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Loyalty between the State and the Nation : Ukraińsko-Włociański Klub Sejmowy (1922–1927)

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**LOYALTY BETWEEN THE STATE
AND THE NATION.
UKRAIŃSKO-WŁOŚCIAŃSKI KLUB SEJMOWY
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Representatives of the Ukrainian national minority (ca. 14–16% of the II Polish Republic's citizens; Żarnowski 1973: 374) had been allowed to take part directly in parliamentary proceedings only since 1922. The Constitution adopted on 17 March 1921 provided guarantees for equal political rights for all Polish citizens irrespective of their nationality (Ustawa z dnia 17 marca..., DzU 1921 nr 44, poz. 267; ustawa z dnia 28 lipca 1922 r. ..., DzU 1922 nr 66, poz. 590). Until Sejm Ustawodawczy [Legislative Assembly], Galicja Wschodnia was represented exclusively by the Poles who had been elected to the Austrian Council of the State in 1911 (Ajnenkiel 1989: 11).

Following Sejm Ustawodawczy, for the first time an electoral campaign covered all of the territory within the borderlines of the II Polish Republic (II RP). The majority of the Ukrainian groupings from Galicja Wschodnia – contrary to the efforts by the Polish parliament but in line with the recommendation by the Ukrainian émigré government (which was headed by Jewhen Petruszewycz) – boycotted both the campaign and the voting (5, 12 November 1922). Their stance resulted from the adopted tactics, being also influenced by a very low level of security. Members of Ukraińska Organizacja Wojskowa [Ukrainian Military Organization] terrorized the region's inhabitants by means of political killings (for example Wasyl Pichalak, Iwan Bachmaszczuk, Sydir Twardochlibow were killed) (Wysocki 2003: 46).

A successful parliamentary election campaign in Galicja Wschodnia was carried out by those who supported reaching an agreement with the Polish State. Agrarna Ukraińska Chłopska Partia [Agrarian Ukrainian Peasant Party] was created in 1922. The party was com-

monly known as „Chliborobi”. Their activities concentrated mainly in the Stanisławów and Lvov voivodeships. „Ridnyj Kraj” („Homeland”) published during that period in Lvov was that party’s press organ. In the remaining regions within the Polish state the national minorities agreed on a joint electoral slate (no. 16) labeled Blok Mniejszości Narodowych [National Minority Block].

Lacking competition on part of other relevant Ukrainian groupings as well as the relatively low electoral turn-out (ca. 40%) in Galicja Wschodnia made it possible for Chliborobi to introduce five deputies to Sejm I kadencji [Sejm of the I term] (1 in the Lvov voivodeship and 4 in the Stanisławów voivodeship). Mykoła Ilkiw (list no. 24, constituency no. 52), Iwan Krawczyszyn (list no. 26, constituency no. 49), Emilian Załućkyj (list no. 29, constituency no. 53), Semen Melnyk (list no. 29, constituency no. 53) and Iwan Dutczak (list no. 29, constituency no. 53) won the mandates. Having sworn the oath of allegiance, they formed a five-member Ukraińsko-Włościański Klub Sejmowy [Ukrainian-Peasant Sejm Club]. The club was chaired by M. Ilkiw, with E. Załućkyj acting as his deputy, while I. Dutczak was the club’s secretary (Rzepecki, Rzepecki 1923: 304, 315, 317; Bełcikowska 1925: 549–556).

The aim of the following paper is to present the main political features of the only Ukrainian parliamentary club in the Sejm of the first term which demonstrated a positive attitude towards the Polish state. Its members intended to act for political empowerment of the Ukrainians in Poland, for their national-territorial autonomy, introduction of their national language at school and at office as well as good relations between the State and the Greek Catholic Church. Chliborobi’s programme was presented by their chairman, M. Ilkiw, during the 10th session of the Sejm which was held on 23 January 1923 (Sprawozdanie stenograficzne z posiedzenia Sejmu, I kadencja – SSPS, nr 10, łam 56–68). Points included in it, which were later elaborated in more detail, constituted the foundations of their political thought.

Chliborobi maintained that the Ukrainian nation should surrender the 1917–1918 status quo as its point of departure which justified the Ukrainians’ denial of the Polish presence in *Kresy* (Eastern Borderlands). That period of struggle for the Ukrainian state was to remain a beautiful legend, while there was a need now to turn from idealism to realism, from national romanticism to creative positivism. That turn was forced upon the Ukrainians by the international situation. The idea of national self-determination as applying to the whole Ukraine was linked to German and Austro-Hungarian politics. However, this line of

thinking did not get much support from the „unprepared” Ukrainian nation that was „no stronghold for real slogans and claims of this ideology („nie był ostoją realnych haseł i argumentów tej ideologii”). The main reasons why the struggle for the Ukrainian independence had failed were associated with lacking internal strength of the nation, weakness of its elites and a big discrepancy between aims supported by the Ukrainians from Russia and those from Austria-Hungary (SSPS, nr 10, łam 58, 62).

Political empowerment of the Ukrainians in the II Polish Republic was to be achieved by self-defining of the Ukrainian nation in a more precise manner. Chliborobi proposed that the community that they represented should be called the Ukrainian nation and not Ruthenian or Little Russian one. This postulate found justification in the fact that the Polish authorities used exactly that term *vis-à-vis* their „brethren and compatriots” on the other side of the Zbrucz River. It was also justified by the administrative nomenclature reintroduced in Russia by Aleksandr Kierenski’s government in 1917. The term „Little Russian” was believed to have been imposed on the Ukrainians by Russia after the battle at Połtawa in 1709. It was believed not to reflect adequately the actual degree of their national awareness (SSPS, nr 10, łam 56–57). In this way they protested against the National Democrats’ conception of nation-building that often took the Ukrainians to constitute solely a „branch” and part of the Polish nation (Radomski 2000: 10–11).

The inclusion of the areas inhabited by the Ukrainians into the Polish state was seen as a positive solution that guaranteed the maintenance of their national spirit while raising their civilizational level. According to Chliborobi, there was no real international alternative for the Council of Entente’s Ambassadors’ decision to include Galicja Wschodnia in the Polish state (the decision was taken on 25 June 1919), especially that that area had been given up by Semen Petlura’s government (on 26 May 1919). They were convinced that „only a child could believe that Poland would allow to be robbed by an Entente’s diplomatic act or a paper undersigned by the League of Nations of what it had had under its sovereignty”. They did not believe that the Ukrainian cause could be turned into an international issue by any other state either. On the contrary, they envisaged an opportunity to unite the whole Ukrainian nation basing on Poland. Poland was thought to occupy a special position in this regard due to its demographic-national relations and its constitutional guarantees for minority protection. Other states (e.g. USRR and Romania) were accused of pursuing

anti-Ukrainian policies in the field of relations between their nationalities (SSPS, nr 10, łam 56–58, 63; SSPS, nr 42, łam 76–77).

The discussed Ukrainian parliamentary club took a positive stance towards the ensuing Polish cabinets (headed by, respectively, Władysław Sikorski, Wincenty Witos, Władysław Grabski, Aleksander Skrzyński and Kazimierz Bartel). The Ukrainian deputies' support was not unconditional, however, since they expected that the Polish authorities would meet their main demands in return. The style of political thinking typical of the club's members could be depicted as statist, responsible and within the bounds of law.

Chliborobi believed that they joined the „Sejm not carrying a knife or a revolver and not in order to kill [...], but rather to produce the most benefits for our devastated nation”, „to heal the injuries afflicted by the bad leaders who had brought about a complete catastrophe”. The parliament was to be a site for intense and constructive work carried out in the spirit of dialogue and understanding and not criticism or boycotting.

One of Chliborobi's major postulates involved promotion of the principle of national-territorial autonomy. The idea of autonomy was to replace in the Ukrainian mind the ideas of independence, sovereignty and unification within one state. The scope for autonomy they demanded had already been outlined in a Law adopted on 26 September 1922 (Ustawa z dnia 26 września 1922 r. ..., DzU 1922 nr 90, poz. 829; SSPS, nr 334, łam 69). The introduction of autonomy in three voivode-ships (Lvov, Stanisławów and Tarnopol) was to serve as evidence that the Polish state was prepared to make concessions to the benefit of the Ukrainians. They did not exclude the possibility that that kind of autonomy could be extended by the Polish state to its other regions.

This kind of autonomy was to make it possible to rectify the rules prevalent so far in the field of administration, territorial self-government as well as culture and education. Lacking regulations to execute that Law and the maintenance of the existing status quo was held to mean „extermination and destruction of historical-legal achievements of the Ukrainian nation by the Polish *Raison d'Etat*” (SSPS, nr 224, łam 59; SSPS, nr 256, łam 31). During debates over other bills (e.g. concerning land distribution and settlement) they attempted to introduce amendments that involved regulations enabling the execution of the Law of 26 September 1922 (SSPS, nr 222, łam 37–38).

The deputies of the Ukrainian club drew attention to legal-international aspects of that Law, which was a subject discussed by the Council of Entente's Ambassadors (on 15 March 1923), constituting an

important argument for the abolition of the status of a mandatory that Poland had been granted in Galicja Wschodnia. The Polish authorities were warned not to turn this issue into an international one either within the state's borders or outside Poland for this could result in actions that might have undermined Poland's territorial integrity and sovereignty (SSPS, nr 229, łam 57–58).

The Ukrainian deputies believed that schooling in their national language as the language of instruction was vital from the point of view of their nation's existence and preservation of its sense of unity. They stressed distinctiveness of the Ukrainian language and its formal language status dating from its recognition as such by the Academy of Sciences in Sankt Petersburg in 1905. The language community had enabled the intergenerational transfer of the unique for the Ukrainians as an ethnic group way of perceiving their surrounding reality. Also, their language communion constituted one of the foundations on which their shared sense of cultural distinction had formed. That is why the establishing of an Ukrainian university in Lvov was found among the major demands by the Ukrainian parliamentary club. Until it was established, they urged the Polish government to implement the principle of equal treatment of Ukrainian and Polish students. They assumed that the Ukrainian university would become an element of the reformed system of education (comprehensive and professional) for the Ukrainians. The system of education was to be restructured basing on the Ukrainian cadres. Also, the deputies urged for the return of teachers that had left Galicja during the period of war struggles taking place there (Tomaszewski 1990: 115–124; SSPS, nr 10, łam 57, 60; SSPS, nr 53, łam 41–42; SSPS, nr 129, łam 42). Chliborobi were aware that the education issues had been – due to budget constraints – pushed to the very bottom of the list of postulates during the period when Poland was being rebuilt from war destruction, which is why they evaluated in positive terms the adoption of a Law that regulated the organization of minority schooling as of 31 July 1924 (Projekt ustawy..., Druk nr 1337; Ustawa z dnia 31 lipca 1924 r.: DzU 1924 nr 79, poz. 766), seeing in it an introduction to later advantageous solutions to the problem. In reality that Law, when combined with the Polish educational authorities' policy, led first to restrictions on and later on to gradual dismantling of the Ukrainian schooling system (Torzecki 1989: 12; Mauersberg 1968: 59–103).

In the eyes of Chliborobi, the membership in the Orthodox religious community was one of the key spheres of life and an extremely

important element of their identity and self-identification. Their party's attitude towards the Church and their denomination in general became particularly visible during discussions focused on the ratification of the Concordat that took place on 10 February 1925 (Konkordat..., DzU 1925 nr 72, poz. 201). M. Ilkiw, on behalf of their club, emphasized the importance of the Concordat, at the same time noticing threats that it might spell from the vantage point of the Unites. They voted for the Concordat as the only deputy club representing the Ukrainian minority, voicing, however, a list of reservations concerning the contents of this agreement. Inter alia, their Club proposed that the name of their denomination should be changed from „Greek-Ruthenian” – as was stated in the Concordat – to „Ukrainian”. Regarding this issue, they justified their request by stressing the nation's name, its tradition and the already negotiated contents that had been included both in the 1891 ecumenical council's documentation and in the documents adopted by the Roman Catholic Church authorities. They criticized the administrative organization of the Church in Poland, which resulted in granting the Greek Catholics only one archbishopric and 2 bishoprics. This decision was seen as an act of discrimination when compared to the Latin and Armenian rites. Also, they thought it to be unjust that within an area inhabited by the Greek Catholics five Latin rite dioceses should have been established and only three of the Unite Church.

Among the main proposals concerning the Church's internal organization a proposal to introduce an obligatory celibacy and to support the Greek Catholic military ordinariate were included. The deputies saw the clergy families as a burden (personal and economic) that hindered their effective religious service, especially in extreme conditions (such as epidemics, wars etc.). The Concordat was believed to laid down good regulations for unmarried clergy but was thought to be undermining existential security of married priests and their families. The deputies urged for introducing regulations that could rectify the Greek Catholics' situation in the army by enabling them to practice their religious customs. One of the guarantees was to allow the Orthodox clergy to make use of the Orthodox church in Warsaw (which used to belong to the order of the Basilian monks).

One opinion concerning relations between the religious denominations as expressed by M. Ilkiw was extremely interesting. He strongly opposed restricting the Unite Church's „expansion” to the area of Wołyń (Volhynia), Podlasie, Polesie and the Chełm county. He believed that the unification of the Greek Catholic and the Orthodox Church would be

a natural but much prolonged process. He was very critical of the Orthodox Church's condition as far as its moral, organizational and material decline. He quoted an example of autocephaly (as of 30 January 1922) of the Orthodox Church in Poland that had been introduced in a manner that broke the principles of the Eastern canonical law. He voiced a necessity to regulate the relations between the Church and the Polish state on a permanent basis (SSPS, nr 188, łam 18–38; *Tymczasowe...* 1922, nr 38, poz. 20). Altogether, Chliborobi's proposals and conclusions were apt, which testified to the deputies' good knowledge of the attitudes prevailing among the followers and the clergy.

Chliborobi believed that an idea of organic work was of fundamental value. This belief was related to their conviction that the Ukrainian community in Poland was a kind of an organism that could function effectively only on the condition that its particular parts were „healthy and strong”. They understood that it was necessary to work for the benefit of the poorest and most disadvantageous strata of their nation in order to help them integrate with the structures of the state and society – their labor would in turn multiply the wealth of the whole nation and of the state.

This side of their activities is evidenced by their parliamentary activities (e.g. 140 interventions) occasioned by discussions concerning the most important laws that could affect the socio-economic position of the Ukrainian population. The frequent parliamentary interventions by M. Ilkiw made other deputies call him „a speaker of all trades [*mówca od wszystkiego*]” (SSPS, nr 140, łam 53; *Wnioski poselskie...*). His interventions could be exemplified, inter alia, by his proposals voiced during debates focusing on the Law on the reparation of the II Polish Republic's Treasury [*Ustawa o naprawie Skarbu Rzeczypospolitej* [9 March 1923]], on the land tax (o podatku gruntowym [23 May 1923]), on land consolidation (o scalaniu gruntów [14 June 1923]), on the forest tax [o daninie lasowej [21 June 1923]], on state-granted academic grants (o państwowych stypendiach akademickich [28 June 1923]), on social insurance against unemployment (o zabezpieczeniu na wypadek bezrobocia [6 March 1924]), on rebuilding houses that had been destroyed as a result of war (o odbudowie budynków zniszczonych przez wojnę [18 March 1924]), on the Concordat with the Holy See (o konkordacie ze Stolicą Apostolską [25 March 1925]), on re-introduction of the existing law on benefits for army reserve's families (o przywróceniu mocy obowiązującej ustawy o zasiłkach dla rodzin rezerwistów [27 May 1925]), on land distribution and settlement (o par-

celacji i osadnictwie [26 czerwca 1925]), on the state police (o policji państwowej [16 July 1925]), on means to alleviate the financial crisis (o środkach złagodzenia przesilenia finansowego [11 November 1925]) or those proposed during debates concerning most of the preliminary budgets (SSPS, nr 46, łam 24–26; SSPS, nr 49, łam 32–33; SSPS, nr 53, łam 41–42; SSPS, nr 106, łam 41–42; SSPS, nr 111, łam 43–44; SSPS, nr 211, łam 8–9; SSPS, nr 222, łam 36–39; SSPS, nr 236, łam 38; SSPS, nr 252, łam 22–32).

Faced with non-implementation of their key demands, Chliborobi became gradually disappointed with the Polish state and its authorities. During one of the last Sejm of the first term's sessions, that took place on 6 July 1927, during a general discussion, M. Ilkiw summed up the Polish state's policy regarding its national minorities using the following words: „the whole legal-statist apparatus serves to strengthen the inclination to exterminate and implement laws aimed at a total and progressive destruction of all of the Ukrainian nations' achievements that this nation had arrived at amid struggles against the rule of the partitioning powers – Austria and Russia” (SSPS, nr 334, łam 68). The disappointment with the results of their parliamentary activities resulted in their withdrawal from political life. During the ensuing elections representatives of Chliborobi did not win any mandate.

They were never able to get any guarantees from the Polish authorities that their demands would be met. They did not even get any moral support. They tried to re-organize their grouping by establishing Ukraiński Związek Ludowy [Ukrainian People's Union] (30 January 1926). However, following the May *coup d'état* (12–14 May 1926), the center responsible for the Polish national policies was moved from parliamentary sessions to internal arrangements within Piłsudski's camp (Chojnowski 1979: 26 and ff).

Chliborobi could accurately see utopianism inherent in the conception to unite the Ukrainian groupings in order to create a single Ukrainian party due to their enormously diversified conceptions and tactics (SSPS, nr 42, łam 76–77). The members of the Ukrainian political elite were portrayed by them as an alienated and narrow circle that was separated from the broad masses of population. The elite's main activity involved sustained agitation, breeding political unrest and divisions within the nation. Chliborobi had a particularly negative opinion about the radical-nationalist political current. However, when the law on amnesty was being discussed (28 June 1923), they stressed that it should be as encompassing as possible (SSPS, nr 53, łam 8).

Chliborobi negatively evaluated the activities and attitudes of the other Ukrainian parties and groupings. They often spoke condescendingly about them (calling them e.g. „ariere-guarde from Volhynia”) (SSPS, nr 42, łam 78). The representatives of the other Ukrainian parties paid them back with similar attitudes and behavior. They not only questioned the usefulness of their party’s existence but also the results of their current activities (Papierzyńska 1979: 53–61). Because of their attitudes, this club’s members were isolated and restricted in the parliamentary and national domain. This could be exemplified by the case of M. Ilkiw, who was conflicted with the Church authorities and got even suspended in his clerical duties (Kunert 2000: 258).

In their current activities Chliborobi referred to a variety of elements that had been borrowed from diverse ideologies. Their political thought was comprehensive in nature. Ever since their party was founded, they always took a definite stance regarding all relevant political and socio-economic issues. As far as their cultural and religious values, one might point to some features derived from conservatism and social teaching of the Church.

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