

## THE EXPERIENCE OF MOBILITY OUTSIDE GALICIA BEFORE AND AFTER WORLD WAR I – WAR REFUGEES EXAMPLE

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### ABSTRACT

#### THE EXPERIENCE OF MOBILITY OUTSIDE GALICIA BEFORE AND AFTER WORLD WAR I – WAR REFUGEES EXAMPLE

When in 1912 a group of friends from Przemyśl went to Istanbul and came back telling others about their adventures it was almost possible to believe that the “white man’s burden” can be easily fulfilled not only by the British. They were not the only ones to believe that. It was the time when travelling was cheaper and much more democratic than ever before. What is more, being outside of their place of living could help the residents of Galicia to identify their Polishness, Ukrainianness etc. in the epoch of growing nationalism. All of the sudden, the year 1914 stopped this process. Lots of Galician inhabitants on a massive scale were forced to emigrate for fear of the Russian troops. They escaped to more central Austrian-Hungarian provinces. Not only the authorities but also common inhabitants of those provinces were unprepared to host so many refugees. Special concentration camps in Moravia were created, soon becoming notorious places all over the Monarchy. But even everyday travel experience was shocking for the Galicians – not less than living with complete strangers in a new environment. What is more, the months following the liberation of Galicia by German and Hungarian troops brought even more complex problems: resentment, irritation as well as hostility towards each other. This kind of treatment was shown inside and outside of the province. Galicia’s natives took revenge in 1918 – getting rid of the “strangers” from the newly created Poland, as not Galician enough.

**Key words:** World War I, Galicia, travelling, experience of an “alien”

**Słowa kluczowe:** I wojna światowa, Galicja, podróżowanie, doświadczenie obcego

In September 2014 the management of the National Archives in Przemyśl on account of the round anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, made a small part of its “Collection of 1914–1918 wartime correspondence” available to researchers. Although it has been in the Archives for a few decades now, the collection has remained unexplored, and thus inaccessible to researchers. It comprises

letters in Polish, Ukrainian, Hebrew, Czech, German and Hungarian, sent by various senders from many places (Galicia, Europe or different countries under the rule of the Russian Empire) and addressed to the multi-national inhabitants of Galicia.<sup>1</sup> Those analyzing the collection point out that the one (unknown right now) who had gathered the letters was aware of their significance for the posterity. His/Her goal was to preserve people's wartime experience.<sup>2</sup>

The wartime correspondence found in Przemyśl is not just a collection documenting experiences of the Galicians between 1914 and 1918. However, similarly to others, it shows some important aspects connected with the theme. Apart from describing contemporary events and the matters about which it was not allowed to write due to censorship, the letters are an excellent source showing snatches of personal lives of the soldiers, refugees and travelers. They include plenty of information on the whereabouts of the Galicians as well as their needs. Indirectly they tell us a lot about their living conditions, relations with the locals in different countries, and the changing perception of the world of the people whom the war had torn out of their family homes. Even if the letters were sometimes laconic, depending on the authors, their sex, social background, education, wealth or the place they were staying at, we get various pictures of their mindset and everyday living conditions. What the letters have in common, however, is the perception of the new, the strange, the unknown, which redefined those who were forced to stay away from home (i.e. the old, the familiar, the known). The realization of the distinction, to use the notion by Pierre Bourdieu,<sup>3</sup> changed one and constructed one anew.

Before exploring the theme of travelling outside Galicia during the Great War, it seems proper to define travelling itself, especially as it was different before 1914 and during the war. Travelling is understood as moving to a distant place; moving for various reasons (financial, business, tourist, induced by circumstances) created a specific literary genre called travel literature.<sup>4</sup> It is in those terms that Bourdieu's distinction is a point of departure in the deliberations by many authors.

Also the travelling Galicians often left written evidence of their peregrinations, comparing their own country to other parts of the Monarchy and to foreign countries. In doing that, on the one hand they formed their opinions on the places visited and people met, on the other hand they created their own perception of themselves. Criticism was then developed not only through information sent to Galicia via

<sup>1</sup> The National Archives in Przemyśl, fond "Collection of 1914–1918 wartime correspondence."

<sup>2</sup> A. Bobowska-Hryniewicz, *Słowo wstępu* [in:] *Wojenna skrzynka pocztowa*, eds. A. Nowak, A. Bobowska-Hryniewicz, A. Sawicka, Przemyśl 2014, pp. 7–11.

<sup>3</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge, MA 1984 (Polish version: P. Bourdieu, *Dystynkcja. Społeczna krytyka władzy sądzienia*, trans. P. Biłos, Warszawa 2005 – I used this version).

<sup>4</sup> In Polish the following authors wrote a lot on the methodology of research on travel literature: S. Burkot, *Polskie podróżopisarstwo romantyczne*, Warszawa 1988, pp. 5–40; W. Tomasik, *Inna droga. Romantycy a kolej*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 41–74. See also: *Under Eastern Eyes. A Comparative Introduction to East European Travel Writing on Europe*, vol. 1: *Orientations. An Anthology of East European Travel Writing on Europe*, vol. 2: *East Looks West*, vol. 3: *A Bibliography of East European Travel Writing on Europe*, eds. W. Bracewell, A. Drace-Francis, Budapest 2008.

different sources, but also in the sphere of contact – myths and stereotypes were confronted with the experiences of individuals, who were simultaneously creations of their native culture.<sup>5</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, researcher of travel literature, said that “empires create in the imperial center of power an obsessive need to present and represent its peripheries and its others continually to itself. It becomes dependent on its others to know itself. Travel writing, among other institutions, is heavily organized in the service of that need.”<sup>6</sup> Galicia was a periphery of the Habsburg Empire and was perceived as a country “somewhere at the end,” near the border with Russia – exotic and different, almost half-Asiatic.<sup>7</sup> But also from the Galician perspective, far from the decision-making centers, both Vienna and Budapest and other European capitals, would sometimes appear more imagined than real.

The main purpose of this paper is to show how the First World War with its experience of the “alien” influenced the Central Europeans’ thinking about the others. The people from Galicia with their experience of travelling (for pleasure or in search of work before 1914; forced during the war as refugees) can be a very good case study of the changing approach towards the others but also of redefining oneself. Using Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic power, I would like to emphasize after the French scholar that their language, as part of cultural exchange, had a power to influence the world through influencing the conceptions about it, including affirmation of difference.<sup>8</sup>

## 1. NOT ONLY FOR PLEASURE – THE EXPERIENCE OF “OTHER” BEFORE 1914: SOME GENERAL REMARKS

When in 1912 a group of friends from Przemyśl<sup>9</sup> went to Istanbul<sup>9</sup> and came back telling about their adventures it was almost possible to believe that the “white man’s burden” can be easily fulfilled not only by the British. What is more, they were not the only ones to believe that. The residents of Galicia had frequent opportunities to get beyond the borders of their province, thanks to frequent talks by the outstanding Czech traveler Doctor Emil Holub<sup>10</sup> in provincial towns, or thanks to Polish lecturers, like Doctor Edmund Libański. Many of them, especially the poorest groups (regardless

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<sup>5</sup> M.L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London 1992 (Polish version: M.L. Pratt, *Imperialne spojrzenie. Pisarstwo podróżnicze a transkultuacja*, trans. E.E. Nowakowska, Kraków 2011 – I used this version).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> J. Purchla, *Galicja po Galicji, czyli o niezwykłości mitu „zaginionego królestwa”* [in:] *Mit Galicji*, eds. J. Purchla, W. Kos, Ż. Komar, M. Rydziej, W.M. Schwarz, Kraków 2014, p. 89.

<sup>8</sup> P. Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

<sup>9</sup> See more: N. Sarkady, *Orient nam bliski. Fotografie z podróży Przemyśl–Stambul 1912*, Przemyśl 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Emil Holub was in Galicia many times and delivered lectures in various cities. He also donated some of his African collection to science rooms in secondary schools, e.g. in Sambor and Przemyśl. See

of their nationality) had friends and relatives who were seasonal workers in the lands of Germany, or emigrated to the USA. If, however, it was the poorest who took the risk and emigrated to work abroad, only the richest, mainly aristocracy, could afford travelling overseas, less frequently the middle classes, i.e. the intelligentsia and the bourgeois. That is why the average resident of Galicia could learn about exotic lands mostly from the papers or tales of those who had been there.

Galician press is full of reports from distant and unknown parts of the world – the Lviv and Krakow dailies were where the travelers shared their experience even from Egypt and the Far East. On the other hand, even provincial weeklies were eager to publish reports from the travels in the Balkans, as well as the Adriatic and the Mediterranean countries. Often travel reports were published by the local priests, professors from both Galician universities or those local intellectuals who could afford leaving their job for some time and paying for the trip. Travel reports must have been very popular, judging by a growing number of the examples of that literary genre in the papers on the threshold of the WWI and by the increased interest in Southern Europe, after Austria-Hungary had seized Bosnia and Herzegovina and after the Balkan wars.<sup>11</sup> Many residents of Galicia not only moved to those so far unknown to them lands with a hope for a better future, but also started exploring them touristically.<sup>12</sup> A good example here is the account of a 1909 trip Dalmatia as well as Bosna and Hercegovina by a deputy to the Vienna State Council, Doctor Franciszek Tomaszewski from Lviv. During the trip in his letters to the Lviv daily “Słowo Polskie” he repeatedly expressed not only his fascination with the technical progress of the region, which he constantly juxtaposed with the popular rumors of terrible civilizational backwardness of the Balkans, but also his admiration for the “wildness” of local nature and unfamiliar to him Muslim culture.<sup>13</sup>

Travel literature of that period is of a very hybridic nature: facts (like places, events, people) are put next to the author’s point of view; objective narration is mixed with the reporters’ own feelings and impressions.<sup>14</sup> The analysis of the content of particular travel accounts shows that the inhabitants of Galicia – region considered to be one of the poorest provinces of the Habsburg Monarchy – especially those who could read and write, had a chance to promote their knowledge and broad horizons far beyond their familiar world. It was the time when traveling was cheaper and much

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more in: “Kurier Przemyski” Y. 1: 1895, no. 99 of 14 XI, p. 3; “Gazeta Samborska” Y. 3: 1896, no. 6 of 3 VII, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> For Polish travelers in the Balkans see more in: E. Prokop-Janiec, *Polskie podróże po Słowiańszczyźnie* [in:] *Południowa Słowiańszczyzna w literaturze polskiej XIX i XX w.*, eds. K. Stępnik, M. Gabryś, Lublin 2010, pp. 19–20; M. Sadlik, *Dziewiętnastowieczne podróże w krajach południowo-słowiańskich odbywane* [in:] *Południowa Słowiańszczyzna...*, pp. 25–33.

<sup>12</sup> See detailed literature in: T.J. Lis, *Polskie osadnictwo i duchowieństwo w Bośni i Hercegowinie od 1894 do 1920 roku*, Toruń 2014.

<sup>13</sup> F. Tomaszewski, *Notatki z podróży*, “Słowo Polskie” Y. 14: 1909, no. 387 of 20 VIII, p. 2, no. 394 of 24 VIII, p. 4, no. 400 of 27 VIII, p. 3, no. 408 of 1 IX, pp. 2–3, no. 427 of 13 IX, pp. 5–6, no. 431 of 15 IX, pp. 1–2, no. 437 of 18 IX, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> See M. Baine Campbell, *Travel Writing and Its Theory* [in:] *Travel Writing*, eds. P. Hulme, T. Youngs, Cambridge 2005.

more democratic (available not only for single men, and not only for aristocracy) than ever before. What is more, being outside of their place of living could help the residents of Galicia to identify their Polishness, Ukrainianness etc. in the epoch of growing nationalism. “The others” could help “us” to better understand ourselves, our uniqueness and selectness. That is why – as experts point out – almost in all Polish travel reports the presence of the Poles was always stressed, comparing local conditions with the Polish ones. In this way the accounts inspired the imagination of the local reader, to whom that kind of writing was addressed. Through those comparisons, in a still very positivistic manner, they attempted to make that reader realize the necessity to work on the civilizational (especially economic and social) success of his own country.

## 2. MOBILITY EXPERIENCE IN THE PERIOD OF RUSSIAN INVASION (1914–1915)

The year 1914 and the outbreak of the WWI all of a sudden stopped the process of “getting familiar with the world.” The general enthusiasm due to the hope for a quick and easy victory over the enemy, so common in Europe, was not exactly seen in the Galicians’ attitude.<sup>15</sup> No wonder, as the latter anticipated fights with the “barbarian” Russia, infamous for decades for persecuting the Poles, Ukrainians and Jews, and generally feared. On the one hand the number of soldiers stationed in the province for decades, the Austrian investments in the construction of the Przemyśl Fortress as well as the alliance with the Kaiser Germany, allowed the locals to believe in victory. On the other hand, the proximity of the borders with Russia did not inspire optimism.<sup>16</sup> The quick seizure of most of the province by the Russians was a great surprise for its inhabitants. Neither the railways nor the command, neither the army nor the administration were able to control the ensuing chaos. Even less so, as people generally feared the cruelty of the Cossacks, requisition and uncivilized demeanor of the tsar’s subjects. As one anonymous author wrote:

For a Pole even the word “Moskal” (Russian) itself is a symbol of the worst and the most terrible; there was a time when mothers used to frighten their children with the “Moskal” figure, as if he is a personification of the plague and other misery. For many years, for whole generations, that name had been looming like a bloody specter, feeding on human blood and agony, insatiable, in Polish towns and villages, heralding tears, pain and oppression.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See more in: M.S. Neiberg, *Dance of the Furies. Europe and the Outbreak of World War I*, Cambridge, MA 2011.

<sup>16</sup> J.Z. Pająk, *Od autonomii do niepodległości. Kształtowanie się postaw politycznych i narodowych społeczeństwa Galicji w warunkach Wielkiej Wojny 1914–1918*, Kielce 2012, pp. 55–56.

<sup>17</sup> *Pierwsze wrażenia. Z wojennych wspomnień*, “Echo Przemyskie” Y. 20: 1915, no. 2 of 24 X, p. 2.

What is interesting, in the memoirs written in the years 1915–1916, the Russians were largely dehumanized. It was stressed that they were feared on account of the two hundred years of terrible Polish-Russian relations and many tsar's repressions towards the Poles in the nineteenth century. Their behavior, wild and barbarous, in many memoirs grew into a negative symbol – the name “Moskal” itself was associated by the Poles with a zombie-like creature, forever insatiable and greedy for the blood of the conquered nations. The Russian occupation of Galicia strengthened that image even more; perhaps that is why the *post factum* reports published in the papers met with such a strong response. It is worth remembering that it was not only the Poles who had suffered during the Russian occupation, which was characterized by increased anti-Semitism, fuelled both by Russian army and civilians. A Russian saying “A Jew is no human” became popular then.<sup>18</sup>

The quick seizure of a large part of Galicia by the Russian troops resulted in migrations on a scale so far unknown in that part of Europe. It was not travelling for pleasure anymore; during the war moving from place to place took on a whole new dimension. Apart from the recruits, who had no say in where their units would send them, a lot of Galicians (the Poles, Ukrainians, Ruthenians, Jews) were forced to emigrate in large numbers for fear of the Russian troops. Only some selected civilians were allowed to stay in the Przemyśl Fortress; the rest were forcibly evacuated.<sup>19</sup> It was no different in other towns. Those who went westwards with an army-issued evacuation order, were entitled to a benefit. Those who had decided to flee of their own free will, found themselves in a worse situation. With very little money at their disposal, oftentimes not speaking any German, they were in dire straits.<sup>20</sup>

The fugitives escaped to Bohemia, Moravia, Styria and Hungary. Not only the authorities but also the common inhabitants of those provinces were unprepared to host so many refugees. That is why even the railway travel turned out to be a shock for many Galician people; the passengers were confined for many days in trains moving from one province to another without being informed about their destination or the route. They travelled in unheated carriages, often deprived of the possibility to buy something to eat and drink. They could only go out when the trains stopped far from railway stations, so that the Galician people could not contact with the locals.<sup>21</sup> The Czechs, Hungarians, Germans (from Austria, Styria and Tyrol) and Slovenians were

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<sup>18</sup> J.Z. Pająk, op. cit., p. 137. For more see: Rev. K. Wais, *Wspomnienia z pierwszego roku wojny światowej*, Lwów 1930; Sz. An-Ski, *Tragedia Żydów galicyjskich w czasie I wojny światowej. Wrażenie i refleksje z podróży po kraju*, Przemyśl 2010.

<sup>19</sup> T. Pudłocki, *Działalność inteligencji Przemyśla na tle życia mieszkańców miasta między sierpniem a listopadem 1914 r.* [in:] *Materiały z konferencji naukowej Twierdza Przemyśl w Galicji. Przemyśl, 25–27 kwietnia 2002*, Przemyśl 2003, p. 115.

<sup>20</sup> D. Szymczak, *Galicyjska „ambasada” w Wiedniu. Dzieje ministerstwa dla Galicji 1871–1918*, Poznań 2013, p. 288. See more: K. Sierakowska, *Śmierć, wygnanie, głód w dokumentach osobistych. Życie polskie w latach Wielkiej Wojny 1914–1918*, Warszawa 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Sabina Jankowska, who escaped from Żywiec to Jihlava in Moravia, heavily pregnant, with her husband and two young children, remembered the trip as follows: “After many different hardships of travelling in unheated carriages, where, changing trains five times, one had to fight for a smallest bit of a seat, after three days, on 15 November [1914] we finally reached our destination” – see M. Dalecki,

afraid that the refugees would spread diseases, steal, take over some of their jobs and food rations so difficult to come by even in the first months of the war. That should not surprise us, as the image of the Galicians among the residents of the Empire had not been too good even earlier. What was more, nobody had expected such a large number of refugees from the north-east of the state and nobody was ready to receive them. No wonder then that in individual countries of the Habsburg Monarchy the decision-makers did what they could to get rid of the burden. What is more, they subjected the refugees to ethnic segregation (sending the Poles, Ukrainians and Jews to separate countries) and controlled them every step of the way.

A good example here are the memories of Rev. Doctor Jan Trznadel, a fugitive from the Przemyśl Fortress. With a lot of effort, after a few days of escaping westwards (on a cart, on horseback, on foot) in early November 1914 he reached Nowy Sącz, where he managed to get on a train. And there another problem emerged: “[...] the railways [...] do not take into account the passengers’ wishful thinking and against our plans and intentions we were ‘transported’ there in the way we had neither expected nor wanted.”<sup>22</sup> Eventually, after plenty of stops and travelling in terrible conditions the refugee transport was separated: the Jews and Ukrainians were driven to Upper Styria and the Poles to two little towns, Judenburg (in today’s Austria) and even smaller Reichenburg (now in Slovenia). The inhabitants of those towns were probably even more surprised by their arrival than they were themselves, as nobody had warned them about the arrival of a group of people as numerous as 1/3 of their own population. Moreover, winter had just begun and the government had not assigned any money for extra food, accommodation, fuel or jobs for the new arrivals. It was only thanks to mutual kindness that they were able to survive that hard time. However, when on 23 May 1915 Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary and hostilities started on the south-western border of the Habsburg Empire, the fugitives from Galicia found themselves in a very awkward situation. The local inhabitants felt suddenly endangered; their own people were now wounded or in need, so they stopped sharing so eagerly with the strangers. The more so because cases of theft and betraying the hosts’ trust by the people from Galicia were not at all so rare.<sup>23</sup>

Whereas some refugees landed in small towns or villages, where they found it hard to find themselves in a new reality, those who ended up in bigger cities attempted to create temporary centers of Polish or Ukrainian culture there. They established Polish and Ukrainian schools, magazines, mutual-aid societies. They tried to spread news not only about the war developments in Galicia but most of all about emigration

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*Wspomnienia przemyskich nauczycielek z okresu I wojny światowej*, “Przemyskie Zapiski Historyczne” Y. 18: 2010–2011, p. 161.

<sup>22</sup> Rev. J. Trznadel, *Ze wspomnień uchodźcy wojennego*, “Echo Przemyskie” Y. 21: 1916, no. 22 of 16 III, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> See Rev. J. Trznadel, *W klasztorze OO. Trapistów i Kartuzów* (“Echo Przemyskie” Y. 21: 1916, no. 3 of 9 I 1916, pp. 2–3, no. 4 of 13 I, pp. 2–3, no. 5 of 16 I, pp. 2–3, no. 6 of 20 I, pp. 2–3, no. 7 of 23 I, pp. 2–3), *Ze wspomnień uchodźcy wojennego* (“Echo Przemyskie” Y. 21: 1916, no. 21 of 12 III, pp. 2–3, no. 22 of 16 III, pp. 2–3, no. 23 of 19 III, pp. 2–3, no. 25 of 26 III, p. 2, no. 26 of 30 III, p. 2, no. 29 of 9 IV, p. 2, no. 30 of 13 IV, p. 2, no. 34 of 27 IV, p. 2, no. 34 of 27 IV, p. 2, no. 35 of 30 IV, p. 2, no. 36 of 4 V, p. 2, no. 37 of 7 V, p. 2, no. 38 of 11 V, p. 2, no. 39 of 14 V, p. 2).

initiatives and living conditions of the refugees. That action was meant not only to provide work and income for thousands of the homeless, occupation and continued education to children and youths, but also to create support institutions for those in need, and enhance the community spirit. It also turned out that in the places where there were more Galician immigrants, Poles, Ukrainians and Jews, like Vienna, Prague, Brno, Olomouc and Graz, the local authorities not only had to approach them in a different way than in the small places, but also provided more material assistance for them. No wonder, as in most of those places, not only in Vienna, the Poles and Ukrainians had resided for a long time, had their own organizations and functioned well in local communities. The Vienna Ministry for Galicia became actively involved in organizing support for various charity initiatives and most of all for the Relief Committee for Galician and Bukovinian Refugees.<sup>24</sup>

The problems with supplies, lack of jobs or prospects for improving the conditions were a recurring motif of the letters sent to relatives in Galicia. This does not mean that the fugitives from Galicia experienced only hunger and uncertainty. Separated from their nearest and dearest, people did whatever they could to organize meetings, even if the circumstances were not too favorable. Such was the motif of a letter of an unknown Antoni. In a letter to his friend (or perhaps his partner or lover, judging by the specific choice of words), Szymon Chruszcz, soldier of the Imperial-Royal Army, on 31 March 1915 Antoni wrote from Vienna, thanking him for the regular correspondence:

You write to me like I write to you, I recognize your strong desire to return to old golden days, and your longing, your resignation and hope. Oh, how you write to me! With you alone can I talk like this without fear of being ridiculed as oversensitive. What is left to us: memories, yearning and friendship. [...] Do not be surprised that I'm writing so chaotically but to you I write freely and say whatever is on my mind. [...] Ending my letter, I kiss you and send you my best regards. Yours, Mańko.<sup>25</sup>

It is a beautiful letter, showing not only a close relation between two friends/lovers separated by war, but also the way the war changes them. Szymon turns out to be depressed by the hostilities in which he takes part – he changes, becomes indifferent and withdrawn. This change frightens him, however, and he shares that sentiment with his friend. Antoni, who signs his letters “Mańko,” also feels lonely and is scared but for different reasons. In his letter he describes his visits to museums and art galleries – his delight in works of art he had not seen before and “probably never will again.” He shares his impressions with his friend, as if he wanted to get

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<sup>24</sup> For more see e.g.: W. Bieńkowski, *Polacy w Wiedniu w latach pierwszej wojny światowej (Działalność społeczno-polityczna i kulturalno-oświatowa)*, “Studia Historyczne” 1992, vol. 35, issue 3, pp. 351–362; J. Buszko, *Udział Polaków w życiu politycznym, naukowym i kulturalnym Wiednia doby konstytucyjnej (1867–1918)*, “Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne” 1993, vol. 45, issue 1–2, pp. 31–45; K. Hödl, *Als Bettler in Leopoldstadt. Galizische Juden auf dem Weg nach Wien*, Wien 1994; R. Tabor-ski, *Polacy w Wiedniu*, Kraków 2001; H. Binder, *Galizien in Wien. Parteien, Wahlen, Fraktionen und Abgeordnete im Übergang zur Massenpolitik*, Wien 2005; W.M. Schwarz, *Galicia w Wiedniu [in:] Mit Galicji...*, pp. 175–181; D. Szymczak, op. cit., pp. 286–334.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted after *Wojenna skrzynka pocztowa*, pp. 28–29.

him out of apathy and that cruel world which had become Szymon's everyday reality: "[...] it is only now that I have grasped what the world and its creations are like. One cannot help but feel some fear and respect for it. This is how philosophies are born [...]." <sup>26</sup> The shared experience of forced emigration was so strong and widespread that even as the fleeing began, data started to be collected for a major publishing enterprise – *Księga pamiątkowa i adresowa wygnańców z Galicji i Bukowiny 1914–1915* (Memorial and Address Book of the Exiles from Galicia and Bukovina) (Vienna 1915). On 19 January 1915 a group of Poles in "Wiedeński Kurier Polski" announced an initiative "Let us count ourselves and unite." As it was pointed out in the Preface to that publication:

In wild chaos and haste we were leaving our homes. Like in some terrible explosion our family relationships, our friendships, acquaintances and businesses got scattered in all directions, people from the same nest, village or town dispersed in all corners of the world, one not knowing the whereabouts of the other and searching for each other painfully and often in vain. <sup>27</sup>

The publication covered three volumes: the residents of Lviv, Cracow and the provinces. It is a beautiful work with plenty of illustrations of major places – not only of temporary emigration but also of towns and villages in both provinces. It contains basically all temporary addresses of various people (men, women, families, single individuals, ranging from aristocrats to craftsmen and laborers, even secondary school students), which help to identify the main directions of emigration. The book provides, however, not only the basic data; it is predominantly a proof of communication between dispersed Polish people, and evidence that even despite hardships in exile successful attempts to build social bonds were made. Even a cursory reading of the three volumes reveals that besides the Poles the book contains the data of other residents of Galicia: the Ukrainians, Jews, Armenians, Germans and Czechs. Therefore, despite pre-war ethnic and political divisions, the common experience of exile unified the people of Galicia.

There was one more group of Galician exiles: those who had been settled in hastily built internment camps. Concentrated in a confined space and surrounded by walls or barbed wire, jammed into wooden sheds which resembled rather barracks than houses, often deprived of basic means of support, those Galicians felt like criminals or prisoners in their own country. They were fugitives whose homes and properties had not been protected by their government and army. Not only were they deprived of dignified survival during the many months of seeking refuge, but they were also treated with contempt as if they were criminals themselves. Though their legal status was different than that of POWs, the conditions were almost the same. <sup>28</sup> No wonder then that although these special concentration camps in Moravia were meant to be

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted after *ibidem*, p. 29.

<sup>27</sup> *Księga pamiątkowa i adresowa wygnańców z Galicji i Bukowiny 1914–1915 oraz Album pamiątkowe* [sic!]. Część II. Kraków, Wiedeń 1915, p. V.

<sup>28</sup> For more see: J. Zaťková, *Zabudnutí vojaci. Zajatci v oblasti Vojenského veliteľstva Bratislava 1914–1918*, Bratislava 2013; A. Becker, *Paradoxien in der Situation der Kriegsgefangenen 1914–1918* [in:] *Kriegsgefangenen im Europa des Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. J. Oltmer, Paderborn 2006, pp. 24–31; U. Hinz, *Humanität im Krieg? Internationales Rotes Kreuz und Kriegsgefangenenhilfe im Ersten Welt-*

only temporary solutions to help the State's inhabitants, they soon became notorious places all over the Monarchy. The Poles were usually taken to camps in the following places: Choceń (Bohemia) and Leibnitz (Styria), the Ukrainians to Gmünd (Lower Austria), Wolfsberg and Sankt Andrä (Carinthia), the Jews to Mikulov, Pohořelice, Gaya (Moravia) and Bruck (Lower Austria).<sup>29</sup> An example of the many individual tragedies is the story of Anna Biały. Her husband had been called up in early August 1914. With her father and three young children she escaped from the Przemyśl Fortress at the last moment. She got to a camp in Bohemia, where, as a result of terrible living conditions, hunger and an epidemic she lost not only her father but also two of her children. When many months later she left the camp and met her husband – a soldier of the Imperial-Royal Army – in Přerov, Bohemia, she wasn't able to look him in the eye. He husband said only three words to her: "Go back home."<sup>30</sup> The question of sanitary conditions in the places accommodating hundreds and even thousands of people and the fact that they would be kept there even as long as several years, outraged the public opinion in Galicia. Letters of admonition from different powerful circles turned out to be of no avail – some of the detained could return home only in 1917.<sup>31</sup>

Everyday travel experience and moving by trains from one province to another was shocking for the Galicians – not less than living with complete strangers in a new environment. It turned out that Austria-Hungary was a huge country with many faces and secrets unknown also to its inhabitants.<sup>32</sup> It was not merely a huge country ruled by the kind-hearted Emperor Franz Joseph, but a peculiar medley where particular nations, social groups and classes each had their own assigned places and not necessarily lived in such harmony as the state propaganda would show it. What is more, teachers and educators pointed out that wartime experiences strongly affected the psyche of children and youths. They contributed to depravity and hyperactivity of the young generation, but also to their faster growing up and faster learning.<sup>33</sup>

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*krieg* [in:] *Kriegsgefangenen im Europa*, pp. 216–236; E. Pavlik, *Ruskí zajatci v Slovincách a ich práca v baniach za prvej svetovej vojny*, "Zborník Banského Muzea" 1991, č. 15, pp. 137–150.

<sup>29</sup> T.A. Olszański, *Austriackie represje w Galicji. Obóz w Thalerhofie* [in:] *Pierwsza wojna światowa w Karpatach*, ed. T.A. Olszański, Warszawa 1985, pp. 55–56. See also: *Талергофскій Альманахъ. Выпускъ первый*, Львовъ 1924.

<sup>30</sup> A. Simmler-Świetlicka, *Opowieść z czasów I wojny. Wspomnienie o Annie Biały z domu Wojnarowicz*, "Gazeta Przemyska" 2014, no. 31 (111), p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> See e.g.: K. Rędziański, *Szkolnictwo galicyjskie na uchodźctwie wojennym (1914–1918)*, Częstochowa 2008, pp. 57–63; D. Szymczak, op. cit., pp. 291–292; B. Woźniczka, A.J. Cieślukowa, *Polacy na wygnaniu i w austriackich obozach w czasie pierwszej wojny światowej*, "Sowiniec" 1999, no. 15; A. Olejko, *Karpacka wojna trzech cesarzy. Z działań wojennych I wojny światowej na lądzie i w powietrzu*, Rzeszów 2013, pp. 504–505.

<sup>32</sup> See e.g. the experiences of Rev. Józef Budowski, which he described in several texts: *Wojenne wrażenia ze Schodnicy*, "Echo Przemyskie" Y. 21: 1916, no. 8, of 27 I, pp. 2–3, no. 9 of 30 I, pp. 2–3; *Miesiąc pobytu na Spiszu. Ze Schodnicy do Jasła*, no. 61 of 30 VII, pp. 2–3, no. 63 of 6 VIII, pp. 2–3; *Z Jasła do Bardiowa*, no. 81 of 8 X, p. 2, no. 82 of 12 XII, pp. 2–3, no. 83 of 15 X, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> M. Dalecki, *Wspomnienia przemyskich nauczycielek...*, p. 148.

### 3. THE GALICIANS IN THE ROMANOV EMPIRE

The consequence of the Russian occupation of Galicia was people moving not only westwards but also eastwards. Many Austro-Hungarian soldiers became Russian prisoners, interned in different places of the Empire. It was the case especially when on 22 March 1915 Russian troops, after long-lasting, many-month siege captured the Przemyśl Fortress, taking tens of thousands of Austro-Hungarian soldiers prisoner. However, not only the military were deported but also some inconvenient people. Among them a symbolic figure was the Greek Catholic metropolitan archbishop of Lviv, Andrey Szeptycki – the unofficial national Ukrainian leader. It is also worth remembering, though, that besides the people forcibly taken into the tsars' country there was also a quite large group of Russophiles, people with a pro-Russian outlook, who escaped eastwards along with the Russian army withdrawing from Galicia from May 1915.

For the substantial majority, however, they were not voluntary trips. Among the interned there was a soldier of the Imperial-Royal Army, Roman Dyboski, Professor of English Philology at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. He ended up first in central Russia and then in Siberia. He wrote colorful memoirs from that seven-year stay.<sup>34</sup> Soon after their publication in 1922 they became part of the canon of the Polish memoir-writing related to Polish experience of Russia. Similarly to the diaries of many nineteenth-century exiles, Dyboski's memoirs are full of such leitmotifs as hunger, cold, hard labor, ruthlessness of the tsar's system of repressions, Polish elements in the wild and backward country, relations between Polish exiles and the local people, delight in rugged nature.<sup>35</sup>

Not all exiles were completely cut off from the outer world. Dyboski, who in the years 1916–1917 was living in Kazan and Khabarovsk, felt quite comfortable among the local intelligentsia and the many exiled Poles. His letters to Professor Jan Łoś indicate that two topics prevailed in his life: 1) providing information about the fate of his friends and acquaintances and 2) issues of living standards and his profession. In exile the Cracow professor of English philology earned his living teaching English and completed his two works on history of English literature, about Shakespeare and Byron. In his letter of 11 October 1916 he divulged to his mentor that in Russia he was even found by his English friends from London, who maintained regular correspondence with him. Thanks to that he could write to Professor Łoś about the department of Polish philology at the King's College of the University of London.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> R. Dyboski, *Siedem lat w Rosji i na Syberii (1915–1921). Przygody i wrażenia*, Warszawa 1922.

<sup>35</sup> E. Pogonowska, *Wyrazić Rosję – Romana Dyboskiego „Siedem lat w Rosji i na Syberii (1915–1921)”. Przygody i wrażenia* [in:] *Komunikowanie i komunikacja w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym*, eds. K. Stępnik, M. Rajewski, Lublin 2010, p. 271–283. Cf.: M. Chrostek, *Etos dziewiętnastowiecznych zesłańców*, Wrocław 2008; idem, *Jeśli zapomnę o nich... Powiklane losy polskich więźniów politycznych pod zaborem rosyjskim*, Kraków 2009.

<sup>36</sup> The Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Arts in Kraków, sign. 4053 The correspondence of Zygmunt Lasocki from 1912–1941 (letters of R. Dyboski from 1916–1917). Other letters from

Not everyone was as lucky as Professor Roman Dyboski, though. People who stayed far from their families usually asked in their letters about everyday matters concerning their nearest and dearest: their health, well-being, current issues. Because of censorship they did not write about political or social matters – postcards from exile are, in any case, extremely laconic. The weather and problems with mail delivery were regular motifs in the letters from Russia. A certain Władysław Leja wrote on 23 November 1914 from Omsk to his family in Leżajsk that snow had been covering the ground for over a month, which he found surprising. He complained that there were hardly any friends around and his only entertainment was the Holy Mass said by a Polish priest from Galicia.<sup>37</sup>

While homesickness was visible in the letters of those inhabitants of Galicia who had ended up in western provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it was even clearer in the letters from Russia. The letters of Eugeniusz Złotnicki interned in Tashkent to his wife Filipina and four daughters living in Przemyśl are a perfect example of mutual emotional support over a distance. Eugeniusz tried to constantly comfort his wife, who could feed their young daughters only thanks to the help from friends and apparently found separation from her husband extremely hard. Due to censorship he could not be straightforward about what was happening around him but he tried to write his messages on postcards from Tashkent, showing monuments, people and nature of Uzbekistan. It was a slightly coded and fully legal way to show his beloved a modicum of the world where he had been forced to spend six years. For example, in a letter to his daughter Eugenia of 19 February 1917 he gave a brief account of the history of Samarkand and emphasized that it was known as the abode of Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan. Following the October Revolution, his letters changed – they started to be less enigmatic and referred more directly to the political and social situation. On 8 January Eugeniusz wrote to his wife:

It's a good thing that this whole edifice of lawlessness and violence has fallen apart. I am wondering, what will eventually come out of this chaos – and I am dying to know how Our Cause will emerge from that muddle and swindle. Tashkent is getting more and more depopulated, everyone is moving nearer the border.<sup>38</sup>

He was not the only prisoner of the empire who counted on the fall of tsarism to help him to return home and Poland to regain independence. The next months were to prove, however, that the situation was much more complicated.

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Russia to Kraków can also be found in the Archives of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Files of the Jagiellonian University Senate 1849–1939, Personal files of academics working between 1850–1939, S II 619 Dyboski Roman.

<sup>37</sup> *Wojskowa i wojenna korespondencja braci Lejów, 1913–1917*, ed. S. Kułacz, Oświęcim 2014, p. 47.

<sup>38</sup> Private archives of Mr Wojciech Rubinkowski in Przemyśl.

#### 4. FELLOW ONES OR STRANGERS IN GALICIA BETWEEN 1915 AND 1918?

When in June 1915 the German and Austro-Hungarian troops managed to recapture some Galician land from the Russians, including the Przemyśl Fortress, a slow homecoming started for the people from Galicia. The experience of the forced evacuation can be seen not only in the undertaken actions to rebuild the province from war damage<sup>39</sup> but most of all in the contemporary press discourse. Numerous newspaper articles describing the adventures of inhabitants of particular towns and villages in the western parts of the Habsburg Monarchy competed with the descriptions of the atrocities of the Russian occupation. It is no wonder that there appeared so many texts related to personal experiences from the first months of the war, as they at least partially expressed the feelings and emotions shared by almost all Galicians – they had been the experience of the whole generation and affected its mentality. In a region which had not seen armed struggle for many decades, and due to years of economic neglect and poor communication routes had not attracted many tourists or investors, the years 1914–1915 turned out to bring a particular cultural phenomenon. Almost all inhabitants of Galicia had been forced to experience “the alien” somehow: either through being evacuated to the western provinces or through the presence of intruders, mainly Russian troops, or – in the so-called hinterland, an area not directly affected by hostilities (the western regions of the province) – through contact with the refugees from the east.

While initially people feared the Russians and the Cossacks, and direct contact with them was associated predominantly with chaos, plunder and lawlessness, the months following the liberation of Galicia by German and Hungarian troops brought even more complex problems along: resentment, irritation and hostility towards each other – the Germans and Hungarians bullied the Poles and the Ukrainians and complained about the local civilization’s “inferiority.” That process had started even in the first days of Russian victories in the summer of 1914 and was continued in the next years. It is not my intention here to describe the relations between the Hungarians and Germans and the inhabitants of Galicia, as those problems do not concern the experience of travel outside that province of the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>40</sup> It is only worth indicating that among the peasants, both Polish, Ruthenian and

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<sup>39</sup> For more see: T. Kargol, *Odbudowa Galicji ze zniszczeń wojennych w latach 1914–1918*, Kraków 2012.

<sup>40</sup> M. Dalecki, *Samosąd na moskalofilach w Przemyślu podczas pierwszej wojny światowej*, “Rocznik Historyczno-Archiwalny” 1994, vol. 7–8, pp. 151–157; J.Z. Pająk, op. cit., pp. 85–89; A. Szczupak, *Represje austro-węgierskie wobec duchowieństwa greckokatolickiego Lemkowszczyzny w latach I wojny światowej* [in:] *Prowincja galicyjska wokół I wojny światowej. Konteksty – porównania – przykłady*, eds. T. Pudłocki, A.S. Więch, Przemyśl 2014, p. 69–79; H. z Seifertów Jabłońska, *Dziennik z oblężonego Przemyśla 1914–1915*, Przemyśl 1994, p. 41. Zob. też K. Bachman, *Twierdza Przemyśl jako teren działań szpiegowskich na rzecz Rosji w przededniu I wojny światowej*, “Studia Przemyskie” 2004, vol. 2, pp. 61–67.

Ukrainian ones, soon the following slogan gained popularity: “The Russians are bad, the Germans are bad, but the worst scoundrels are the honveds.”<sup>41</sup>

This kind of treatment was visible inside and outside of the province. Whenever the Galicians wanted to travel to Vienna during the war, they faced enormously complicated bureaucracy and a lot of problems from railway authorities. That is why even travelling to the neutral Switzerland could be full of horrors and obstacles. For instance, when sisters Tekla and Maria Ekiert wanted to get there by train for health reasons, they were repeatedly subjected to document and luggage control and body search, they had to report to the military police in each city where they changed trains, and in Innsbruck they had to undergo a several-day quarantine. Showing their documents confirming the state of their health was of no avail, nor was a Swiss specialist’s declaration that he was prepared to receive them for treatment. On their way back to Galicia – in Bohemia – they had to bribe the conductor in order to get seats on the train. Their valid tickets were not enough.<sup>42</sup> Plenty of diarists of that time wrote about the condescending attitude of the inhabitants of Cisleithania (northern and western part of Austria-Hungary) and their unacceptable demeanor towards the Galicians (regardless of their nationality). The above mentioned sisters complained that traditional gallantry towards women, for which Austrian officials had once been famous, had vanished without a trace. The fact they were Polish made their travelling even harder – everywhere they were given to understand that the Poles meant poverty and diseases.<sup>43</sup> Even in Vienna, so well known to both of them, where so many important Poles lived, their impressions were not too good. “A sordid Vienna hotel with arrogant servants that assumed a special tone when speaking to the guests from Galicia.” That was the case both inside the province and outside it. Paradoxically, the Russian occupation, instead of improving the image of the Galicians in the eyes of the citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, made it even worse.<sup>44</sup>

Galicia’s natives took revenge in 1918. With the fall of the Habsburg Monarchy and at least partial expulsion of the Ukrainian troops from Eastern Galicia in late

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<sup>41</sup> See more in: P. Szlanta, „*Najgorsze bestie to są Honwedy*”. *Ewolucja stosunku polskich mieszkańców Galicji do monarchii habsburskiej podczas I wojny światowej* [in:] *Galicyjskie spotkanie*, ed. U. Jakubowska, Warszawa 2011, pp. 166–169. For instance, Ludmiła Wróblewska, who lived in Kraków during the FWW, wrote in her *Dziennik*: “Apparently in Galicia Austrian troops brought about more destruction than the Russians, especially the honveds, a kind of Russian Cossacks, are wreaking havoc. I have recently heard of two cases near Wieliczka and Sanok, where the honveds robbed the manor houses of whatever they could. The Russians, who had come before them, behaved decently – then came the honveds and looted everything” – see P. Krzywda, *Przeżywamy straszne czasy... Dziennik wojenny Ludmiły Wróblewskiej* [in:] *Odlamki pamięci o Wielkiej Wojnie*, Kraków 2014, p. 45.

<sup>42</sup> M. Ekiertówna, *Wspomnienia z podróży do Berna szwajcarskiego*, “Echo Przemyskie” Y. 21: 1916, no. 65 of 13 VIII, pp. 2–3; no. 66 of 17 VIII, p. 2; no. 67 of 20 VIII, p. 2; no. 69 of 27 VIII, p. 2; no. 70 of 31 VIII, p. 2; no. 71 of 3 IX, p. 2; no. 72 of 7 IX, pp. 2–3; no. 73 of 10 IX, p. 2; no. 74 of 14 IX, pp. 2–3; no. 77 of 24 IX, p. 2; no. 78 of 28 IX, p. 2–3; no. 79 of 1 X, p. 2; no. 80 of 5 X, p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> For women travels during the FWW and their specific nature see e.g.: K. Sierakowska, *Kobiety – uchodźcy z ziem polskich w czasie I wojny światowej – kilka refleksji* [in:] *Kobiety i procesy migracyjne*, eds. A. Chlebowska, K. Sierakowska, Warszawa 2010, pp. 151–159.

<sup>44</sup> See e.g. U. Jakubowska, *Maryli Wołskiej pamiętnik z czasów I wojny światowej* [in:] *Galicyjskie spotkania*, ed. U. Jakubowska, Warszawa 2011, pp. 181–194. More in: K. Rędziński, op. cit., passim.

autumn there started the process of getting rid of the Bohemians and the Germans from the newly created Poland, as not Galician enough. A lot of applications were sent to the city councils and national councils for permission to remain in one's place of residence, and to work. Submitting such an application was required from the people who did not possess the right of permanent residence in particular towns. Among them prevailed German, Czech and Hungarian women as well as non-Galician Jewish women – the wives of Austro-Hungarian military, living with their children and running households in their husbands' absence, or the women who ended up in Galicia during the war due to their job (members of drama groups, cabarets, music ensembles). In most cases, even if the applicants had a certificate of good moral character and a certificate of adequate income which guaranteed they could support themselves, they were refused the right to stay in a given town.<sup>45</sup> Did those practices result only from problems with provisions, the ongoing Polish-Ukrainian war or difficult relations between the two young republics, Poland and Czechoslovakia? Surely on the local level other factors were decisive, too; the Hungarian, German and Czech women represented the nations which during the WWI had made no attempt to conceal their superiority and perhaps the new hosts of the southern Polish lands did not want to have much to do with them. An additional factor was the Poles' disillusionment with the policy of Vienna but that matter requires deeper exploration.<sup>46</sup>

## SUMMARY

Although the First World War for the majority of Galicians was a traumatic experience, it does not mean that it brought about only the destruction of economy and suffering of individuals. Already in October 1915 the editors of "Echo Przemyskie" published the article titled *What have we learned in exile?* Its anonymous author pointed out that the forced emigration had been a chance for the Poles to observe the life of the Germans, Czechs and Hungarians, where "human activity flows down a different corridor than in our country."<sup>47</sup> He emphasized the differences in the construction of cities – whereas Galician towns boasted magnificent office buildings surrounded by poor houses, in Austria, Bohemia and Moravia solid brick buildings prevailed in urban architecture, surrounded by factory chimneys. The author pointed out that the difference stemmed from the inhabitants' mentality. In Galicia the average citizen dreamed of a clerk's career, which manifested itself e.g. in the general excessive use of and respect for official titles, and in pursuing general education. On the other hand, in the countries of the Monarchy the emphasis was put on the

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<sup>45</sup> For more see e.g.: The Central National Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv, fond 583, descr. 1, cases 1–19.

<sup>46</sup> See more in: P. Szlanta, op. cit., pp. 169–178; L. Mroccka, *Galicji rozstanie z Austrią. Zarys monograficzny*, Kraków 1990.

<sup>47</sup> "Echo Przemyskie" Y. 20: 1915, no. 2 of 24 X, p. 1.

development of trade, craft and industry. Nobody was ashamed to be pursuing that kind of career; indeed, it was a source of pride. The author of the article accused the Poles of lack of courage to set up their own businesses, reluctance towards capitalist relations, lack of honesty and favoritism and nepotism, which, according to him, had to disappear in order for Poland to be able to be rebuilt from war damage.<sup>48</sup> If, however, the Galicians had learned anything during their many forced travels during the WWI, it was a very bitter lesson. They had come to associate the Habsburg Monarchy with the activity of the army and military police, who treated them harshly and even brutally, not only in exile but also upon returning to their country, mercilessly exploited by the Russians, Germans and Hungarians alike. The visible and growing atrophy of the structures of the state additionally increased the feeling of having been betrayed, used, the feeling of injustice and abuse. And for the prisoners detained in Russia the fall of the tsars' empire was a chance not only for homecoming but also reconstructing the Polish state.

If before 1914 traveling had been getting more and more popular among the middle class, whose members, fascinated by the unknown world, believed that it should be "colonized" according to European patterns, then after that date this attitude changed rapidly. The pride of being a member of the European family of nations was struck by the behavior of the so-called superior nations. The "younger Europe" was forced to face the cruel reality of being a "poor sister" of the Western one and very often stuck in resentment, as well as complexes covered and cured in the new world after the Treaty of Versailles. But the post-1918 divisions did not concern only the eastern and western parts of the continent – they reached much deeper and were much more complicated. Perhaps that was why Professor Roman Dyboski wrote in 1923, after a PEN Club meeting in London, that he had no idea the WWI had changed the attitude of the European nations to each other so much.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See "Echo Przemyskie" Y. 20: 1915, no. 1 of 21 X, pp. 3–4, no. 2 of 24 X, pp. 1–2, no. 3 of 28 X, pp. 1–2.

<sup>49</sup> R. Dyboski, *Goethe i nasza epoka (z powodu nowego przekładu „Fausta”)*, "Przegląd Warszawski" 1923, no. 26, pp. 228–229.

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