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STUDIE / ARTICLE

Jews in Limbo: Decay of the State Authority in Galicia in 1918 as a Prelude to Post-War Anti-Jewish Violence¹

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Jews in Limbo: Decay of the State Authority in Galicia in 1918 as a Prelude to Post-War Anti-Jewish Violence

The economic situation in Galicia in the last year of the war was desolate. Protests, strikes, and looting marked the beginning of 1918. Then a wave of violence came in response to the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Jews were considered a foreign element loyal to the hated central authorities and were often the targets of violence. After the national passions caused by the loss of the Chełm region due to the Brest-Litovsk peace cooled down, the violence caused primarily by food shortages emerged. Jews perceived as dishonest merchants were often the victims of an angry mob. In the last months before the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, war exhaustion was steadily

1 The article was supported by the grant project SGS_2023_007 called “Support for scientific and presentation activities of the students of the doctoral study programme in History and the master’s study programme in Cultural history at the University of Pardubice, the Czech Republic”. I want to thank Konrad Zieliński for his advice and invaluable critique. Also, I would like to thank Pieter M. Judson, Marcos Silber, and Zbyněk Vydra for fruitful discussions on the issue.

becoming more noticeable. The hardships caused by the lack of food as well as national and social stirrings worsened the overall situation.

Keywords: Anti-Jewish Violence; Galicia; Austria-Hungary; Poland; Food Riot; National Upheaval

Introduction

The article explores the economic situation and violence against Jews in Galicia in 1918, prior to the fall of the monarchy. In order to gain insight into these events, archival materials from the Austrian State Archives in Vienna and the National Archives in Kraków are made of use. Several studies have been written on violence against Jews in Poland during and after World War I. The violence against Jews in Galicia, particularly in the early months after the Second Polish Republic was proclaimed, is of great interest to both Polish and foreign historians. The violence against Jews in the last year of the Austro-Hungarian Empire is a less commonly discussed topic. However, what is notably missing from the discussion is the proper emphasis on the broader detailed context of the gradual disintegration of the Austrian administration in Galicia, which was crucial for creating the conditions that led to anti-Jewish violence. The brutal violence against Jews in November 1918 was not an isolated event but occurred against the backdrop of social disintegration caused by shortages of food, as well as the escalation of national tensions.²

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- 2 Grzegorz GAUDEN, *Lwów-kres iluzji: opowieść o pogromie listopadowym 1918* [Lviv-the End of Illusion: the Story of the November Pogrom of 1918] (Kraków 2019); William W. HAGEN, *Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1914–1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 123–172; William W. HAGEN, “The Moral Economy of Ethnic Violence: The Pogrom in Lwów, November 1918,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 31 (2005), no. 2, pp. 203–226; William HAGEN, “The Moral Economy of Popular Violence: The Pogrom in Lwów, November 1918,” in *Anti-Semitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland*, ed. Robert Blobaum (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 124–157; Christoph MICK, *Lemberg, Lwów, L'viv, 1914–1947: Violence and Ethnicity in a Contested City* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2016), pp. 85–136; Alexander Victor PRUSIN, *Nationalizing a Borderland. War, Ethnicity, and Anti-Jewish Violence in East Galicia, 1914–1920* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005); Eva REDER, *Antijüdische Pogrome in Polen im 20. Jahrhundert, Gewaltausbrüche im Schatten der Staatsbildung 1918–1920 und 1945–1946* (Marburg: Verlag Herder-Institut, 2017); Jan RYBAK, *Everyday Zionism in East-Central Europe: Nation-building in War and Revolution, 1914–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 151–198; Frank M. SCHUSTER, *Zwischen allen Fronte. Osteuropäische Juden während des Ersten Weltkriegs (1914–1919)* (Köln: Böhlau, 2004); Konrad ZIELIŃSKI, “Z fali zająć antysemickich i pogromów w Galicji Zachodniej: Mielec, listopad 1918 r [From the wave of anti-Semitic incidents and pogroms in Western Galicia: Mielec,

Administrative, demographic, and ethnic relations background of Galicia

The predominant populations in Galicia, situated within the Cisleithanian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, consisted primarily of peasants. In the region of West Galicia, demarcated by the Vistula River to the west and north, the San River to the east, and the Carpathian Mountains to the south, the prevailing religious affiliation was Roman Catholicism, and the dominant language was Polish. On the other hand, in East Galicia, bounded by the San River to the west, the Carpathian Mountains to the south, Bukovina to the southeast, and the Zbruch River to the east, the majority of the population adhered to Greek Catholicism and spoke Ukrainian.³ Jews were the third-largest group after Poles and Ukrainians. In 1910, there were about 871,000 Jews in Galicia, making up 10.9 % of the population. Of these, approximately 213,000 lived in western Galicia, primarily in the eastern and southern districts of what later became Kraków Voivodeship. Eastern Galicia had a larger Jewish population that was more evenly distributed and spread across villages. In the towns of western Galicia, Jews were in a weaker position compared to Poles, unlike eastern Galicia, where they typically made up about a third of the population alongside Poles and Ukrainians. In some towns, Jews were the majority, such as Brody with 67.5 % Jewish population or Buchacz with 54.4 %. Although the Jews in both parts of Galicia had distinct features, they were primarily of the Eastern European type. The majority adhered to Orthodox Judaism, and the predominant occupations were in trade, intermediation, small-scale services, and crafts. Only a very small number were involved in agriculture, with over two-thirds of Galician Jews working in trade, small industries, and crafts. However, in eastern Galicia, there was a small yet noticeable community of Jewish landowners.⁴

November 1918],” in eds. Kamil KIJEK – Artur MARKOWSKI – Konrad ZIELIŃSKI, *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX I XX WIEKU [Pogroms against Jews in Poland in the 19th and 20th centuries]*, vol. 2, Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 2019, pp. 218–240.

3 Tim BUCHEN, *Antisemitism in Galicia: Agitation, Politics, and Violence against Jews in the Late Habsburg Monarchy* (New York: Berghahn, 2020), p. 9.

4 Konrad ZIELIŃSKI, “Galicyjscy Żydzi w latach Wielkiej Wojny 1914–1918 [Galician Jews in the years of the Great War 1914–1918],” *Studia Żydowskie. Almanach* 1 (2011), no. 1, pp. 17–42, pp. 18–20.

A Rough Beginning of the New Year

The economic situation in Poland and Galicia during the last year of the war was exceedingly bleak. Demographic changes, hunger, inflation, and military requisitions lead thousands of people to move into cities. Additionally, Hungary's refusal to sell food to Austria and Germany meant that the burden of supply lay solely on war-impooverished Galicia.⁵ The collapse of the municipal supply system was already evident in the first half of 1917. In mid-January 1918, the Habsburg monarchy was rocked by demonstrations, hunger strikes for peace, mutinies in the army, and workers' protests in Galicia and Silesia.⁶ Kraków, the administrative centre of Western Galicia, was the site of riots on 15 January 1918 due to a shortage of bread. A mob of several thousand people looted shops and smashed shop windows, with order being restored only in the evening. The following day, thousands of women gathered in front of the Mickiewicz Monument. After one woman "spoke excitedly about the growing distress," the crowd moved on to the Bishop's Palace on Franciszkańska Street, where they demanded to be admitted. The Bishop of Kraków, later Archbishop Adam Stefan Sapieha (1867–1951),⁷ received the women's deputation and promised intervention, suggesting that the women return later so that he could inform them of the results of his actions. The crowd subsequently proceeded to the Town Hall in Grodzka Street, where it was dispersed by the police. However, dispersed groups of hunger strikers also formed in other parts of the city and suburbs. Women, as well as boys and girls in smaller and larger groups, broke windows of shops, restaurants, and cafés, and also broke into shops and looted.⁸

The next day, more than 2,000 women gathered in front of the Bishop's Palace. Sapieha explained to the protesters that his intervention had not fallen on deaf

5 A. V. PRUSIN, *Nationalizing a Borderland*, p. 71.

6 Jerzy PAJAŁK, *Zarys dziejów społecznych ziem polskich 1914–1918 – Galicja* [Outline of the social history of the Polish lands 1914–1918 – Galicia], in red. Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, *Studia nad historią społeczną ziem polskich 1914–1918* [Studies in the social history of the Polish lands, 1914–1918] (Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN 2018), pp. 102–103; See also Tomasz KARGOL, *Odbudowa Galicji ze zniszczeń wojennych w latach 1914–1918* [Reconstruction of Galicia from War Destruction in the Years 1914–1918] (Kraków: Historia Iagellonica, 2012), pp. 21–47.

7 Adam Stefan Sapieha was a Polish priest, from 1925 Archbishop of Kraków and from 1946 Cardinal.

8 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖSTA), Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (AVA), Ministerium des Innern (Mdl), Präsidiale (PR), Galizien (GA), Signatur (Sign.) 22, Faszikel (Fsz.) 2118, protocol 1349.

ears, and two wagons of flour were sent to Kraków. He also promised to help alleviate the supply shortage in the future using his influence. The deputation promised to try to calm the situation, but they stressed that they could not be responsible for the city's peace if the shortage continued. Some women left, but others moved to the municipal building, where several thousand people gathered to ask councillors about the supply situation. Councillor Daszyński was the first to speak to the crowd, followed by Dr. Marek, who added fuel to the fire with the following speech: "The Germans are primarily to blame for the misery because they recklessly deprived Galicia of food, but in the second place the imperial and royal governor's office is to blame, which seemed powerless against the overconfidence of the landowners [Agrarier] and chain merchants [Kettenhändler]." ⁹ Certainly, stirring up anti-German sentiments did not contribute to the future peace in the city. As we will see in detail below, during this time, the hatred towards Germans increased in Galicia. However, it was not just Germans that Dr. Marek verbally attacked. Moreover, his attacks on chain merchants, who were commonly identified as Jews, served to reinforce negative stereotypes about Jewish people. ¹⁰ Marek ended his speech by urging the people present to avoid violence. Nevertheless, the crowd headed to Kazimierz, the main square and other streets in the Jewish quarter, where they broke windowpanes. The police had to intervene to disperse the rioters, but no looting had yet occurred. ¹¹

On January 17, a group of approximately 3,000 dissatisfied people gathered in front of the Governor's office on Czysta Street for another hunger demonstration. They demanded an improvement in the supply situation, as was typical for these protests, and also wanted to be updated on the meetings taking place between the members of the central Imperial Council (Reichsrat) and the City Council in the Governor's Office. Before the meeting started, a group of workers from local factories, led by the deputy of the Austrian Parliament Zieleniewski, and a delegation of women, went to speak with the governor about the poor living and working conditions.

Karl von Huyn (1857–1938), ¹² who was the governor at that time, promised the people that the town would be supplied with flour and bread for a few days as soon as possible. However, some in the crowd criticized this promise, seeing it as

9 Ibidem, protocol 1719.

10 W. W. HAGEN, *Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland*, p. 92.

11 ÖSTA, AVA, MdI, PR, GA, Sign. 22, Fsz. 2118, protocol 1719.

12 Karl von Huyn was the last governor of Galicia from July 1917 to November 1918.

a way to deceive the people. They also demanded an end to the war. The crowd threw stones and coal at the governor's office, resulting in a broken window. After the police intervened, only a few people remained. Vice President Rolle assured them that the military authorities would be asked to provide supplies sufficient for two weeks and that steps would be taken to import food from the Olkusz and Miechów districts to Kraków. Additionally, it was promised that the gendarmerie would no longer confiscate food brought to Kraków from the surrounding villages. The speech also mentioned that measures would be taken to prevent food transport from Galicia to Germany and the western provinces. In the afternoon, several thousand women and children gathered again in front of the City Hall and the surrounding area, but they were dispersed. The daily report noted that the mood of the population remained agitated, and that there were signs of the influence of Bolshevik ideas in the lower strata of society. Finally, the report stated that the desire to end the war as soon as possible was gaining strength.¹³ As Borislav Chernev noticed, the population of the Habsburg Empire realized there could not be enough food without peace.¹⁴ In order to contextualize these riots, it is necessary to move from the local dynamics to the imperial perspective. On January 14, the Austrian government announced the already low flour rations to be reduced to only half. As a result, the workers in Wiener Neustadt took to the streets, demanded not merely food supplies but also immediate peace and political and social liberty, and rejected both war and the ruling authorities.¹⁵ This triggered a domino-like effect, leading to a wider strike movement of over 700,000 workers in a few days. From Ostrava to Trieste, and Salzburg to Lviv, protesters poured into the streets.¹⁶

In Galician town of Tarnów, windows were smashed and flour was stolen during protests on January 17 and 18. The police had to intervene, but no major incidents occurred and peace was restored in the evening. Discontent towards the Prussians and their annexationist aspirations was a common theme among the demonstrators. In Jasło, windows were broken on January 22 and 23, and Jewish homes in Bochnia were targeted on January 24. Organized strikes also occurred,

13 ÖSTA, AVA, MdI, PR, GA, Sign. 22, Fsz. 2118, protocol 1719.

14 Borislav CHERNEV, *Twilight of Empire: The Brest-Litovsk Conference and the Remaking of East-Central Europe, 1917–1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), p. 83. As Borislav Chernev argues, the strike movement anticipated the revolutions of 1918, which aimed for more democracy and popular participation. For the broader context of the protests associated with the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, see the 3. chapter of aforementioned Chernev's book.

15 Ibidem, p. 86.

16 Ibidem, p. 118.

such as the railway workers' strike in Lviv that started on January 17 and lasted for 11 days. Minor disruptions in the local industry occurred in Biała on January 22, in Przemyśl on January 23, and railway workers in Lviv went on strike again on February 2 for about 48 hours.¹⁷

On February 1, the National Democratic youth handed out leaflets with the message "The resolution of May 26 is in danger, come to the Mickiewicz Monument on Saturday 2 February at 7 p.m.," one day before the National Workers' Congress meeting in the Lviv Town Hall. The next day, several thousand young people gathered, and the local security authorities had a hard time controlling the crowd. The youths refused to disperse and resisted military and police guards by shouting "shame, long live the revolution, long live the republic, down with the police" as they made their way to the Town Hall. The police pushed the demonstrators away, but the protesters behaved aggressively and wounded several police officers. The investigation suggested that even a shooting that should have first come from the crowd occurred. Staff Sergeant Józków Stanislaus responded by firing one shot into the air and another without aiming into the perimeter. The disturbance resulted in two dead protesters who likely died as a result of shots fired from the crowd. A rumour started that German soldiers were behind the first shot. The protesters' hatred towards the Germans was shown by an incident where they started shouting, breaking windows, and burning a small German flag outside the German Field Post Directorate on Stefan Batory Street.¹⁸ According to Frank M. Schuster, young men identified themselves as Poles and strongly supported the emergence of the Polish state. Having grown up during the war, they believed that violence was a justified way to achieve their goals. Their hatred towards Germans was driven by their nationalism, which was also connected to anti-Semitism. As Poland neared independence, it was mainly these young men and demobilised soldiers who attacked Jews.¹⁹ In 1918, the military intelligence services observed an increase in cases where Polish schoolchildren were being incited. Moreover, pupils in Galicia repeatedly released detained deserters and assaulted Jews.²⁰

17 ÖSTA, AVA, MdI, PR, GA, Sign. 22, Fsz. 2118, Galizien; Demonstrationen und Arbeitsausstände im Monate Jänner 1918, protocol 1775.

18 Ibidem, Anfrage der R. R. Abg. Dr. Glabinski, Dr. Graf Skarbek und Gen. wegen der Vorfälle in Lemberg am 2. Februar 1918, protocol 3294.

19 F. M. SCHUSTER, *Zwischen allen Fronte*, p. 426; See also Eva Reder, "Im Schatten des polnischen Staates – Pogrome 1918–1920 und 1945/46 – Auslöser, Bezugspunkte, Verlauf," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropaforschung* 60/4 (2011), pp. 571–606, here p. 593.

20 Ch. MICK, *Lemberg, Lwów, Lviv*, p.108.

To summarise, protests and strikes erupted in Galicia in early 1918 as part of the broader strike movement, driven by discontent with harsh living conditions. Anti-German sentiment was high, with clashes between demonstrators and authorities. The discontent among the population was further fuelled by the Polish press, which reported extensively on the dire living conditions and the spread of diseases such as typhus and dysentery. The German authorities were accused of reckless requisitioning, while the Austrian authorities were seen as being influenced by the Germans. For instance, *Gazeta Podhalańska* reported that every German soldier who wished to go on leave had to prove he had 25 kg of food for his family, and that each soldier had to send 2 kg of food per week to his relatives in Germany. Meanwhile, the *Agence Polonaise* revealed on November 23, 1917, that large quantities of foodstuffs were being sent to Germany as “war material”. *Kurjer Lwowski* published an article claiming that the German army was sending regiments of recruits to Galicia solely to feed them at the expense of the local population. According to the article, these regiments were depriving several districts of all food.²¹

National unrest as a consequence of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty

Ota Konrád and Rudolf Kučera have demonstrated, using the Bohemian lands, Austria, and Tyrol as examples, that the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was largely due to the delegitimisation of the old order in the streets and squares, rather than the programs of politicians of individual nations. The scarcity of basic necessities, especially food, played a crucial role in the collapse.²² However, the national issue contributed significantly to the downfall. In Galicia, the national issue arose very acutely in the aftermath of the Brest-Litovsk peace. In February 1918, the already difficult economic conditions in Galicia were exacerbated by the uncertainty surrounding the future of the Polish residents of the province. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk resulted in Podlasie, Volhynia, and the Chełm region becoming part of the Ukrainian People’s Republic.²³ Ukraine under threat of occupation by Bolshevik

21 Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie (ANK), C.K. Dyrekcja Policji w Krakowie (DPKr), sygnatura (sygn.) 29/247/0/-/117, Akta prezydialne (AP): 1918, numer (nr) 1–999, pp. 1606–1607.

22 Ota KONRÁD and Rudolf KUČERA, *Cesty z apokalypsy: Fyzické násilí v pádu a obnově střední Evropy 1914–1922* (Prague 2018), p. 176. See also the English translation *Paths out of the Apocalypse. Physical Violence in the Fall and Renewal of Central Europe, 1914–1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

23 Ch. MICK, *Lemberg, Lwów, Lviv*, p. 88.

Russia in return for promised military assistance guaranteed to supply Germany with 1 million tons of grain annually. A robust Polish reaction followed. The provisional government of the Kingdom of Poland, which was a state under the influence of the Central Powers, resigned. Polish legionaries, led by Józef Haller, switched their allegiance to the Entente powers.²⁴ In February of 1918, about 1,600 Polish legionaries stationed in Rarańcza defected to the enemy over the course of two days. As a result, around 5,500 remaining legionaries were either interned or expelled from the Austrian army. In addition, the treaty contained a secret clause providing for the establishment of a Ukrainian Crown Land ruled by Austria, which would result in the future cession of East Galicia to Ukraine. This clause quickly became public knowledge and further outraged the Poles. In response, February 18 was declared a day of national mourning.²⁵

Mass protests broke out in Galicia, spontaneous and then organised by independence parties. Some of the protests turned violent against the Jews.²⁶ One notable example was the peaceful demonstration that took place on February 18 in the primarily Polish city of Lviv, where roughly 20,000 people from all social strata took part in a peaceful demonstration.²⁷ The center of Western Galicia was not spared from the demonstrations either. In Kraków, a gathering of approximately 40,000 people took place, with speakers expressing a common theme: Austria and particularly German diplomacy had acted deceitfully towards the Poles. One of the speakers, Novak, the president of the Galician association of primary school teachers, announced that the primary school teachers had decided to “stop teaching German in regular classes as early as this week.” Railway workers also promised to “prevent any food from being exported from Galicia.”²⁸

However, the peaceful demonstration was preceded by violent riots. The report of Police Commissioner Steinhäusl, who visited Galicia to organise counter-intelligence activities on the occasion of the treaties with Ukraine and Russia, states that on February 11 and 12, demonstrations of an “anti-dynastic and anti-state cha-

24 W. W. HAGEN, *Anti-Jewish Violence*, pp. 92-93. These were troops that had hitherto been on the Austrian side. Units under Józef Piłsudski had already refused to fight for Austria in 1917 (see Idem, *Anti-Jewish Violence*, p. 93).

25 Ch. MICK, *Lemberg, Lwów, Lviv*, pp. 88-89.

26 W. W. HAGEN, *Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland*, pp. 92-93.

27 ÖSTA, AVA, MdI, PR, GA, Sign. 22, Fsz. 2118, Protestkundgebungen gegen die Einbeziehung des Cholmer Gebietes in die Ukraine, protocol 4009.

28 Ibidem, Kundgebungen gegen die Einbeziehung des Cholmer Gebietes in die Ukraina, protocol 4146.

racter” took place in Kraków. State emblems, eagles and coats of arms on state buildings, newsagents and shops were torn down. Eagles on post boxes were painted over with black paint. “On Ringplatz [Rynek Główny], a picture was put up depicting Christ on the cross, on the sides of which were drawn His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty Emperor Charles and His Majesty the German Emperor.” The painting read, “Jesus Christ, you were never in the company of such two scoundrels on the cross!” Locals may also have seen a painting depicting the German Emperor playing the flute and Kaiser Karl dancing to the tune of Wilhelm’s “whistle”. Both emperors and “Her Majesty the Empress” were “publicly ridiculed, their eyes were gouged out, and the defaced paintings were burned.” Shop windows were smashed during the demonstrations, regardless of the nationality or religion of the owners. Similar incidents occurred in Rzeszów and Jarosław, located in Galicia, and in Lublin, located in the Kingdom of Poland. In Lviv, a Polish enclave located in the predominantly Ukrainian Eastern Galicia, a burning of paintings of the Austrian and German emperors took place. Leaflets depicting a Semitic caricatured Polish eagle were distributed, ridiculing the Austro-Polish solution to the so-called Polish question.

However, in Eastern Galicia, the strike was more peaceful due to fears of counteraction by the majority population of Ukrainian nationality. The calmer course of the demonstrations in the eastern part of the Crown Lands is reflected in the report of the court inspector mentioning the situation in Vynnyky near Lviv, the provincial court councillor Agenor Ritter von Frenzl of 2 March: “As the court president, the provincial court councillor Promiński, who has lived in Winniki [Vynnyky] for several years, knows the population well and seems to enjoy great respect in the town, assures me, the fears of a revolutionary movement are unfounded.” Not only during the organised protest rally, which was attended by 7,000 people but also before it, “the population behaved with complete calm and dignity.” He states that no disturbances or hostile speeches against the state or the Emperor were observed anywhere in the area of the local district court.

On February 18, Polish civil servants, railway officials, students, women, and children participated in a strike to mourn the annexation of the Chełm region to Ukraine. Copies of a painting depicting Christ and the two emperors were distributed in Przemyśl. In Rozwadów, the Emperor’s monument was demolished and replaced with a Polish eagle. The Bishop of Przemyśl, Józef Sebastian Pelczar (1842–1924),²⁹ stated in his sermon that Poles had lost trust in the government

29 Józef Sebastian Pelczar was a Polish Roman Catholic clergyman and bishop of the diocese of Przemyśl.

and could only trust in God and their people. Polish railway workers removed the badge of the imperial crown from their hats, and people vowed in churches not to speak German anymore.

In the midst of the turmoil, rumours were spreading about barricades being set up in Prague and the German National Theatre being burnt down. There were also reports of public ridicule of Kaiser Wilhelm in Vienna and accusations that the Austrian government had sold Warsaw to Ukraine for flour. The resistance was largely directed towards everything German, particularly imperial Germans [*Reichsdeutschen*] or “Prussians”. In Lviv, Polish demonstrators tore down and destroyed German flags, while in Kraków, the German passport office was demolished. The negative sentiment towards Germans also extended to the Jewish community, which was viewed as a “foreign body suspected of loyalty to the central authorities”.

According to a report dated March 3 by Judicial Inspector Dr. Windakiewicz, widespread anger over the Chełm annexation was evident. This anger was directed primarily at the imperial Germans, who were suspected of having a significant influence on the decision to annex the region. They were also accused of disregarding the needs of the local Polish population, whose food requisitions and exports from Galicia left them vulnerable to famine. Additionally, it is worth noting that similar acts of unrest occurred in the surrounding small district towns, such as Tuchów, where mobs removed imperial eagles from official buildings before 18 February. In some instances, such as in Kraków or Limanowa, authorities took preemptive measures to remove imperial eagles from official buildings as a precautionary measure to prevent them from being vandalized or destroyed by the mob.

During the demonstration in Mielec, several individuals, including the district judge Głogoczowski, addressed the assembled crowd in front of the district council building and at the graves of the fallen participants of the Polish uprising of 1863. Notably, the speeches given “did not contradict the pro-Austrian sentiment that had been ingrained in Polish society for many years.” However, only two days later, a Jewish-owned shop was vandalized, and the proprietor was assaulted. According to reports, the shop owner had been accused of charging exorbitant prices for thread and stockings. These incidents reflect the rise in anti-Jewish sentiment that was prevalent in the region at this time, fuelled in part by economic anxieties and political unrest.

On 17 February in Rzeszów, the imperial eagles were torn down from public buildings and burned, while imperial paintings and pictures of army commanders were blackened. Additionally, stones were thrown at the windows of houses in-

habited by Jews. One of the reports suggests that violent acts against Jews were taking place at every opportunity. In Dębica, a speech against Germany was delivered by a man named Szczerbinski, which was followed by the customary oath in which attendees pledged not to feel any satisfaction until a united Poland was established. The president of the court took down the eagle to prevent any potential riot. On 4 March, Dbałowski, the provincial councillor of the Ministry of Justice for Western Galicia, reported witnessing firsthand how the imperial eagle in secondary school had been replaced with a Polish one and how the eagle hanging on the financial guard building had been covered with black ink in Tarnobrzeg. The demonstration that took place on 18 February in Tarnobrzeg consisted of a church service, nationalist speeches, and a resolution on the Chełm question. Despite being peaceful, Jewish shops were closed that day, and Jews did not venture out into the streets due to the fear of attacks. Dbałowski also notes that there was a growing unease due to the recent arrests of returning Polish legionnaires, who were mostly young men who had become eligible for compulsory military service only this year. Notably, protest demonstrations took place on February 18 not only in Tarnobrzeg but also in other municipalities in the district.

According to the court inspector Johann Hawel, the protest rally against the annexation of the Chełm region to the Ukrainians in Mościska was peaceful. The speeches were mainly directed against the German and Austrian governments, without contesting the dynasty. The Roman Catholic dean's opening words were: "Brethren, do not let yourselves be drawn into hostility and hatred towards our monarchy because the injustice done to the Poles by the Treaty of Chełm [Cholm] was done by the Germans." However, rumours were circulating in some villages belonging to the district that Vienna had already decided to cede Eastern Galicia up to the river San to Ukraine, that Eastern Galicia had been made into a separate Crown land administered by Ukrainians, that the large estates had been abolished, and that property had been divided among the Ukrainian population. These rumours were probably spread indirectly by prisoners of war recounting the revolutionary events on their way out of Russia and Ukraine.³⁰ These former prisoners of war were held in camps for returnees, where they underwent not only medical examinations but also a ten-day "disciplinary re-education".³¹ Despite this effort, the allegations of subversive activities by former prisoners of war were frequently re-

30 Ibidem, protocol 11226.

31 Pieter M. JUDSON, *The Habsburg Empire: a New History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 426.

ported in the documents of the Austrian authorities, suggesting that the effort was insufficient.

In Dynów, a local president of the court and a lawyer allegedly incited the Poles against the Jews. "In Wadowice, Saybusch [Żywiec] and other places", the distribution of leaflets was recorded, which were also posted on telegraph poles, calling on the inhabitants to proceed to the division of land and to take action against the Jews.³² In Strzyżów, the district governor was informed that Father Bolek, the parish priest of Lutcza, had made a provocative speech that could potentially cause anti-Jewish riots and strengthen the opinion of the inhabitants that they were no longer obliged to supply grain. The district governor then questioned several participants in the meeting, including Bolek, the mayor Dr. Patryn, and the district commissioner Wojcikiewicz. Wojcikiewicz stated that Bolek criticised the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and urged that the peasants should not be required to supply any more grain for state and military purposes. Bolek also criticised the Jews for "holding aloof from demonstrations and exploiting the people". In Bolek's view, it was necessary to break relations with the Jews but not to resort to violence.³³

A phonogram addressed to the Prime Minister in Vienna reports that on February 18, there were sporadic riots in several Galician districts, including Żywiec, Nowy Targ, Tarnów, Stryj, Mielec, and Myślenice. The riots were directed against Jewish shops, particularly food vendors and warehouses, and had the character of "aprovisional riots".³⁴ In particular, anti-Jewish riots by the peasant population took place in the villages of Jordanów, Myślenice and Maków. In Myślenice, a crowd of women from the suburbs attempted to break into a shop and rob it. The situation escalated to the point that soldiers from Kraków had to be called in to restore order.³⁵

Following the disturbances after the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the situation in Galicia briefly calmed down. However, according to a report by the k. u. k. police commissioner Steinhäusl, tensions still ran high. He stated that "great events are being prepared, and the people are only waiting for the signal to rise again against the dynasty and the state." The population was divided along national lines, with Poles and Ukrainians forming two distinct groups. Polish individuals, officials, students, schoolchildren of both genders and soldiers were seen wearing

32 ÖSTA, AVA, MdI, PR, GA, Sign. 22, Fsz. 2118, protocol 11226.

33 Ibidem, Polnisch nationale Kundgebungen am 18. Februar 1918, protocol 5222.

34 Ibidem, Judenfeindliche Exzesse in Krakau, protocol 9226.

35 Ibidem, Antisemitische Ausschreitungen im politischen Bezirke Myślenice, protocol 5062.

badges with the Polish eagle and white and red ribbons, as well as cockades with the image of Piłsudski. Meanwhile, Ukrainians were seen wearing badges with the Ukrainian lion and yellow and blue ribbons. According to reports, students in Stryj were even armed with revolvers and “punch rings [Schlagringen]”. The situation was kept under control only due to the presence of Hungarian, Austrian and imperial German troops.³⁶

In March, marked by the second major Polish protest, a leaflet was circulated by Polish nationalists. This leaflet depicted a Polish eagle wearing a kippa holding a money bag and a menorah, portraying Jewish Polish politicians as traitors who supported an independent Poland under Habsburg rule. March 2, high tensions were reported in Lviv, with Ukrainians and Poles planning demonstrations for the coming Sunday. Unlike Poles, Ukrainians demonstrated to express gratitude. The fear of a pogrom forced Jews to hide their belongings.³⁷ In March, the Polish protests eventually yielded results as the government gave in to their demands. The justification was the Ukrainian People’s Republic’s failure to secure grain supplies. Chełm was returned to the Poles, which naturally caused resentment among the Ukrainians.³⁸ The Jews were caught between the warring sides. Tensions remained high, and there was a constant fear of violence.

As Konrad Zieliński summarised, as a consequence of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, many towns experienced incidents of violence against Jews. These actions were carried out by various groups, including schoolchildren, students, and peasants in small settlements and villages. Jews were also targeted on trains, and in some cases, Jewish shops were plundered.³⁹ The depicted events were defined by demonstrations and strikes with an anti-dynastic and anti-state character, marked by acts of vandalism, defacement of symbols, and protests against imperial rule. These events were fueled by frustrations over the cession of the Chełm region and food shortages. The population of Galicia was divided along national lines. The

36 Ibidem, protocol 11226.

37 Ch. MICK, *Lemberg, Lwów, Lviv*, p. 93.

38 Ibidem, 95.

39 Konrad ZIELIŃSKI, “Impact of the Central Powers’ Occupation in Poland on the Polish-Jewish Relations, 1914–1918,” in eds. Věra TYDLITÁTOVÁ – Alena HANZOVÁ, *Reflections on Anti-Semitism: Anti-Semitism in historical and anthropological perspectives* (Plzeň: Západočeská univerzita v Plzni, 2009), pp. 78–86, p. 84; See also Konrad ZIELIŃSKI, Reperkusje traktatu brzeskiego z 1918 roku dla stosunków polsko-żydowskich [Repercussions of the Brest Treaty of 1918 on Polish-Jewish relations], *Studia Judaica* 6 (2003), no. 1, pp. 95–115.

described incidents reflect the troubling rise in anti-Semitic sentiment, fuelled by economic anxieties and national unrest.

Jews responsible for food shortages: the April violence

In April, a severe food shortage again caused ethnic tension. A disturbing event happened at the beginning of the month during an annual gathering of thousands of Jewish pilgrims in Nowy Sącz to pray at the grave of Rabbi Halberstam (1793–1876).⁴⁰ Soldiers from the k. u. k. infantry regiment disrupted the event, claiming that the prosperous appearance of the pilgrims contrasted with their misery and suffering. The soldiers beat and robbed some of the Jewish pilgrims, taking several thousand crowns, clothing, and shoes. This incident highlighted the perception of the Jewish population in the region.⁴¹

Moreover, Kraków saw another round of street violence. The unrest was driven by a severe food shortage. The Jewish population was blamed for the high prices, and it was alleged that Jewish customers were willing to pay more, further inflating the prices. This sparked an angry mob, which gathered in Kleparz Square and Grodzka Street, and attacked Jews. The mob then proceeded to the Jewish quarter of Kazimierz, where they smashed shop windows and looted several stores.⁴² Certainly, Kraków was not the only city in the empire facing a food crisis. The shortage of food in the imperial cities was mirrored in the constant decline of the daily food allotment. In Vienna, by 1918, there was not enough milk available for ration. Prague had to introduce a half-ration of bread in April 1918.⁴³ In April, bread shortages also plagued Kraków. However, the official reports sent to Vienna attributed the Kraków riots to high prices charged by Jewish merchants during a bread shortage.

40 Chaim Halberstam of Sanz was a famous Hasidic rabbi and founder of the Hasidic dynasty of Sanz.

41 ÖSTA, AVA, MdI, PR, GA, Sign. 22, Fsz. 2118, Überfälle von Soldaten auf Juden in Nowy Sącz, protocol 9591.

42 Ibidem, Judenfeindliche Exzesse in Krakau, protocol 9226. See also W. W. HAGEN, *Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland*, pp. 97–100; Jan MAŁECKI, *Zamieszki w Krakowie w kwietniu 1918 r. Pogrom czy rozruchy głodowe?* [The Disturbances in Kraków in April 1918. Pogrom or Hunger Riot?], in ed. Andrzej PALUCH, *The Jews in Poland*, vol. 1 (Cracow: Jagiellonian University, 1992), pp. 245–257.

43 P. M. JUDSON, *The Habsburg Empire*, p. 400.

The police director in Kraków suggested that the military police were partly responsible for the violence, with some guards allegedly instructed not to prevent looting. The misconduct of the military police was allegedly due to the replacement of experienced officers with “inferior material, and only partially at that”.⁴⁴ On the other hand, the military command in Kraków reported to the War Ministry that the security guards responsible for maintaining order in the city were not only inactive during the April riots but also during the February riots.

Teenage boys, led by Polish legionnaires, played a significant role in the riots and were responsible for looting shop windows and Jewish stores. A report from the military headquarters in Kraków reveals that “uniformed school youths with revolvers, hoes, and clubs” were involved in the violence. Soldiers on leave and deserters also participated in the excesses. The attacks were not limited to Jews, and anyone who opposed the rioters was beaten. The security forces were also met with hostility and no longer held authority in the eyes of the crowd. A lieutenant who tried to aid a beaten civilian was punched in the face by a legionnaire, who also seized his bayonet. The military police present at the scene did not intervene. In another instance, even though three military police officers on horseback were present at the scene, they did not intervene to stop the looting happening just 15 paces away from them.⁴⁵ One report raises the possibility that the soldiers sympathized with the aggressors and, therefore did not intervene.⁴⁶

Psachie Meller, a Jewish man, died as a result of the riots. He was beaten after being dragged off a tram. On May 3, the Presidium of the Police Directorate in Kraków reported his death to the Ministry of the Interior in Vienna. He died at the Rappaport Hotel on Józef Dietl Street. The owner of the hotel, Rebecca Rappaport, had summoned a doctor Dr. Lustig, who described Meller’s condition as hopeless. Later, Rappaport also called another doctor, Dr. Bernaciński, who noted no visible injuries on the body and allowed Meller to be buried without an autopsy. Later that night, the government councillor and head of the police directorate received a message from the police chancellor Kantor, saying that a rumour was spreading in the Jewish quarter of Kazimierz about rioters murdering Meller. Given this information, an investigation into the cause of Meller’s death was ordered, and the body was taken to the institute of forensic medicine that same night.

44 ÖSTA, AVA, MdI, PR, GA, Sign. 22, Fsz. 2118, Judenfeindliche Exzesse in Krakau, protocol 9226.

45 Ibidem, protocol 9607.

46 ANK, DPKr, sygn. 29/247/0/-/117, AP: 1918, nr 1–999, p. 2639.

The public prosecutor's office was also informed, and a police investigation was launched to find witnesses to the incident. However, it was not possible to identify who had attacked Meller. The witnesses recorded in the court record, including Johann Salz, Abraham Schenker, Rebecca Rappaport, and others, only testified to what they had heard from Meller but did not see the assault with their own eyes.⁴⁷

On 18 April, when Meller's funeral took place, "stones were thrown from a worker's train travelling between Kraków and Podgorze at a corpse," carried near the railway line to the Jewish cemetery. As a result, several people were hit and slightly injured. At noon on April 19, more than 100 young Jews armed with clubs, iron bars, etc., gathered in the old Jewish temple on Szeroka Street. They then went to the nearby flea market, where they "attacked the Christians present [...] and slightly injured several persons".⁴⁸ This gathering was probably the result of the joint effort involving both Zionists and Poale Zion members to organize self-defence. Several thousand Jews assembled in the streets to safeguard their neighborhood. According to Jan Rybak, the events in Kraków were not just another act of violence against Jews. For Jewish activists, it marked a significant turning point, leading them to conviction that both central and local authorities were unwilling to protect Jews. This prompted the organization of Jewish self-defence in Galicia, with Zionists taking a leading role.⁴⁹

Since the disturbances in Kraków, fears began to spread in nearby Wieliczka that an attack on the Jews would soon occur. The rumours were alleged to spread, especially among women and adolescents.⁵⁰ Immediately after the outbreak of violence, the district governor turned to the military headquarters in Kraków with a request for military assistance, which arrived by train and marked the end of the looting. Some of the stolen items were subsequently returned to their original owners. Nevertheless, the passive attitude of the local gendarmes became the subject of the Jewish religious community's complaint.⁵¹ The state no longer possessed the power and the will to protect the Jewish citizens. Meanwhile, the growing national movements became increasingly influential. In general, the hunger riots

47 ÖSTA, AVA, MdI, PR, GA, Sign. 22, Fsz. 2118, protocol 11092.

48 Ibidem, Judenfeindliche Exzesse in Krakau, protocol 9226.

49 J. RYBAK, *Everyday Zionism in East-Central Europe*, p. 162–163.

50 ÖSTA, AVA, MdI, PR, GA, Sign. 22, Fsz. 2119, protocol 19867, Haus der Abgeordneten – 83. Sitzung der XXII. Session am 26. Juli 1918, p. 23.

51 Ibidem, Kriegsarchiv, Ministerium für Landesverteidigung, Gendarmerie, box 53, Judenfeindliche Exzesse in Wieliczka, protocol 6205.

increasingly having an anti-Jewish character compelled Jews, particularly Zionist activists, to reassess their stance towards the state.⁵²

Although the April riots were primarily triggered by food shortages, it's crucial to stress its significant anti-Jewish character. The May report compiled by the military headquarters in Kraków revealed that the people's main concern and desire was to end the war in order to improve their increasingly limited means of subsistence. The long-suffering population blamed the defective social and national structure of the state and sought social and national reform or overthrow. The demands for social and national change were met with the most robust response.⁵³ The report confirms the thesis of Jochen Böehler and others that the spread of national consciousness was not a priori the work of national political organisations. The experience of war was far more critical and formative than the efforts of Polish nationalists.⁵⁴

An empire on the verge of collapse

In the last months of the war, the Polish intelligentsia focused on the interned Polish legionnaires, who were seen as martyr victims of the k. u. k government. Deserter hunts organized by the Austrian authorities caused feelings of injustice, as Jews were rumoured to avoid front-line service while Poles faced severe punishments for the same offense. The arrest of legionnaires at the Stryj railway station, who were locked in sealed wagons on their way to Dęblin, was widely discussed in preparations for the May celebrations of Labour Day and Polish Constitution Day. Such perceived injustices had the potential to trigger protests and unrest. In May, there were rumours that a revolution would soon occur in Austria within two to three months.⁵⁵ A report on the mood in Western Galicia delivered to the k. u. k Ministry of the Interior, on May 13, described the Polish sentiment towards the army as unfavourable, considering it an "annoying foreign body". The report noted that Poles openly and covertly opposed the military administration. The report fur-

52 J. RYBAK, *Everyday Zionism in East-Central Europe*, p. 161–163.

53 ÖSTA, AVA, MdI, PR, GA, Sign. 22, Fsz. 2118, Stimmungsbericht des Militärkommandos in Krakau, protocol 14672.

54 Jochen BÖHLER, *Civil War in Central Europe, 1918–1921: The Reconstruction of Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 51.

55 ÖSTA, AVA, MdI, PR, GA, Sign. 22, Fsz. 2118, Situationsbericht des Militärkommandos Przemyśl, protocol 11474.

ther stated that this sentiment, fuelled by impulsive agitation, triggered bitter opposition to the military authorities in public, particularly among the youth, working class, and “urban trash”. This public behaviour was widely perceived as national-political and patriotic.⁵⁶

A report dated June 3 noted that riots were often instigated by refugees who were suffering from a lack of food. “Refugees who have no home, seed or food on their return to their homes grumble and claim they have been destroyed.”⁵⁷ This situation was particularly prevalent in eastern Galicia, where inhabitants returned to villages that had been abandoned by their original inhabitants due to the war. As a result, there were numerous conflicts exacerbated by the war’s destruction and the fact that Galicia had to provide accommodation for the moving troops during the war.⁵⁸

The shortage of flour and bread during the war also affected military garrisons, receiving inadequate or no supplies. However, the lack of food resulted in growing resentment from civilians and deserters towards the soldiers. On the night of June 10–11, the commander of the gendarmerie station in Grodzisko Dolne near Jarosław arrested several deserters. Later that night, about 20 soldiers and civilians demanded the release of the deserters, gathering outside the gendarmerie building. As a result, the gendarme station commander was hit by three shots, dying about an hour later. Investigations revealed that the gunmen fired about 30 shots.

On June 16, Social Democratic deputy Moraczewski was in Jarosław and invited the locals to a meeting at the Sokol hall. Despite a subsequent ban by the local authorities, he spoke to a crowd of thousands in the park, denouncing the government, Jews, estate owners, rich lords, and district officials. He claimed that the district governor and Jews were hiding large stocks of grain, and there was a conspiracy by central authorities and officials at the district level to rob the starving population. He called on the people to “help themselves” and deal with these “bloodsuckers [Blutsauger]”, particularly addressing women and assuring them of impunity for their acts. The deputy was cheered with applause and carried away on the arms of the crowd to cries of “Long live Bolshevism! Down with the district chiefs, the Jews, and their helpers! Finally, throw yourselves upon these gentlemen!” Three days later, riots broke out in Jarosław, involving mainly women and

56 Ibidem, Westgalizien – Stimmungsbericht, protocol 10878.

57 Ibidem, Fsz. 2119, Stimmungsbericht des Militärkommandos in Przemyśl, protocol 24035.

58 J. PAJAŁK, *Zarys dziejów społecznych ziem polskich*, p. 105.

children from poorer classes and “neglected street youth”. Breaking of windows and looting of bakeries occurred.⁵⁹

During the autumn of 1918, widespread criminal activity such as muggings, robberies, thefts, and murders plagued the region. The limited presence of soldiers and gendarmes made it difficult to implement effective countermeasures, resulting in a growing perception among the populace that the state was powerless to maintain order and security. This loss of faith in state power led to a disgracing of authority and a rapid deterioration of the situation. Additionally, various political and social factions promoted ethnic nationalism, further eroding the public’s trust in the state. In such a climate of lawlessness, the absence of consequences for criminal actions only served to embolden perpetrators.⁶⁰ Ultimately, the events of this period highlight the importance of a strong state monopoly on violence and power in maintaining public order and security.⁶¹

The violence that occurred after the fall of Austria-Hungary cannot be separated from the broader context of the last months of the war. During this time, the number of deserters who banded together for robbery increased rapidly. On September 18, a group of deserters attacked a gendarmerie post in Tarnowska Wola, firing shots into an empty guard’s bed through the window. The Austrian authorities responded by forming a unit to capture them. A report from September on the population’s mood, sent to the authorities in Vienna, noted that “the general hatred of Germans in Galicia (including Austrian Germans) knows no bounds.”

As the war dragged on, the toll it took on the population became increasingly apparent. The struggle for basic necessities like food and clothing was compounded by rising nationalist and social tensions, which even the military was not immune to. A report from Przemyśl on October 17 noted that despite efforts to stop them, deserter riots were spreading and had become a serious problem. Even executions meant to deter deserters had little effect, as crimes like robberies, burglaries, thefts, and looting of trains by deserters had become commonplace.⁶² The

59 ÖSTA, AVA, MdI, PR, GA, Sign. 22, Fsz. 2119, Stimmungsbericht des Militärkommandos Przemyśl, protocol 16443.

60 Ibidem, Stimmungsbericht des Militärkommandos in Przemyśl, protocol 24035.

61 Jeffrey S. KOPSTEIN – Jason WITTENBERG, *Intimate Violence: Anti-Jewish Pogroms on the Eve of the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), p. 114. Unless, of course, it is a law-despising state that uses violence instrumentally to achieve its goals.

62 ÖSTA, AVA, MdI, PR, GA, Sign. 22, Fsz. 2119, Fsz. 2119, Stimmungsbericht des Militärkommandos in Przemyśl, protocol 24035; According to the report German troops “hunting” deserters were to be subjected to false accusations so that the Slavic soldiers could replace them.

number of deserters in the last months of the war in Galicia alone probably reached around ten thousand.⁶³

Already in the late summer of 1918, the central authorities ceased any efforts to counter anti-Jewish incitement and violence. The military command in Przemyśl reported that Jews in Galicia were compelled to form their own self-defence groups. It had become increasingly evident, particularly to the Zionists, that depending on Austria for the protection of Jews was futile. Zionists realized that the Jews had to prepare for a new order in which the new nation-states would play a major role rather than relying on the Habsburg monarchy, which could no longer meet even the basic needs of its citizens.⁶⁴

Conclusion

The November attacks on Jews occurred in a state of disintegration of the Austrian administration and war between the People's Republic of Western Ukraine and the Second Polish Republic. However, violence against Jews did not erupt out of the blue after the establishment of the Second Polish Republic. The pogroms that engulfed Galicia in November 1918 stemmed from a long unstable supply and security situation and escalating nationalism. Moreover, it cannot be overlooked that there was a certain tradition of anti-Jewish violence. Although the situation in Habsburg-dominated Galicia cannot be compared to Tsarist Russia, where, as John D. Klier points out, "the phenomenon of the pogrom became a familiar and unexceptional part of Russian life."⁶⁵ However, waves of violence with more or less anti-Jewish features had occurred before. These were the riots of 1846, 1872, 1881, 1886, and 1898. Indeed, in 1918, the last peasant waves of violence of 1886 and 1898 especially had to be vividly remembered.⁶⁶

63 Jakub BENEŠ, *The Green Cadres and the Collapse of Austria-Hungary in 1918* (Past & Present 236, 2017), no. 1, 207–241, p. 217.

64 J. RYBAK, *Everyday Zionism in East-Central Europe*, pp. 165–166.

65 John D. KLIER, "The Pogrom Paradigm in Russian History," in eds. John DOYLE KLIER – Shlomo LABMROZA, *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 33.

66 In 1846 the violence was primarily directed against the feudal lords, in 1872 against the nobility, in 1886 mainly against the Jews, who became economic rivals of the peasants, and the clergy, and in 1898 only against the Jews. See T. BUCHEN, *Antisemitism in Galicia*, pp. 114–115; see also Daniel UNOWSKY, *The Plunder: The 1898 Anti-Jewish Riots in Habsburg Galicia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018).

In 1918, the collapse of the Austrian administration led to a vacuum in maintaining law and order, which is crucial to understanding the events that took place in the newly formed Second Polish Republic. This vacuum led to attacks on Jews. This was confirmed by contemporary sources, including the final report of the American investigating mission in Poland, which stated that most of the excesses occurred during the chaotic organization of the new republic and military operations.⁶⁷ According to university professor Władysław Natanson (1864–1937),⁶⁸ Poland was in a state of anarchy, unable to maintain order.⁶⁹ However, Natanson attributed blame for the pogroms not only to the Poles but also to the Jews, arguing that the mistreatment of Poles by Jews had provoked revenge. He also described Jews as cowards. Piłsudski, the Chief of State of the newly established Second Polish Republic, acknowledged that the sudden collapse of the Austrian government contributed to the outbreak of violence against Jews in November 1918. However, he also pointed out that Polish resentment towards Jews, who were allegedly profiting from the war, was also a factor.⁷⁰ The stereotype that Jews were hoarding and speculating on food prices during the war, as well as avoiding military service, was widespread and contributed to the hostility towards them.⁷¹ Additionally, the Jews were associated with Austrian rule, which added to the resentment during the time of political upheaval.⁷²

67 “The Jadwin and Johnson Report,” in: *The Jews in Poland. Official Reports of The American and British Investigating Missions*, Chicago: American Commission to Negotiate Peace, 1920, p. 14.

68 Władysław Natanson was a Polish physicist of Jewish origin who was baptized and considered himself Polish.

69 Israel COHEN, “My Mission to Poland (1918–1919),” *Jewish Social Studies* 13 (1951), no. 2, pp. 149–172, p. 159.

70 *Ibidem*, p. 167

71 Heiko HAUMANN, *Dějiny východních Židů [History of the Eastern Jews]* (Olomouc: Nakladatelství Votobia, 1997), p. 180.

72 Although Polish, Ukrainian, and Jewish national movements developed rapidly, most Jews did not join any national movement and were loyal to the emperor. See Christoph MICK, “Legality, ethnicity and violence in Austrian Galicia, 1890–1920,” *European Review of History: revue européenne d’histoire* 26 (2019), no. 5, pp. 757–782, p. 760; The Habsburg monarchy offered many opportunities for Jews. They attended government schools and thus underwent a process of acculturation. Compared to Jews from other parts of Poland, the Jews of Galicia were the most Polonized. The growing Polish acculturation was associated with a strong loyalty to the Habsburg Empire. The Jews achieved emancipation under Habsburg rule, and compared with Tsarist Russia, anti-Jewish policies were never pursued there. Nevertheless, the majority of Polish society did not share Habsburg’s generosity. See Ezra MENDELSON, *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the Wars* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 18–19.

The anti-Jewish violence that occurred after the proclamation of the Second Polish Republic in November 1918 was not an isolated incident, but rather a continuation of a long-established trend of hostility towards the Jewish population in the region. This trend was prevalent during the whole year of 1918 when economic hardships in Galicia were compounded by the uncertain future of Polish inhabitants caused by the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Gradually, the state had lost both the capacity and the resolve to safeguard its citizens. The last months of the monarchy had seen a further deterioration in security due to masses of deserters flooding Galicia. Although not as brutal and on such a scale as events in the first months of the Second Polish Republic, the mistreatment of the Jewish population was consistent.

SUMMARY

In 1918, the Austrian administration collapsed. The empire's collapse is crucial for comprehending later developments on the territory of the nascent Second Polish Republic. The pogroms that swept through Galicia in November 1918 resulted from a long-term precarious supply and security situation and intensifying nationalism. In the scarcity caused by the fierce war, the people increasingly turned against the Jews. Soldiers were facing escalating hostility from the civilians and the ever-increasing number of deserters. The later anti-Jewish violence of November cannot be taken out of the entire background of the last war months. Even though the later violence against Jews, which broke out at the same time as the proclamation of the Second Polish Republic, was much more widespread and brutal, one cannot fail to see the continuity of the treatment of Jews.