). The Ukrainian National Council came into being also in October of 1918, it was largely comprised of the parliamentarians from the regional Diet (in Lviv) and from the Imperial Parliament in Vienna. These interim national councils were formed in October of 1918 almost in all crown lands and provinces of the Monarchy. The Ukrainian Council seemingly was the only one who continued to coordinate prospective Galician state-building with the Austrian administration in Vienna and Lviv.

In this regard, the Ukrainian Council acted rather untypically if compared to the other ethno-national proto-independent entities of the Empire. The Ukrainian Parliamentary Representation in Vienna and Ukrainian National Council in Lviv still adhered to the fading imperial rules. Most of other recently established ethno-national proto-political entities in the former imperial territories externalized the disintegration of the Empire and not inhibiting the state-building of their own.

In the continuing introspection, Ukrainian political elites perhaps unconsciously institutionalized veneration to the Monarchy and its institutions. Thus, they accepted the Imperial Manifesto as an implicit guidance for the federalization of the Empire. Overall, the Ukrainian politicians continued to correlate the attainment of independence of the ethnic Ukrainian territories with the reformation of the Monarchy. De-facto, the Imperial Manifesto, a long-awaited Document of the federalization, was factually running against the 'Historic Time.'

From a present-day perspective we may compare the Proclamation of West Ukrainian National Republic (October 1918) to the Wilsonian Thirteen Points (January 1918). Both were the Documents of the Time. The Ukrainian Declaration indeed connotes with the Wilsonian Provisions. However their implementations differs significantly. The Wilsonian Thirteen Points laid the foundation for the new political map of Central and East Europe. The West

Ukrainian National Republic recognized to the Jews the rights of a Nation and it was unparalleled for the East Europe political narrative of the Time. Although the Ukrainian narrative was not without a political motivation, but certainly it was imbued by fraternal intentions. It was indeed, not the Ukrainian political guilt of the circumstantial inability to reify Jewish social and political equality and mobility in East Galicia. Geo-political situations in the Region continued to dictate the old instinctual persuasions suited to the previous matrix of Subject-Object relationships. The Jews remained the Object.

The Ukrainians expected of the Jews a shared responsibility for the Ukrainian national cause as a reciprocal step, tantamount to Jewish national determination. For the Poles it remained incomprehensible how the Jews could even consider a yearning to support to the non-Polish cause. Phenomenally, but the Jews of Lviv did not embarrass themselves, neither they deceived the both of the conflicting sides. The Jews of Lviv did not eschew political responsibility for the Neutrality. They paid dearly for the semblance of their independent position. In the aftermath of the Ukrainian retreat from the city, the Jewish population faced violence, brutalities and vehement anti-Jewish atrocities. The Jews of Lviv defiled and blemished for the puzzling anti-Polish activities and spontaneous support given to the Ukrainian authorities. The Ukrainians would eventually be interceded for the Jews in the given place and given time, that is for the unflattering Jewish support and not prolific but exuding Jewish Neutrality.