

## THE POLISH-UKRAINIAN INTER-WAR CONFRONTATION. THE UKRAINIAN POLITICAL MOVEMENT IN POLAND<sup>1</sup>

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### **Rezumat: Confruntarea polono-ucraineană interbelică. Mișcarea politică ucraineană din Polonia**

*Dezideratul dezvoltării, în perioada interbelică, a unor relații de bună conviețuire între minoritatea ucraineană din Polonia și administrația statală, împărțită, parțial, de ambele părți, a fost dificil de materializat, pe fondul demersurilor constante ale liderilor politici ucraineni de formare a unui stat ucrainean independent. În acest scop, Partidul Național Ucrainean din Polonia s-a conexas inclusiv mișcării politice ucrainene din Bucovina, liderii acesteia din urmă implementând, întocmai, directivele trasate. Pe de altă parte, autoritățile polone au acționat pentru apropierea de elementele ucrainene moderate, căutând să exercite, prin acestea, o presiune favorabilă asupra partidelor ucrainene naționaliste, ca mijloc de obținere a unei colaborări pozitive. Accederea lui Adolf Hitler la putere, în Germania, a influențat contextul internațional în care Polonia se regăsea, dând speranțe minorității ucrainene în lupta sa de obținere a unității naționale, spre nemulțumirea sovieticilor.*

**Abstract:** *The desire to develop, in the inter-war period, good cohabitation relations between the Ukrainian minority in Poland and the state administration, shared, partially, by both sides, was difficult to carry out, given the constant endeavours of the Ukrainian political leaders to form an independent Ukrainian state. To that effect, the National Ukrainian Party from Poland linked itself including to the Ukrainian political movement from Bukovina, the leaders of the latter implementing, to the letter, the directives mapped out. On the other hand, the Polish authorities acted so that they approach the moderate Ukrainian elements, wishing thus to carry out, a favourable pressure upon the nationalist Ukrainian parties, as a means to obtain a positive collaboration. Adolf Hitler's accession to power, in Germany, has influenced the international context in which Poland was at the*

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*time, giving hope to the Ukrainian minority in its fight to obtain national unity, much to the discontent of the Soviets.*

**Résumé: La confrontation entre la minorité ukrainienne de Pologne et l'état polonais dans la période de l'entre-deux-guerres. Le mouvement politique ukrainien de Pologne**

*L'ambition de développer, dans la période de l'entre-deux-guerres, de bonnes relations de cohabitation entre la minorité ukrainienne de Pologne et l'administration d'état, partagée partiellement par les deux parties, s'est difficilement matérialisée, sur le fond des démarches constantes des chefs politiques ukrainiens de former un état ukrainien indépendant. Dans ce but, le Parti National Ukrainien de Pologne s'est relié y compris au mouvement politique ukrainien de Bucovine, les chefs de ce dernier implémentant à la lettre les directives reçues. De l'autre part, les autorités polonaises ont essayé de s'approcher des éléments ukrainiens modérés, en cherchant d'exercer par leur intermédiaire une pression favorable sur les partis ukrainiens nationalistes afin d'arriver à une collaboration positive. L'ascension d'Adolf Hitler au pouvoir en Allemagne a influencé le contexte international où se retrouvait la Pologne, en donnant des espoirs à la minorité ukrainienne dans son combat pour obtenir l'unité nationale devant le mécontentement des Soviétiques.*

**Keywords:** *inter-war context, Galicia, Bukovina, political connections, claims, self-determination*

## Introduction

Of all the minorities that have lived in Poland, in the period of time between the two world wars, the Ukrainian one was the most important, both as far as number and role in the political life of this country. Polish statistics of that time confirmed the existence of roughly five million Ukrainian inhabitants, two million less than what the Ukrainian polls had estimated<sup>2</sup>. According to the 1931 census, Ukrainians were representing 14,3% of the total of 32.107.000 inhabitants of Poland<sup>3</sup>, being the second most numerous population following

<sup>2</sup> As evidenced in a document found in the Arhivele Ministerului Afacerilor Externe [Ministry of External Affairs' Archives, hereinafter AMAE], Fond 71 / URSS (1929 - 1933). Volumul 39. Problema ucraineană [Fund 71 / USSR (1929 - 1933). Volume 39. The Ukrainian issue], p. 262.

<sup>3</sup> Compared to Poland's specific polls, we are highlighting the fact that, according to the 1930 general census, in Romania, Ukrainians were representing 3,2% of the population total, placing themselves, numerically speaking, after Romanians (71,9%), Hungarians (7,9%), Germans (4,1%) and Jewish people (4%). In Bukowina, the

the native (69%) and outnumbering the Jewish (7,8%), Belorussian (3,9%), and German (3,9%)<sup>4</sup> populations.

Geographically speaking, native Ukrainian communities were to be found in the south-eastern and eastern part of Poland, predominantly in the Stanisławów<sup>5</sup>, Ternopil<sup>6</sup>, Lvov<sup>7</sup> and Volhinia<sup>8</sup> voivodeships, but also in great in the Polesia<sup>9</sup> and Lublin<sup>10</sup> voivodeships. In the north-eastern part of Poland, the interference of the Ukrainians with the Byelorussians / “white Russians” was visible as far as similar social organisation and political tendencies.

In light of the political influence shed upon them, the Ukrainians of Poland were split into two categories: those coming from territories of the former Austrian province of Galicia, attached to Austria in 1772, on the occasion of the first partition of Poland from the Lvov, Ternopil and Stanisławów principalities, and on the other hand, those who originated from the former Russian Empire (the Volhinia, Polesia and Lublin) voivodeships.

The three voivodeships mentioned initially, which were forming the Oriental Galicia, had come, in fact, back to Poland in 1919, following the Polish-Ukrainian war between 1918 – 1919. Through the decision of the Ambassadors Conference, date March 14<sup>th</sup> 1923, Poland has been recognized full sovereignty over the region, having been conferred the partial administration mandate ever since June 15<sup>th</sup> 1919, by the Peace Conference’s Supreme Court<sup>11</sup>. The areas

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majority of the population were natives (44,5%), Ukrainians being almost twice less (27,7%), followed by Jewish (10,8%), Germans (8,9%) and Polish people (3,6%). The data are taken out from a statistical table concerning Romania’s population according to ethnicities and maternal language (rural and urban area), following the 1930 general census, presented in the *Minoritățile naționale din România (1925-1931). Documente* [National Minorities in Romania (1925-1931). Documents book]. Coordinators Ioan Scurtu and Ioan Dordea, București, 1996, p. 458.

<sup>4</sup> Nicolae Mareș, *Republica Populară Polonă* [The People’s Republic of Poland], Editura Enciclopedică Română, București, 1972, p. 88.

<sup>5</sup> Now Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine.

<sup>6</sup> In Polish, Tarnopol, now a city in the region of the same name in Ukraine.

<sup>7</sup> In Polish Lwów and in Ukrainian Lviv, the most important city in the historical region of Galicia, located at 80 kilometers from the actual border with Poland.

<sup>8</sup> The historical region of Western Ukraine.

<sup>9</sup> The Polesia region, located in the north, north-western and north-eastern of Kiev, nowadays consists of territories of Ukraine and Belorussia.

<sup>10</sup> Nowadays the biggest city in the Eastern Poland.

<sup>11</sup> AMAE. Fond 71 / URSS (1929 - 1933). Volumul 39. Problema ucraineană [Fund 71 / USSR (1929 - 1933). Volume 39. The Ukrainian issue], p. 263.

inhabited by Ukrainians, which were an integral part of the former Russian Empire, were incorporated to Poland following the Riga Treaty, concluded with Russia, on March 18<sup>th</sup> 1921. The Polish victory in the Warsaw battle, of August 1920 (considered by the English ambassador in Berlin, Lord d'Abernon, as being the 18<sup>th</sup> most important battle in the history of the world), the failure of Lenin's plans, those of installing a communist regime in Poland, as well as the frailty of the political consensus inside of a military victorious Poland, have brought peace within the Central and Eastern Europe for the next twenty years<sup>12</sup>.

We even identify differences in the spiritual sense, between the Ukrainians of the Austrian Empire and those of the Russian Empire: those living in the Austrian Galicia were under the jurisdiction of the Greek-Catholic Metropolitan from Lvov, while the Ukrainians living on Polish territories annexed by Russia, had their church life managed by the Russian Orthodox Metropolitan from Warsaw. Whereas the Autonomous Greek-Catholic Church of Galicia had gradually become a Ukrainian National Church, disposing of clergy exclusively made of Ukrainians, those from the Russian areas couldn't enjoy the support and protection of priesthood, during the national battle.

The different political regimes that the Ukrainians from Poland lived in, prior to the First World War, have influenced their national development. Under the Austrian regime, the Eastern and Western Galicia were forming the Krakow Principality, a single autonomous province, with a regional diet and legislative power within the province's cultural, educational, medical or public issues. Through the carrying out, by the Polish, of the political and administrative leadership, Galicia was considered<sup>13</sup>, even under the Austrian regime, a Polish province. Yet, benefiting from the support of the Austrian Government, which was acting on two levels, aiming at the reduction of the Polish element, which was powerful in Galicia, and concurrently, separating Ukrainians from Russians, the Ukrainians from Galicia have managed, in time, to establish themselves as an important political factor. In this context, the pre-war life in Galicia was recording, as a specific element, the sometimes violent fight between the Polish (as holders of the political privileges) and the Ukrainians (animated by their own national claims).

Prior to the First World War, the national battles that took place in Galicia meant to awaken the national consciousness and political expression of the

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<sup>12</sup> M. K. Dziwanowski, *Poland in the 20th century*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997, p. 82, 83.

<sup>13</sup> AMAE. Fond 71 / URSS (1929 - 1933). Volumul 39. Problema ucraineană [Fund 71 / URSS (1929 - 1933). Volume 39. The Ukrainian issue], p. 264.

Ukrainians. Despite representing only a small part of the Ukrainian-inhabited regions, Eastern Galicia became, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the intellectual centre of the Ukrainians who were living in Russia, Bukovina and sub-Carpathian Russia. The powerful political organizations, the profitable economical institutions, the numerous elementary schools and high-schools, cultural and sports societies, cooperatives and people's banks, functional in the Ukrainian-inhabited Eastern Galicia, were all proof of this population's level of development, during the Austrian regime.

Ukrainians living in the former Russian Empire have been deprived of the freedom of having their own national life, since even Russia's attitude was against Austria. Thus, Russia wouldn't officially acknowledge the difference between Russians and Ukrainians, the Ukrainian language being considered only a dialect of Russian, and any other form of manifesting the national character was forbidden. Given the conditions, the national idea couldn't develop but in a subversive, revolutionary way. The national movement of the Ukrainians from the former Russian Empire dates back from the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk peace, on February 9<sup>th</sup> 1918.

It is worth mentioning that, following the above mentioned peace treaty, the former Russian Empire Ukrainians obtained their political independence, forming a free republic, with its capital in Kiev. As a consequence, the beginning of the independent political life triggered real interest for all Ukrainians living in other countries. Following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Galicia Ukrainians have formed, in Lvov, The Ukrainian National Council, which on November 1<sup>st</sup> 1918, took on its role as administrator of all territories inhabited by congeners in the former Austro-Hungarian area, proclaiming the Western Ukraine Republic. While the Ukrainian Republic, formed in the region of the former Russian Empire, was forced to succumb to the Bolshevik pressure, the Western Ukraine Republic disappeared as a result of the battles between the new Polish army and the Ukrainian military formations, improvised and equipped by a decaying Austria.

With regard to the Ukrainian National Council members, we must mention that they, that is the five Ukrainian deputies from the Parliament of Wien, supported by those from Galicia, were claiming the right of the Chernivtsi, Storojineț and Siret in the northern part of Bukovina to be a part of the new Ukrainian state. Among the council representatives, one can notice Mykola Spenul, member, since 1915, of the Ukrainian General Council (ZUR), authority with a role in coordinating the activity of the Ukrainian population in Galicia and Bukovina. The active involvement of Mykola Spenul in the division of Bukovina materialized in the participation in the people gathering in Bukovina, on

November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1918, and in the discussions with other Ukrainian leaders, regarding Bukovina's division into two parts, a Romanian and a Ukrainian one. On the same note, Mykola Spenul, O. Popovici and I. Semaka sign on November 6<sup>th</sup> 1918, a protocol of taking over the power in the Ukrainian part of Bukovina, an endeavour which proved to be unsuccessful, given the presence of Romanian troops in the area<sup>14</sup>.

Those in question found opposition from the Romanian deputies of the same legislature, who asked, on behalf of all their conationals, the right for self-determination, stating that Romanians from Bukovina wanted "the unification, in a single state, of all Romanian provinces from Austria and Hungary"<sup>15</sup>. Materialized on November 28<sup>th</sup> 1918, the act of Bukovina's union with Romania was received enthusiastically by the native Polish population of the historical region. Thus, it is shown that "we, the current Polish people, living in Bukovina, being tied to this region by time (...). We, the Polish people of Bukovina, being the eastern safeguard of the Polish nation (...), we salute the birth day of the United Romanian State. We acknowledge the right of the Romanian people over the entire territory, from the south of Dniester, including over Bukovina"<sup>16</sup>

The Polish military occupation in 1919 not only ended the Ukrainian political independence, but suddenly changed the basis of the Polish-Ukrainian relations. Under the Austrian regime, the Polish and the Ukrainians were forming two nations equally rightful within the area of a neutral state, from the nationality problem perspective. In 1919 this balance was reduced, so the Ukrainians found themselves in a national state with chauvinist tendencies<sup>17</sup>.

Throughout the transition period, that is, from 1919 until March 14<sup>th</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Data source is represented by the book Петро Брицький, Олександр Добржанський, *Буковинці на дипломатичній службі УНР та ЗУНР* [Bukovinians within the diplomatic service of the UNR and ZUNR], Чернівці, 2007, p. 235.

<sup>15</sup> Mihai-Ștefan Ceaușu, *Ion Nistor, luptătorul pentru unirea Bucovinei cu România* [Ion Nistor, the fighter for Bukowina's union with Romania], in *Ion Nistor (1876 - 1962)*, prepared by Alexandru Zub, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași, 1993, p. 117.

<sup>16</sup> As it results from a document of the Poland Republic Consulate in Chernivtsi, with regard to „*The declaration of the Polish people from Bukowina, concluded on 28.11.1918, on the occasion of Bukowina's union with the Romanian state*”, in B. M. Запововський, С. Д. Осачук (ред.), *Буковина: національні рухи та соціально-політичні процеси 1918-1944 рр, Погляд дипломатів (документи)* [Bukowina: national movements and social-political processes (1918 - 1944), Diplomats' opinion (documents)], Чернівці, Зелена Буковина, 2007, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup> AMAE. Fond 71 / URSS (1929 - 1933). Volumul 39. Problema ucraineană [Fund 71 / USSR (1929 - 1933). Volume 39. The Ukrainian issue], p. 267.

1923<sup>18</sup>, the day when Poland's sovereignty upon Eastern Galicia was formally acknowledged by the Council of Ambassadors, the Ukrainians resisted Poland, not wanting to acknowledge, prematurely, the new state of affairs. Thus, by ignoring the Polish administration's dispositions, by refusing to pay the wealth tax, and by boycotting the 1922 elections, the Ukrainian national life had acquired a subversive character and the retaliation of the Polish authorities have further alienated the two nations. The enactment of the new state of affairs, through treaties and international conventions, took the Ukrainian leaders by surprise, generating, in their turn, pro-soviet and philo-Polish oscillations.

### **Ukrainian parties in the context of political life in Poland**

In the raised context, the overcoming of the disquietude and the tensions within the Ukrainian community in Poland took place as late as 1926, through the founding of the Ukrainian National Party (UNDO) from this country, as a result of the fusion between the Democrat Party, Labour Party and the parliamentary group with adherents within the territories which previously belonged to Russia, the principalities of Volhnia, Polesia and Lublin, respectively.

Having become the most powerful political organization of the Ukrainians living in Poland, UNDO gradually controlled the economical and cultural life of this population, having, socially speaking, a moderate character. A series of claims, ranked in the accessed archive documents, as radical, such as the expropriation of the great Polish big landowners, in the detriment of the peasants, have rather had more of a national character, since the materialization of such an endeavour would have contributed to the strengthening of the Ukrainian element in the Eastern Galicia.

From the confessional point of view, the UNDO were manifesting a neutral attitude with reference to the Greek-Catholic Ukrainians from Eastern Galicia and those Orthodox from the former Russian territories, while politically speaking there was both an anti-Polish as well as an anti-Russian attitude. The Philo-Soviet current disappeared almost completely until 1932, as a consequence of the persecutions to which the Ukrainian political leaders and intellectuals in the Soviet Russia have been subjected to.

The UNDO strategy in relation to the Polish authorities has been established at the time of the congress held in Lvov, in November 1926. On this occasion, a decision has been made over adopting of an opportunistic, cautious

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<sup>18</sup> Ukrainians hoped, throughout this period of time, that there would be a favorable resolving of their independence aspirations or at least they longed for a great national autonomy, imposed by the Great Powers.

and conciliatory orientation, especially given the significant reduction, following the coup d'état in May of the same year, of the Polish National Democrat Party supremacy, known for its chauvinism. In the UNDO representative's sense, for a short amount of time the moment was seen as a new beginning for the national minorities in Poland, since the lack of an actual program of the Ukrainian National Party to favourably solve the Ukrainian issue and the problems regarding the relation with the Polish authorities that soon followed (the administrative chicanery, the encroachment in the 1928 elections, the Polish colonization in the areas inhabited by Ukrainians, as well as misunderstanding their cultural and economical needs), culminating in the arresting of the party leaders prior to the 1930 elections, led, in this final year, to the rupture between the two parts.

Under these conditions, UNDO redefined its orientation, militating in favor of an independent Ukrainian state which would include all the Ukrainian-inhabited territories, under a democratic-parliamentary regime. On behalf of Ukrainians living in Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia, UNDO claimed the right to self-determination, considering that the current situation had intervened against the Ukrainian people's will and consultation. The UNDO headquarters was located in the Eastern Galicia, yet the party was disposing of organizations also in Volhinia and other Russian territories. The Ukrainian National Party from Poland became the most important form of political association of the Ukrainians from this country, in terms of its influence. Following the 1930 elections, UNDO, managed by Dr. Lewicki, obtained 17 mandates, three were obtained by other Ukrainian parties, while eight were obtained by Ukrainians who were up for and were chosen on the lists of the governmental lists.

The Ukrainian movement in Poland, coordinated by UNDO, which acted for the obtaining of the autonomy for the Ukrainian-inhabited territories and which, following Konrad Ernst Eduard Henlein's action<sup>19</sup> in Czechoslovakia, was perceived as a threat to the Polish state, and thought of as having repercussions over state of mind of the Ukrainians living in Romania<sup>20</sup>, too.

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<sup>19</sup> May 6<sup>th</sup> 1898 – May 10<sup>th</sup> 1945. He was the most important pro-nazi politician from Czechoslovakia, leader of the Sudeten German separatists. Through his actions, which included conventional political activities and instigations to violence, The Sudet / Sudeten region (which, politically speaking, belonged to the Austrian Empire until 1918, from 1918 to 1938 to Czechoslovakia), was annexed, in 1938 until 1945, to Germany (from 1945 to 1993 again to Czechoslovakia). For his activity, Konrad Ernst Eduard Henlein became SS general and leader of the Nazi Party in the Sudeten region.

<sup>20</sup> AMAE, Fond 71 / URSS (1938). Volumul 41. Problema ucraineană [Fund 71 / USSR (1938). Volume 41. The Ukrainian issue], p. 173 – 178.



Guided by the principle that a good economic situation draws after itself political power and cultural development, Ukrainians of Galicia proceeded to the founding of cooperatives („Maslosoiuz” – „The milk industry”, „Silskyi Gospodar” – „The rural householder”, „Narodna Torhovlea” – „Popular commerce”), financial institutions, credit and insurance institutions, as well. As a consequence, the success of these actions materialized itself not only in the exclusion of the Polish and Jewish elements from the economic life, but also in the development of the cultural and political life in Galicia, the financial support being represented by such revenues made. All the while, the political-cultural development of the Ukrainians conferred Galicia a Ukrainian national character.

Against this background, on Polish authorities level, there has been recorded a duplicitous political attitude, in the sense that, within the political spectrum of Krakow, one would discuss of the normalization of the relations with the Ukrainians, an aspect which was vehemently disputed in Galicia, where one would aim at the weakening of the Ukrainian movement, in order to abolish it<sup>21</sup>.

Proposals of recovery have been submitted by the Polish leaders, to the leader of the National Ukrainian Party in Poland, Dr. Lewicki; however, he refused them. Subsequently, he was removed from the UNDO management by the Polish circles, his place being taken by Vasyl Mudryi, editor-in-chief of the Ukrainian daily paper „Dilo”<sup>22</sup>, who accepted all the requests of the Polish government and signed a pact with it. The normalization of the Polish-Ukrainian relations, which had also occurred given Vasyl Mudryi’s appointment as vice-president of Poland’s Sejm, gave back the Ukrainian population the hope that, by benefiting from Poland’s and Germany’s support, the creation of The Great Ukraine would finally be possible.

Directives that would be common to all Ukrainians have been therefore established, that is, including the Ukrainians from Bukovina<sup>23</sup>, where the UNDO policy had been implemented, at regional level, by the Ukrainian National Party (UNP), with its headquarters in Chernovtsy<sup>24</sup>, which officially led the

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<sup>21</sup> In reply, UNDO summoned, on July 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> 1936 a congress of the Ukrainian parliamentaries. Subsequently, a press release was issued by which the Polish government policy was criticized, as being non-unitary.

<sup>22</sup> Another press body of UNDO was the weekly newspaper „Swoboda”.

<sup>23</sup> AMAE. Dosar 71 / URSS (1934 – 1937). Volumul 40, referitor la problema ucraineană [File 71 / USSR (1934 – 1937). Volume 40, in reference to the Ukrainian issue], p. 244.

<sup>24</sup> AMAE, Fond România (1920-1944), vol. 389, Referat privitor la Partidul Național Ucrainean [Romania Fund (1920-1944), vol. 389, Essay with a reference to the National Ukrainian Party], p. 57.

political activity of the Ukrainian minority in Romania<sup>25</sup>, seconded by „Ukrainska Volia”, a political formation managed by Dr. Vasyl Dutchak, a close-by of Petr Sievich, founding supporter of the Ukrainian Republic, in the composition of which the northern part of Bukovina was anticipated to enter<sup>26</sup>. In the first part of 1936, Iuriy Serbyniuk, as general secretary of the UNP, travelled to Lvov, where he discussed with the UNDO leaders, while the „Ceas” newspaper– UNP’s press body, criticized the Soviet regime, thus spreading, the UNDO policy. A similar role had „Hliborobska Pravda” - „The ploughman truth” newspaper, managed by the former deputy C. Kracalia, who was under the influence of Warsaw and the Polish-Ukrainian circles from the Ukrainian Institute in the capital of Poland, as well as having good relationships with the representatives of the Poland Republic Consulate in Chernovtsy<sup>27</sup>. The institution, founded in the spring of 1919 and managed by Stanislaw Kwiatkowski, whose rank was that of Honorary Consul, had, as evidenced in a letter sent to the Warsaw headquarters, good relationship with the local authorities, no misunderstandings having been signalled<sup>28</sup>.

Contrary to the open attitude manifested by the Warsaw authorities, the Polish people from the Ukrainian-inhabited territories have enclosed all their cultural organizations in a single Union, acting concurrently, with the purpose of aggravating the activity of the Ukrainian cooperatives, precisely in order to diminish the national Ukrainian character of Galicia. Thus, one proceeded to the dissolution of the most important Ukrainian cultural and sports societies: „Soiuz

<sup>25</sup> *Raport întocmit (1930) de Serviciul Secret de Informații privind activitățile și scopul societăților ucrainene din Bucovina* [Review prepared (1930) by the Information Secret Service, related to the activities and purpose of the Ukrainian societies in Bukovina] in *Minoritățile naționale din România (1925-1931). Documente* [National minorities in Romania (1925-1931). Documents]. Coordinators Ioan Scurtu and Ioan Dordea, București, 1996, p. 472.

<sup>26</sup> AMAE. Fond Geneva. Dosar Societatea Națiunilor. Referitor la minoritatea ucraineană din România (1927-1938). Volumul 237 [Geneva Fund. The Nations Society File. With reference to the Ukrainian minority in Romania (1927-1938). Volume 237], p. 14.

<sup>27</sup> AMAE. Dosar 71 / URSS (1934 – 1937). Volumul 40, referitor la problema ucraineană [File 71 / USSR (1934 – 1937). Volume 40, related to the Ukrainian issue], p. 244.

<sup>28</sup> According to the *Annual administrative review for the period: January 1<sup>st</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup> 1922*, addressed to the Warsaw Ministry of External Affairs, by the consular representative, with headquarters in Chernovtsy, cited in *Буковина: національні рухи та соціально-політичні процеси 1918-1944рр, Погляд дипломатів (документи)* [Bukovina: national movements and social-political processes (1918 - 1944), The diplomats’ opinion], Чернівці, Зелена Буковина, 2007, p. 17, 21, 22.

Ukrainok” – „The Ukrainian Women Union”, which had 1200 branches, 72 county organizations and 50.000 members; „The Sela Catholic Labour Society” and „The Ukrainian Sports Union”. Also, towards the end of the inter-war period, the Polish authorities forbade any cultural, sports or any other type of manifestation which could have had a Ukrainian character (the celebration of the most important and old Ukrainian cultural societies – „Prosvita”).

One must hereto mention, that the German-Polish nonaggression pact, dated January 26<sup>th</sup> 1934, changed the Polish political orientation towards a normalization of the Polish-Ukrainian relationships and a collaboration in both the internal and external political area. The pact, signed in Berlin by Józef Lipski and Constantin von Neurath, agreed to both parties by ensuring the time required for the tactical settlement, but instead, determined the soviet disquietude and „cooled off” the Polish-Romanian diplomatic relations. Poland had managed, in less than two year from the normalization (June 25<sup>th</sup> 1932) of the relations with the Soviet Union, to obtain an agreement similar to Germany, made easier by the attitudinal mutations of the Polish diplomacy (along with colonel Józef Beck's<sup>29</sup> taking over the external affairs, who, by alienating France, entered into the disgrace of Nicolae Titulescu, who was a close-by of both the French and British circles) and the contracts carried out, in 1933, by the Polish representatives with the Germans, including with Adolf Hitler. According to the pact text, the parties officially undertook to exclude the force within the bilateral relations. In reality, Adolf Hitler invoked the pact as a justification for the massive subsequent arming, therefore, Poland, based on the agreement, was shielded only for a limited period of time. For Hitler, getting close to Poland was important in terms of its effect (straining the French-Polish relations and diminishing a possible interstate coalition in the Central and Eastern Europe) and the role that this country could play within the anti-Soviet alliance, the very reason why the pact was contested by the Soviet officials<sup>30</sup>.

Given the context, marked, at the beginning of 1938, by the weakening of the economic, cultural and political situation of the Ukrainian population living in Poland, UNDO, through its representatives reacted, by exploiting the international context, created due to the annexation (March 12<sup>th</sup> 1938) of Austria by Germany (Anschluss Österreichs). On May 7<sup>th</sup> 1938, following the

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<sup>29</sup> Ioan Scurtu, *Structuri politice în europa Centrală și de Sud-Est (1918 – 2001)*, Vol. I [Political Structures within Central and South-Eastern Europe (1918 – 2001), Vol. I], Editura Fundației Culturale Române, București, 2003, p. 33.

<sup>30</sup> Daniel Hrenciuc, *România și Polonia (1932 - 1939). Relații politice și diplomatice* [Romania and Poland (1932 - 1939). Political and diplomatic relations], Editura Universității Suceava, 2005, p. 33 – 50.

meeting of the party's central committee, a press release was issued, stating the difficulties faced by the Ukrainian community at that time. In its contents, it is shown that the normalization of the Polish-Ukrainian relationship hasn't registered any real improvement, on the contrary, the situation has worsened due to the Polish attacks, favoured by and not limited or stopped by the central authorities of Warsaw: such attacks, carried out by the Polish, occurred by the forced transition of the Orthodox and United people to Catholicism, as well as by turning the Orthodox churches into Catholic cult institutions. The dissatisfaction of the UNDO representatives also occurred as a result of: the exclusion of Ukrainian peasants from the agrarian reform, the prohibition of educating children in the Ukrainian language, the refusal to accept the Ukrainian element within the local administration and its removal from public functions, given that one wouldn't give up religion and nationality; limiting the Ukrainian economic and cultural manifestations, the authorities' arbitrary attitude towards their relationship with Ukrainian elements in the border area; the authorities' limitation of the Ukrainian population's access to cultural, educational and economic-destined credits.

The most important claim made by UNDO is, without a doubt, the autonomy of all territories inhabited by Ukrainians in Poland. The basis of this request was the acknowledgement of the party's representatives, according to which these territories form a geo-political, economic unit, as well as the obligation assumed by Poland, in 1923, through which it guaranteed the autonomy of the Ukrainian-inhabited territories in this country.

Facing the Polish „danger”, UNDO called on the Ukrainian people, urging them to unite and coordinate the activity, with the purpose of achieving the Ukrainian national policy in Poland („*no one has any rights or power to stop us in our national, constructive and creative battle*”<sup>31</sup>). The endeavour, which aimed at obtaining autonomy for the Ukrainians living in Poland, is interesting, considering the fact that the Ukrainians fight started at the same time with that in Czechoslovakia and that, during the political crisis of the 1937 – 1938 Europe, caused by disputes and contradictions among the totalitarian-revisionist and democratic states, and fuelled by inner political crisis (France's case).

The public opinion and the Polish press (the editions of the „Robotnik”<sup>32</sup>, „Warszawski Dzienik Narodowi”<sup>33</sup> newspapers of May 12<sup>th</sup> 1938, as well as those

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<sup>31</sup> AMAE. Fond 71 / URSS (1938). Volumul 41. Problema ucraineană [Fund 71 / USSR (1938). Volume 41. The Ukrainian issue], p. 176.

<sup>32</sup> Socialist body: „The tone and way of formulating the UNDO declaration reminds Henlein's action. Is it possible that the Ukrainian nationalists have revived their

of the „Ilustrovani Curjer Codzieni”<sup>34</sup> and „Dzenik Polski”<sup>35</sup> newspapers of the next day) showed a determined attitude towards Ukrainians’ claims, the Ukrainian autonomous movement being linked with that of Konrad Ernst Eduard Henlein. In reply, the Ukrainian press of Poland empathized with UNDO, arguing the justice of those over seven million Ukrainians’ claims, by making a reference to the Polish request to obtain the autonomy for the Polish element living in Czechoslovakia.

The moral support that UNDO found in Germany’s actions indicates, in the context of these autonomous endeavours, the tendency of getting rid of the anti-German policy, promoted through the „Ukrainian Bureau” in London. As far as Germany’s policy towards the Ukrainian minority living in Poland was, we keep in mind<sup>36</sup> that, following Adolf Hitler’s accession (January 30<sup>th</sup> 1933) in the position of Chancellor, „the new Germany” turned the Philo-Soviet policy into an anti-Soviet one, supporting the Ukrainian nationalists, who were, thus, hoping for<sup>37</sup>, the

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sympathies towards Berlin?”.

<sup>33</sup> The „Endeki” nationalist group body: „Reading the UNDO declaration, one has the impression that Henlein’s movement hasn’t remained echoless before the events in Poland... This Henlein analogy all the more takes on a troublesome expression as UNDO’s appeal, that of uniting all factors, had as consequence the union of all Ukrainian of every nuance from Austria and Germany, on the very next day following the achievement of the Anschluss... The Ukrainian desideratum expressed by UNDO is an exponent of the German policy, which wants to weaken Central and Eastern Europe, by creating federative autonomous states, where, it is self understood, will find the perfect place for the fixation of economical and political spheres... The first step towards the achievement of this policy is Henlein’s action in Czechoslovakia and once achieving it, Poland will come in its turn, with the Ukrainian issue.”.

<sup>34</sup> „It looks like the UNDO gentlemen ... immitate Conrad Henlein’s claims”.

<sup>35</sup> „UNDO requests, for the Ukrainians, rights which inflict a blow in the integrity of the Polish territory. The tone of this declaration exceeds any expectation. UNDO has forgotten that any right conditions obligations as well and how is the Ukrainian people fulfilling its obligations towards Poland? ... You, gentlement, threaten with foreign factors. Your threat describe the feelings that you have for the Polish state”.

<sup>36</sup> AMAE. Dosar 71 / URSS (1934 – 1937). Volumul 40, referitor la problema ucraineană [File 71 / USSR (1934 – 1937). Volume 40, regarding the Ukrainian issue], p. 240 - 244. The information is selected from a copy of Report no 12024 / 1936, of the Chernovtsy Regional Police Inspectorate, related to Poland’s new Ukrainian policy, adopted following the conclusion of the German-Polish non-aggression pact of 1934.

<sup>37</sup> The publication of a book regarding Ukraine, by the mentor of the Hitlerist external policy, Alfred Rosenberg, has been seen, by the leaders of the two anti-Polish organizations („Orhanizatsiya Ukrayins’kykh Natsionalistiv – OUN, translated „The

Ukrainian independence, by disruption of the Soviet Russia. The measures taken by the Russian government, consequences of the Ukrainian movement's approach to the new Berlin power, and the oppressions that followed, consisting of arrests, deportations and/or death sentences of certain Ukrainian leaders, have only eliminated Ukrainians' sympathies towards Soviet Russia<sup>38</sup>.

Close to UNDO, in terms of the anti-Polish and anti-Soviet attitude, yet with an acute radical character, was the Radical Socialist Ukrainian Party (USRP)<sup>39</sup>, consisting of, in Eastern Galicia, socialist principles which didn't exclude a national specific program. USRP aimed at organizing the Ukrainians from villages to cities, with the purpose of carrying out a joint battle for social and national freedom of the working classes, as well as for turning the economic and political regime specific to 1932, into a socialist regime<sup>40</sup>, achievable only as a result of having obtained national independence<sup>41</sup>. In such a situation, the new Ukrainian Republic of the working class would reunite all territories inhabited by Ukrainians, the power being exercised by a working classing council, chosen by proportional, secret, legal, universal and direct voting. Whereas UNDO's social program had a national bourgeois character, comprising all social classes, the USRP registered an acute class character, its leaders relying on the agricultural and industrial proletariat. The USRP program paid particular attention to Ukrainian workers, without showing sympathy towards the Polish proletariat.

In May 1927, UNDO split, the left wing of this formation having reorganized itself under the title of The Labor National Party (UPP)<sup>42</sup>, which

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Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists", and „Ukrainska viiskova orhanizatsiia – UVO", translated „The Ukrainian Military Organization"), refugees in Berlin, was a confirmation of the German support.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>39</sup> In the 1930 elections, the USRP formed an electoral bloc with UNDO, obtaining three mandates. The USRP's official newspapers was „Hrondzkij Holes". The party had a tight connection with the Ukrainian „Obrony Ukrainy" – „Defenders of Ukraine" organization, in the United States of America.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

<sup>41</sup> According to the party leaders.

<sup>42</sup> Significant is the fact that Dr. Petruszewicz, one of the leaders of the Ukrainian emigration and author of the UPP doctrine, acted as subscriber of more complaints addressed to the Nations League, in the contents of which he incriminated both Poland and Romania's policy in relation to the minority population. In 1932, the party was led by Dr. Zieczeslaw Budzynaki, and his official newspaper was „Rada". Unlike UNDO and USRP, the UPP didn't have, following the 1930 elections, representatives in the Polish Sejm.

militated, through the few adherents it had, for the unification of all Ukrainian within the borders of an independent, socialist state, all the while keeping the national tendency. Contrary to UNDO and USRP, UPP was of philo-Soviet orientation seeing in the Soviet vicinity, a possible solution for obtaining of the independence and achieving the union of the Ukrainian people.

Through the fusion of the „National Will” sovietophile party from Eastern Galicia with the „Ukrainian Socialist Union”, which manifested both socialist and nationalist tendencies, in 1926 „The Socialist Union of the Ukrainian Peasants and Workers” was created, a political formation also known as the „Sel-Rob” Party<sup>43</sup>, which national program was marked, ever since its establishment, by divergence. Thus, whereas the group deriving from the „National Will” Party manifested, influenced by the communist doctrine, an international tendency, accepting, out of tactical considerations, the nationalist ideology of form, the other fraction was opposing the international communist doctrine of the party, making a priority out of the national program. Adopting the „Szumskist ideology”<sup>44</sup>, the „Sel-Rob” followers, supporters of the national current, were militating for the establishment of a communist Ukrainian Republic, independent of Moscow, in other words, for a communist regime within the borders of an independent national state. On the other hand, the representative of the international current was „Sel-Rob Unity”<sup>45</sup>, in reality a communist party, having connections with communist elements, which was constantly receiving instructions from the Soviet Russia. In order to activate on the political scene, „Sel-Rob Unity” wanted to follow the law, the clandestine activities being the responsibility of certain secret organizations. With an eye to the importance criteria, the “Sel-Rob Unity” ranked third, after UNDO and USRP.

A way of getting close to and understanding in the relation with the Polish state, has been manifested, even though in a timid manner, by the Catholic National Ukrainian Party<sup>46</sup>, established in September 1930, under the influence of the Greek-Catholic Bishop of Stanisławów. Lacking unification with the moderate groups within other Ukrainian political organizations, the Catholic National Ukrainian Party’s influence upon the Ukrainian population was moderate. Also, the actions of the party were refuted by the other

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<sup>43</sup> Selanki - rural, robotnicze – working.

<sup>44</sup> Named after the former commissioner of the people of Soviet Ukraine, Szumski.

<sup>45</sup> Led by a former deputy, Walnicki. Under various pretexts, the electoral committees cancelled the majority of the candidates list in the 1930 elections, so that the party didn’t have representatives within the Polish Seym anymore.

<sup>46</sup> The party’s press body was „Nowa Zoria”.

Ukrainian political formations and by the irredentist clerical circles, clotted around the Greek-Catholic Metropolitan Szeptycki and organized in the „Ukrainian Catholic Union”<sup>47</sup>.

### Conclusions

Animated by the wish to evade the Polish administration management, seen as inflicted upon them, despite the will of the Ukrainian people living in Poland, the Ukrainian parties haven't managed, during the inter-war period, to adopt a joint position in the perspective of achieving their desideratum of autonomy, based on the right for self-determination, proclaimed by the American president Woodrow Wilson<sup>48</sup>. The differences identified in the Ukrainian parties' programs, materialized in the opposed tactics adopted and purpose proposed, have deprived the Ukrainian population from Poland from an optimal representations in their relations with the authorities. It was for these reasons that the political organizations formed by the Ukrainians have been dissolved, in the context of the 1922 elections – The Agrarian Ruthenian Party of the Eastern Galicia, and the 1928 elections – „The National Ukrainian Union”.

Not being able to form the basis of a personal party, the Ukrainians supporting the Polish regime, few in number, have adhered to the territorial organizations of the government party, managing, with the help of the administration, to occupy mandates within the Sejm, on the occasion of the 1930 elections (six mandates in the Volhinia voivodeship and two in Eastern Galicia), though with a limited influence upon the congener population.

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<sup>47</sup> Having as press body the weekly newspaper „Meta”.

<sup>48</sup> Ileana Maria Ratcu, *Teodor Bălan (1885 - 1972), istoric și arhivist al Bucovinei* [Teodor Bălan (1885 - 1972), Bukowina's historian and archivist], Editura Cetatea de Scaun, Târgoviște, 2013, p. 44.