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THE ISSUE OF RESISTANCE TO THE POLISH AUTHORITIES IN THE IDEOLOGY OF UKRAINIAN YOUTH NATIONALIST RADICAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE 1920's

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In modern historical science, there are many studies devoted to various political parties and public associations that arose in the Ukrainian lands that were part of Poland in the 1920s and 1930s. However, the problem associated with the attitude of radical youth organizations to Poland was not the subject of a separate study. This issue contains a number of aspects that determine its essence: 1) the attitude of the Ukrainian radical youth organizations to the very fact of the occupation of Poland by Galicia and Western Volhynia; 2) their the attitude to the Polish authorities; 3) their political assessment of the activities of the Polish authorities regarding Ukrainian citizenship and the identification of common trends in relation to Poland; 4) their attitude of Ukrainian political circles in their relationships with Poland; 5) their extrapolation of relations between Ukrainian political factors and Polish authorities in inter-party and inter-ethnic relations.

The main radical youth organizations began to emerge at the beginning of 1920s as in 1925, Dmytro Dontsov began to broaden his journalistic activities, which became an important stage in the development of revolutionary nationalism and nationalist organizations. A significant psychological factor in the founding of the Ukrainian military organization and other radical organizations was the negative attitude towards Poland and its policies towards Ukrainians. We emphasize that it was internal in nature, because in this way, every Ukrainian who was aware of his position, protested against the destruction of his nation.

This article develops and deepens the problem associated with the emergence of Ukrainian radical political environments in Western Ukraine under the conditions of Polish occupation in the 1920's and 30's of the 20th century, their activities, their influence on the public, on the formation of the Ukrainian national idea, with their struggle for Ukrainian culture, language, education, and an independent state.

Key words: Ukrainian youth nationalist radical organizations, Poland, interwar period, the Group of Ukrainian State Youth, the Organization of the Senior Classes of Ukrainian Gymnasia, Ukrainian student communities, Union of Ukrainian nationalistic youth, Ukrainian National Youth Team, and Union of Ukrainian Nationalists Organizations, Ukrainian Military Organization, Organization of Ukrainian nationalists, Western Ukrainian lands.

The emergence of Ukrainian nationalist organizations in the interwar period was dictated by the necessity of presenting a force capable of resisting new occupation. As a rule, a nation that is in decline is rescued by one or another form of national self-identity. One of these forms is political nationalism, crystallized in organizations that present various nationalist trends¹. To create such organizations, a certain level of national self-identification was needed.

¹ Ярослав Дашкевич, “Нація та націоналізм: теоретичні проблеми й історіографічні висновки,” *Україна в минулому*, Випуск IX, (1996): 183.

During this period, these conditions existed only in Western Ukraine, so it was here that nationalist organizations were founded. That part of the Ukrainians who were under the Soviet rule could not do it, because there was a higher level of assimilation, which was determined by certain historical conditions of occupation. At that time, Soviet regime was strong enough to eradicate any form of resistance and Ukrainian Revolution, which began in 1917, had less influence on the national consciousness of the Dnieper Ukrainians than on the consciousness of the Galician Ukrainians. The Revolution educated a whole generation of national elites in the Western Ukraine while in the east of Ukraine this generation was either killed in the struggle with the adversaries, or emigrated. Simultaneously, the Communist regime continued to persecute Ukrainian elite until almost complete liquidation.

On the other hand, in Galicia, alienation from the Polish authorities and politics was much stronger due to high national consciousness of the population. The preconditions that contributed to the foundation of youth radical organizations were partly determined by their attitude to Poland. Thus, the issue of resistance to new authorities depended on both the consequences of National Revolution, and on Polish political actions in relation to the Ukrainians. To a very large extent, interdependence of the policy of Poland in the Western Ukrainian territories and the activities of the nationalists was obvious. This relationship was not homogeneous, it developed and changed for two decades, but during this period, there was one feature in the attitude of Ukrainian radical groups to Polish policy - uncompromisingness.

Thus, at the beginning of the twenties, political conditions in Galicia promoted the creation of a new type of organization that was supposed to work in a different direction than Ukrainian parties before the national revolution. It is not surprising that the first of such organizations was established by the military, or persons close to the Sich Riflemen. The reason for this is that it is easier for the military to unite, and they clearly expressed their attitude to the fact of Polish occupation of Ukrainian territories, as well as to the first political actions of Polish government. In addition, this group definitely demonstrated its dedication to the resistance. This determination was formed during the Ukrainian-Polish war and the first months of Polish rule in the Ukrainian territories. Ukrainian Sich Riflemen were aware of the need to confront Poland's politics and had their own, already formed view on the methods of this confrontation. Thus, the activity of Ukrainian military groups became the acting example for many other radical organizations and eventually led to their unification in the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. However, Ukrainian Military Organization that was created in 1920 was determined as the means to continue the struggle for freedom and independence, which makes this the organization the representative of those leader that established Ukrainian People's Republic during the Ukrainian Revolution as it was created by Ukrainian military elite of the Revolution period and supported by Western Ukrainian political leaders. Thus, it should not be considered as the subject of this article due to the fact that it was not one of the new youth radical organizations. However, many young people joined this group to find their way to express their views.

The period from 1926 to 1929 was a time of ideological strengthening of the radical youth organizations and expansion of their activities. An important role in this was played by the development of the ideology of nationalism, which not only determined the activities of these groups, but also led to the formation of other nationalist organizations, striving to unite into one – the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and thus ensure the diverse development of ideology and its strengthening.

The development of the political ideology of nationalism in the 20's was associated with the state of the nation, the territory of which was divided between different states. Therefore, nationalist ideology necessarily meant an assessment of this situation – an organization that considered itself to be nationalist, had to identify the position in which Ukraine was located. This led to a clear formulation of the attitude towards the rule of the Second Republic in the Ukrainian lands, and since nationalism implies a negative attitude towards the invaders, all Ukrainian organizations, whose program and activities were based on the political ideology of nationalism, considered Poland to be hostile to Ukraine as an opponent of its independence. Moreover, nationalism as a unifying factor in the activities of these organizations demonstrated the fact that hostility to the invaders of Ukraine played a very important role not only in uniting but also in the creation of nationalist organizations. In addition, since the representatives of Western Ukraine formed most of them, the basis of this irreconcilability was a negative attitude towards Poland. On the other hand, such an attitude was provoked by the Polish authorities themselves, or rather by its policy on Ukrainian lands. Thus, the Ukrainian nationalist organizations were the product of the interaction of two polar phenomena – the development of nationalist ideas and the policy of the invaders in relation to Ukrainian problems. The same polarity determined their attitude towards Poland.

In addition to the Ukrainian Military Organization, in Galicia, in early 1920s, there were two more organizations of nationalists: the Group of Ukrainian State Youth and the Organization of the Senior Classes of Ukrainian Gymnasia. These groups considered themselves to be youth organizations. The first one arose among students; its founders were those who attended the Ukrainian Underground University². Therefore, the nationalist ideas of the leading members of the Group of Ukrainian State Youth (Stepan Okhrimovych, Julian Vassyan, Ivan Gabrusevych, and Bohdan Kravtsiv) were connected, above all, with the problem of the Ukrainian University. In addition, based on its nationalism, the Group of Ukrainian State Youth began to oppose the promotion of different orientations among Ukrainian students. What concerns their position regarding the problem of opening a Ukrainian university; it was also based on the resistance to orientations. It means that the members of the group believed that the Ukrainian university should not be open by agreeing with the Polish authorities in the Ukrainian lands, they also strongly opposed those who believed that the university problem would be solved after autonomy would be granted to the Ukrainian territory

² О. Баган, *Націоналізм і націоналістичний рух*. (Дрогобич: 1994), 88.

under the rule of the Second Republic of Poland. Like the Ukrainian Military Organization, the Group of Ukrainian State Youth considered the autonomous position as the betrayal of the interests of the Ukrainian nation and the recognition of the legality of occupation³.

The attitude of the Organization of Senior Classes of Ukrainian Gymnasia towards Poland was similar. What concerns this group, Zinovy Knysh, the author, doubts the importance of this organization, considering that it could be purely intragymnazine group. He believes that the spread of nationalist ideology among high school students was engaged by the Group of Ukrainian State Youth⁴. Other authors, including Petro Mirchuk, believe that the Organization of Senior Classes of Ukrainian Gymnasia arose under the auspices of the Ukrainian Military Organization in 1924 and, consequently, this group shared the ideology of the latter as well as its attitude to Poland⁵. Although the founders of the Organization of Senior Classes of Ukrainian Gymnasia were the members of the Ukrainian Military Organization (Roman Shukhevych, Volodymyr Yaniv, Bohdan Pidgainy), it did not take part in the actions of the Ukrainian Military Organization, but acted within the gymnasium environment, where it conducted anti-Polish propaganda.

The members of the Organization of Senior Classes of Ukrainian Gymnasia tried to persuade the high school students not to enter Polish universities; organized a boycott of Polish state celebrations in gymnasia, distributed anti-state cards among schoolchildren. The connection between the Organization of Senior Classes of Ukrainian Gymnasia and Ukrainian Military Organization was also based on the fact that the members of the Organization of Senior Classes of Ukrainian Gymnasia hid and disseminated the literature of the Ukrainian Military Organization, and also collected money for it⁶.

The development of nationalist ideology, the expansion of the Ukrainian Military Organization, as well as the policy of Polish authorities in the field of education and youth, have pushed youth nationalist organizations to unite. In 1926, Ukrainian Student Communities, organized by former members of the Organization of Senior Classes of Ukrainian Gymnasia to fight pro-Soviet and pro-Polonist orientations among Ukrainian students, united with the Group of Ukrainian State Youth and created the Union of Ukrainian Nationalist Youth. This Union, borrowing from the Ukrainian Military Organization the idea of a permanent revolution, which consisted in the constant accumulation of revolutionary ideas and force, was more effective organization than its predecessors were. Shortly after the creation of the Union, a problem of status arose in its environment, which depended on the attitude of the Union of Ukrainian Nationalist Youth to the Polish domination in Ukrainian lands.

³ Петро Мірчук, *Нарис історії ОУН*. (Мюнхен–Лондон–Нью-Йорк: 1968), 55.

⁴ Зиновій Книш, *Становлення ОУН*. (Київ: 1994), 44.

⁵ Петро Мірчук, *Нарис історії ОУН*. (Мюнхен–Лондон–Нью-Йорк: 1968), 58.

⁶ Степан Ленкавський, “Націоналістичний рух на ЗУЗ та I-ий Конгрес українських націоналістів,” *Свєген Коновалець і його доба*, (1974), 400.

Some leaders of the Union, including O. Bodnarovych and M. Dashkovych-Dobryansky, put forward a proposal to move the Union to legal positions and to organize its activities under the auspices of the Ukrainian National-Democratic Association. This proposal met serious resistance of the members of the SUNM, which is apparently due to the influence of the Ukrainian Military Organization in this organization. The reason for the opposition was that, as well as members of the UMO, the founders of the Union of Ukrainian Nationalist Youth believed that the legal activities within the Polish state meant consent to the current state, and, consequently, the recognition of its power in Ukrainian lands, which was unacceptable for nationalistic youth⁷. Thus, the Union of Ukrainian Nationalist Youth was finally determined as a nationalist organization close to the Ukrainian Military Organization, which in many situations was the coordinator of the Union (perhaps because some of the members of the Union were members of the Ukrainian Military Organization, and some of them, like S. Lenkavsky, were sent there by the Ukrainian Military Organization with the purpose of building the Union)⁸. In addition, due to the influence of the Ukrainian Military Organization, the Union of Ukrainian Nationalist Youth conducted more determined actions than other youth organizations, which had an impact on the latter.

An example of such actions may be the anti-Polish demonstration initiated by the members of the Union prior to the 10th anniversary of the proclamation of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic⁹. The demonstration ended in an armed clash with the police.

The Union also continued the activities launched by the Group of Ukrainian State Youth and the Organization of Senior Classes of Ukrainian Gymnasia, that is - anti-Polish propaganda in educational institutions, boycotting and breaking the celebration of Polish state holidays in schools and gymnasia¹⁰. The Group of Ukrainian State Youth, the Organization of Senior Classes of Ukrainian Gymnasia, and the Union of Ukrainian Nationalist Youth subjectively contributed to the development of nationalism, they were only carriers of it among the youth, not creating new ideas, but only transforming them in accordance with the perception of the realities of the young generation. The Ukrainian Military Organization had the hegemony in the development of the existing Ukrainian nationalism.

On the other hand, everything was different in the case of nationalist organizations abroad. The attitude to Poland of Ukrainian radical organizations in the homeland and abroad developed in two parallel ways. The first meant that there was one common strategic line in relations with the Polish authorities, dictated by a program based on the political ideology of the existing nationalism. The second meant that the assessment of Polish domination in the Ukrainian lands was conditioned by the concrete historical situation, the situation in the province and the policy pursued by the Polish government

⁷ Степан Ленкавський, "Націоналістичний рух на ЗУЗ та I-ий Конгрес українських націоналістів," *Свєген Коновалець і його доба*, (1974), 402.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 401.

⁹ О. Баган, *Націоналізм і націоналістичний рух*. (Дрогобич: 1994), 59–60.

¹⁰ Зиновій Книш, *Становлення ОУН*. (Київ: 1994), 44.

on the Ukrainian territory. In relation to Poland, the Ukrainian nationalist organizations in emigration saw this last aspect as less important, due to the fact that they were more engaged in the theoretical development of nationalist ideas and their propaganda.

The first nationalist organization of Ukrainians abroad was the Group of Ukrainian Nationalist Youth, established in the Czech Republic in 1921. Members of the Group set themselves the task of spreading nationalism among Ukrainians abroad and, under its slogans, unite them in the struggle for national interests. In 1924 a congress of Ukrainian youth was held in Prague, where the ideological foundations of the Group of Ukrainian Nationalist Youth were formed¹¹. Regarding the Polish authorities, the Group of Ukrainian Nationalist Youth, which was, of course, guided by nationalism, was, like other similar organizations, uncompromising on the question of Ukrainian lands: it stated that relations with Poland were the direction of the struggle of the Ukrainian nation for independence, in which it is expedient to use any means. The Group of Ukrainian Nationalist Youth believed that it was not necessary to abandon legal methods, which could also be part of the struggle, and not a way of cooperation with the Polish authorities¹². At the same time, The Group of Ukrainian Nationalist Youth emphasized that the attempts to resolve the Ukrainian issue without requiring independence, but considering autonomy and establishing good relations with the Poles, only complicate the matter, because possible Polish concessions would weaken the aspirations of Ukrainians to fight for full sovereignty.

On November 12, 1925, three nationalist organizations, namely, the Ukrainian National Union, the Union of Liberation of Ukraine, and the Union of Ukrainian Fascists, united in the League of Ukrainian Nationalists. The League absorbed nationalists from many regions of Ukraine and representatives of different social strata. Its ideology and, accordingly, the attitude towards Poland were shaped by the influence of various ideas and factors. Inside the League of Ukrainian Nationalists there were three trends, which included people of different states and attitudes. Firstly, a part of the intelligentsia that participated in the founding and rebuilding of the Ukrainian People's Republic entered Legia; secondly, the League of Ukrainian Nationalists accepted the soldiers of the Ukrainian armies that participated in the national revolution and they proposed to build the ideology of the League on the basis of European radical political trends; Thirdly, many Galicians joined the League, who, after the accession of Galicia to Poland, remained in exile. Due to such a representative variety, the development of a unified ideology of the League was somewhat delayed. The League of Ukrainian Nationalists was not a concrete organization, but an ideological structure; the first years of its existence were devoted to theoretical searches, during which they rejected the ideas borrowed from the representatives of Eastern Ukraine from the Italian fascists. At the general meeting of the League of Ukrainian Nationalists, the proposal of Colonel A. Kmeta about the orientation to the Government of the Ukrainian People's

¹¹ Зинівій Книш, *Становлення ОУН*. (Київ: 1994), 24.

¹² Петро Мірчук, *Нарис історії ОУН*. (Мюнхен–Лондон–Нью-Йорк: 1968), 66.

Republic was denied. The negative attitude of the meeting to this proposal was explained by the fact that the Government of the Ukrainian People's Republic cooperated with Poland, so targeting this government meant joining the Polish supporters' camp. The League of Ukrainian Nationalists, guided by nationalism, opposed any orientation and attached importance to the struggle for independence, first of all, only by their own forces¹³. Poland was perceived as a state "cruelly reigning in Galicia, neglecting international treaties", in connection with which Polish authorities became the object of the struggle, first of all, of the Ukrainian radical nationalists.

In 1927, the Group of Ukrainian Nationalist Youth and the League of Ukrainian Nationalists, united in the Union of Ukrainian Nationalist Organizations, given their ideological identity. The ideology of the Union of Ukrainian Nationalist Organizations combined the basic principles of revolutionary nationalism, the main components of which were: uncompromising struggle for an independent Ukrainian state, irreconcilable attitude towards Russia, Poland and other "enemies" of the Ukrainian nation, as well as to their supporters within the nation itself; the struggle for freedom relied only on Ukraine's own forces (at the same time, the search for allies in this struggle was not rejected)¹⁴. These principles determined the attitude of the Union and other nationalist organizations towards Poland and the Polish domination of the Ukrainian lands. Such an attitude from nationalist formations did not change and was permanent. The task of the Union of Ukrainian Nationalist Organizations, in addition to developing a nationalist ideology and preparing the ground for the unification of all nationalist organizations, was the promotion of hostile attitude to the occupation regimes in the Ukrainian lands.

In 1928, the Union of Ukrainian Nationalist Organizations, on the initiative of the organizational units of the Group of Ukrainian Nationalist Youth and the League of Ukrainian Nationalists, was transformed into the Union of Ukrainian Nationalists, which in 1929 joined the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists.

Thus, it can be noted that the attitude of Ukrainian Youth Nationalist Radical Organizations to Poland largely determined their activities and at the same time it was conditioned by several factors: firstly, the post-war international situation, which led to the fact that Western Ukrainian lands fell under the control of Poland; secondly, the policy of the Polish authorities towards the Ukrainians, which in most cases caused the hostility of Ukrainians; thirdly, the development of nationalism, in the course of which a program of Ukrainian Youth Nationalist Radical Organizations was formed; fourthly, the activities of other Ukrainian parties; fifthly, the opinion of the public, which not only influenced the activities of these organizations, but also demanded

¹³ "Платформа "загравістів" і початки націоналістичного руху," *Українська суспільно-політична думка в ХХ столітті. Документи і матеріали*, ред. Тарас Гунчак та Роман Сольчаник, Т. 3, (Львів: Сучасність, 1993), 387.

¹⁴ О. Бойдуник, "Як дійшло до створення ОУН," *Євген Коновалець і його доба*, (1974): 368.

thier correction. Consequently, the attitude of nationalists to Poland is a phenomenon, which is not accidental and non-invasive, as it was created by external factors and was dependent on them. All these factors are components of the political situation at that time. This is the cause of political hostility not only to the Polish state, but also to the Ukrainian organizations that cooperated with it.

ПРОБЛЕМА ОПОРУ ПОЛЬСЬКІЙ ВЛАДІ В ІДЕОЛОГІЇ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ МОЛОДІЖНИХ НАЦІОНАЛІСТИЧНИХ РАДИКАЛЬНИХ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙ У 20-х РОКАХ ХХ століття

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Розвиток політичної ідеології націоналізму в 20-х роках був пов'язаний із тодішнім становищем України, чия територія була поділена між різними державами. Виникнення українських націоналістичних організацій у міжвоєнний період було продиктоване політичною ситуацією, яка полягала в тому, щоб представити силу, спроможну чинити опір новій окупації. Як правило, нація, що перебуває у занепаді, розвиває ту чи іншу форму націоналізму. Однією із таких форм є політичний націоналізм, викристалізований в організації.

Такі умови існували лише на Західній Україні, тому саме тут було засновано націоналістичні організації. Передумови, які сприяли їхньому заснуванню, частково визначали і їхню ідеологію. Українські націоналістичні молодіжні організації були продуктом взаємодії двох полярних явищ – розвитком націоналістичної думки і політикою держав-окупантів стосовно українських проблем.

Крім Української військової організації, яка не є предметом розгляду у цій статті, у двадцятих роках існувала ціла низка молодіжних націоналістичних радикальних організацій: Група української державницької молоді, Організація вищих клас українських гімназій, Українські студентські громади, Союз української націоналістичної молоді, Група української національної молоді, та Союз організацій українських націоналістів.

Ключові слова: українські молодіжні націоналістичні радикальні організації, Польща, міжвоєнний період, Група української державницької молоді, Організація вищих клас українських гімназій, Українські студентські громади, Союз української націоналістичної молоді, Група української національної молоді, і Союз організацій українських націоналістів, Українська військова організація, Організація українських націоналістів, західноукраїнські землі.

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