

Ewa Nizińska

Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History

Polish Academy of Sciences

The Attitudes and Social Moods of the People of Sambor during the First World War

The following article belongs to the historiographic practice called micro-history. I refer to one town – Sambor (present-day *Sambir*, Ukraine), a district (Polish: *powiat*) town in the eastern part of Galicia and the everyday life of its inhabitants during the First World War. It seems apt to describe the activities of the people of Sambor by dividing them into strategies and tactics, an approach introduced by Michel de Certeau.¹ By strategy I mean systems introduced by local communities as a response to the actions of the authorities, which created a general framework for the operation of society. Tactics are ways of using organized space and the law that governs it, plus ways of coping in a controlled space determined by strategy, including, above all, bottom-up activities undertaken by city residents in the face of war. In this article, the focus will be on the tactics of the residents of Sambor in the context of strategy – the framework created in response to the activities of the changing military authorities and army, stationed in the city. Related questions are asked about the ways that residents dealt with a previously unknown wartime situation and relations between the inhabitants and the military forces in the city.

The time period adopted here is 1914–1918. While the starting point in the case of Galicia, as the year of the beginning of the war, is unlikely to arouse doubts, 1918 does not mark the actual end of the war. In November 1918, the Polish–Ukrainian War began, which lasted until May 1919. Inclusion of this six-month period would open lines of enquiry worthy of a separate article, hence the decision here to set the upper limit at 1918. This allows the work to be separated into three parts, while maintaining coherent issue and chronological order: the period before the Russian occupation, then the time of the Russian occupation from 17 September 1914 – 15 May 1915 and finally

¹ M. de Certeau, *Wynaleźć codzienność. Sztuki działania*, transl. K. Thiel-Jańczuk, Kraków, 2008, p. 31.

the return of the Austro-Hungarian Army – until the fall of the monarchy in November 1918.

The First World War has been studied extensively. Initial works were primarily concerned with military matters, but gradually threads of social history were introduced into the field.² Books by Ukrainian authors are also increasingly appearing, which attests to the popularity of the subject.³ In works about Galicia, Sambor is mentioned most often in the context of the shifting front, but it has not yet been studied separately. While battles centered on the Przemyśl Fortress or the oil basin, Sambor remained on the periphery. In terms of infrastructure, it was primarily distinguished by a railway node created by two important lines intersecting there. There were also several grand buildings in the town (including the district court, tax office, middle school and teachers college), built mostly in the five years preceding the First World War. These, along with the railway station and barracks, in which, after dislocation in 1914, the 1st Battalion of the 77th Austro-Hungarian Infantry Regiment was stationed, constituted a significant housing base during the ongoing military operations. There was a dearth of industry in the city. Residents (the absolute majority were Poles, about 30 per cent Jews and 16 per cent Ruthenians) were mostly local traders and farmers.

In pursuit of answers to the research questions posed, sources are used that come directly from the period discussed: administrative records (from the Governorate of Galicia and the district governor) and a handful of unpublished journals. This is complemented by documents from the Sambor chapter of the Polish Women's League and documents from the Lwów (present-day Lviv) and Przemyśl Governorate established during the Russian occupation. The press is also cited – both local (from the beginning of the war) and Lwów daily newspapers, where news from Sambor is occasionally found.⁴

² See, among others: J. Pajewski, *Odbudowa państwa polskiego 1914–1918*, Warszawa, 1978; id., *Pierwsza wojna światowa 1914–1918*, Warszawa, 2014; W. Najdus, Ż. Kormanowa, *Historia Polski*, vol. 3, pt. 3, Warszawa, 1974; J.Z. Pająk, *Od autonomii do niepodległości. Kształtowanie się postaw politycznych i narodowych społeczeństwa Galicji w warunkach Wielkiej Wojny 1914–1918*, Kielce, 2012; T. Pawlik, *Bitwa pod Lwowem*, Chełm, 2007; *Wielka Wojna poza linią frontu*, ed. by D. Grinberg, J. Snopko, G. Zackiewicz, Białystok, 2013; K. Sierakowska, *Śmierć – Wygnanie – Głód w dokumentach osobistych. Ziemie polskie w latach Wielkiej Wojny 1914–1918*, Warszawa, 2015.

³ Among others: I. Берест, *Перша світова війна на землях Східної Галичини і Західної Волині*, Львів, 2015.

⁴ Most of the sources that I used are stored in Lviv archives: Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi istorychnyi arkhiv Ukrainy u Lvovi (the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv, hereafter: TsDIAL) and Derzhavnyi arkhiv Lvivskoi oblasti (the State Archives of the Lviv

Samborians Face the Outbreak and the First Months of the Great War

The Samborians knew about the tense and unstable political situation in Europe after the murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand from reading newspaper articles,⁵ and thus they expected events of momentous importance. However, if they expected war, they did not necessarily anticipate its scale.⁶ In the city and its surroundings, it seemed very distant. At the end of July, although many men received call-ups to military service, life was virtually unchanged. The only noticeable things were the unprecedented throngs gathering around newspaper kiosks. Everyone wanted to know the latest news.⁷ Soon the city was swarming with soldiers, Austrian or Hungarian armies appeared again and again. In the increasingly war-panicked conditions, arrests began of alleged spies or suspected Moscovophiles. Detailed records were maintained, that were later used to carry out deportations from Galicia.⁸

Although the first arrests took place before the formal outbreak of the war, it was with the actual start of action on the fronts that the wave of Austrian repression increased towards those believed to sympathize with Russia. The authorities often based the arrests on denunciations from informants. Sambor's military commander was willing to pay for information, as made clear in a letter: "If someone learns about such persons, they should be reported to the nearest civil or military authorities. Reporting a person that is proved to have engaged in espionage or Moscovophile propaganda will be rewarded with 50–500 Kronen."⁹

Oblast, hereafter: DALO). A few are from the Archiwum Akt Nowych (the Archives of Modern Records, hereafter: AAN) in Warsaw.

⁵ Among others: "Po zamachu sarajewskim", *Gazeta Lwowska*, no. 154, 9 Jul. 1914, pp. 1–2; no. 155, 11 Jul. 1914, p. 1; "Austro-Węgry wobec propagandy wielkoserbkiej", *Gazeta Lwowska*, no. 156, 12 Jul. 1914, p. 1; "Napężenie austriacko-serbskie", *Gazeta Lwowska*, no. 163, 21 Jul. 1914, p. 2; "Zatarg austro-serbski (Zerwanie stosunków dyplomatycznych)", *Gazeta Lwowska*, a special addition to no. 168, 26 Jul. 1914, p. 2; "Mobilizacja w Serbii", *Kurier Lwowski*, no. 303, 18 Jul. 1914, p. 1; "Ultimatum Austro-Węgier", *Kurier Lwowski*, no. 314, 24 Jul. 1914, p. 1.

⁶ These were not just local experiences. In the summer of 1914, the mood of expectation and uncertainty prevailed among the inhabitants of Polish lands, but also the belief that the European crisis would soon be averted. For more, see: K. Sierakowska, *Śmierć...*, pp. 37–41.

⁷ DALO, fond (hereafter: f.) 1245 (The Boykivshchyna Society), opis (hereafter: op.) 1, sprawa (hereafter: spr.) 34, l. 2.

⁸ W. Najdus, *Ż. Kormanowa*, op. cit., p. 61.

⁹ *Талергофській Альманахъ. Выпускъ первый*, as cited in: A. Szczupak, op. cit., p. 46. A similar appeal was made in the daily press, see: "Галичина в часі війни", *Діло* [Самбір], no. 180, 13 Aug. 1914, p. 4.

In this city of 20,000, an atmosphere of mutual distrust took hold, stirred up by military authorities and heightened by a sense of helplessness towards the failures of the army at the front and emerging information about people taken away to Thalerhof and other smaller camps.¹⁰

At the same time, representatives of all ethnic groups living in the city organized demonstrations of support for the emperor and the Austro-Hungarian Army, as well as anti-Russian demonstrations. For example, Ukrainians led by their local leaders, including Danylo Stakhura and the priest Franciszek Rabiej, showed their support in the streets for the Austrian and Hungarian armies.¹¹ They believed that fighting at the side of the Central Powers, in the event of victory against Russia, would lead to their independence.¹² The Poles also saw their chance, which can explain the positive emotions expressed, especially in the beginning. In addition to the residents, soldiers shared these emotions too. Mobilization to the multinational, royal-imperial army, took place calmly, in an atmosphere of “enthusiasm hard to comprehend by posterity”,¹³ as wrote Henryk Wereszycki. The relative optimism (largely tied to the hope of liberation or autonomy) that buoyed the Samborians in the initial period, gradually weakened in the following days of August, and left for good from the beginning of September 1914. The ongoing battles had their effect. The August victories at Kraśnik and Komarów did not hide the weakness of the right wing of the army fighting in Galicia, suffering defeats at the front near Lwów and Rawa Ruska in the first half of September.¹⁴ In the context of the loss of earlier enthusiasm, it was not without significance for the Samborians that “all restaurants, taverns and hotels were filled with drunken Magyars [Hungarians], who were everywhere in the city.”¹⁵ While the populace wanted to see the officers as valiant, and sometimes gallant heroes, the behavior of many deviated from this ideal.

¹⁰ Based on sources known to me, it is difficult to assess the scale of these deportations. Partial information is provided by questionnaires of those arrested and sent to Thalerhof, that were completed by their families in 1918. They form the basis for the assertion that both Poles and Ukrainians, representatives of various professions – from farmers to tax officials and judges – were deported from Sambor. See: DALO, f. 1148 (Danylo Stakhura), op. 1, spr. 12.

¹¹ A. Szczupak, op. cit., p. 60.

¹² DALO, f. 1148, op. 1, spr. 12, l. 78.

¹³ After: J. Pajewski, *Pierwsza wojna...*, p. 153.

¹⁴ J. Bator, *Wojna galicyjska. Działania armii austro-węgierskiej na froncie północnym (galicyjskim) w latach 1914–1915*, Kraków, 2008, pp. 57–73; J. Pajewski, *Pierwsza wojna...*, p. 231.

¹⁵ Ю.Є. Рабій, *Княжий город Самбір*, Львів, 1999, p. 130.

All of this shows that in the initial phase of the war in August 1914, the attitude of the inhabitants towards the Austro-Hungarian Army was ambivalent. On one hand, the army was associated with specific hopes and it was believed to be strong, and on the other hand, the behavior of officers staying in the city was assessed negatively, and the atmosphere built by mutual suspicion had a corrosive effect on local society. Ambiguity in the assessment of military behavior and the decisions they made in matters important to the inhabitants, remained one of the defining features of relations between them, which persisted late into the Great War.

The Atmosphere in Sambor in View of the Establishment and Functioning of National Military Formations in the Austro- -Hungarian Army

Starting in August 1914, the Sambor community was interested in the creation and functioning of national military formations, fighting as part of the Austro-Hungarian Army – namely the Polish Legions and the Legion of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen. In the case of the Ukrainian Riflemen, volunteers applied at district recruitment points in response to appeals from the Ukrainian Main Council.¹⁶ In Sambor, the district point was led by Danylo Stakhura and Andriy Tchaikovsky – Ukrainian lawyers associated with the national movement. Their tasks included accepting volunteers' applications, but also preparing the young men (even minimally) before they were sent to Stryj, where at the turn of August and September 1914, a gathering of volunteers for the Riflemen took place.¹⁷ They arrived equipped and having completed initial training. Many of the volunteers returned to Sambor however, because, according to regulations, the Legion was to total no more than 2,000 people at that time.¹⁸ A large group was sent back home, while some were employed in field work in the suburbs.

¹⁶ The council was formed on 1 Aug. 1914 and had a pro-Austrian character. It was to some extent the equivalent of the Polish Supreme National Committee, but of smaller importance due to pro-Russian sympathies among Ukrainians, which grew after the wave of Austrian repression. For more: W. Najdus, *Ż. Kormanowa*, op. cit., p. 79.

¹⁷ А. Цайковський, *Спогади, Листи, Дослідження*, Львів, 2002, vol. 1, p. 203.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 206, cf. O. Krasivskyj, "Ententa a problem odrodzenia ukraińskiej i polskiej państwowości w latach 1918–1921", in: *Polska i Ukraina w walce o niepodległość 1918–1920*, ed. by T. Krząstek, Łódź, 2009, pp. 39–51.

Among the Poles in Sambor, the most positive sentiments focused on the initiative to create the Polish Legions, that were called into being by the Supreme National Committee and the volunteers applying to its ranks. They were largely graduates of Sambor secondary schools, who in the interwar period settled in the city for good.¹⁹ In the district committee of the Supreme National Committee, there were several teachers, the owner of a construction company and people previously associated with the Riflemen's Association or the "Falcon" (*Sokół*) Polish Gymnastic Society.²⁰ Legionnaires enjoyed high esteem among Sambor Poles, almost immediately gaining legendary status, and certainly being seen as the embodiment of heroism and patriotism. The activities of the local chapter of the Polish Women's League, established in August 1915, had a significant impact on this perception.²¹

The chairwoman of the board of the chapter was Józefa Błotnicka, the mother of a legionnaire, and at the same time a well-known social activist in Sambor. The women organized afternoon teas and Masses with the participation of legionnaires, and collections of necessities for the men at the front. Like other committees, they organized the sewing of underwear and balaclavas, and in December they prepared Christmas packages sent to the front.²² These activities were part of the strategy of the National Board of the Women's League and, although they were meticulously carried out, it is difficult to consider them a manifestation of entrepreneurship by the local women. There were, however, also initiatives that were highly innovative. One was the suggestion that the unprinted side of bread cards should carry advertising by companies from the region. The idea was to stimulate the economy while gaining support for statutory activities.²³ The chapter gained a growing number of supporters

¹⁹ When establishing the personal data of legionnaires, I used the search engine: <http://wykaz.muzeumpilsudski.pl/> and materials stored in Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe (the Central Military Archives) in Warsaw-Rembertów (mainly personnel and decoration records).

²⁰ J.Z. Pająk, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

²¹ Although the formal date suggests August 1915 as the time when the activity of the Sambor's chapter began, its activity was already visible earlier, mainly in the form of fundraising for charity purposes. At that time, however, it was decided to formalize the activity and its direction. As one of the women involved wrote: "Our city, not wanting to remain deaf to the call for social work, and encouraged by the positive work of the League in other cities, also wants to devote our time, resources and thoughts to our legionnaires." (after: AAN, Liga Kobiet Polskich, ref. no. 57/118, a correspondence with the Board of the Women's League, Nov. 1915, l. 13).

²² AAN, Liga Kobiet Polskich, ref. no. 57/118, l. 10, 13, 20 et al.

²³ *Ibid.*, l. 47–50.

and members – on the first anniversary of its founding it had 107 members, which in comparison with the initial number of 22 testified to the rapidly growing popularity and demand in the city for such targeted activity.²⁴ The greatest popularity of the League in Sambor was after the end of the Russian occupation and with the return of the Austrian authorities. The community awaited news about the Legions. It was particularly significant during the Russian occupation, when positive rumors and gossip raised morale and kept up spirits.

The Russian Occupation (1914–1915)

As I have already mentioned, the monarchy's armies were preparing for simultaneous fighting in Serbia and Galicia. The advantage of the Russians on the Galician front was devastating. The Russian army entered defenseless Sambor, which Mayor Józef Steuermann, and part of the city council and employees of the municipal treasury, had left a few days earlier.²⁵ The departure of the authorities caused panic among at least part of the community, which left the city and their belongings behind. It is difficult to perceive this escape as a conscious tactic of survival – it seems to have been the effect of terror and rumors about the brutality of the Russian army. Similar situations also occurred in other Galician cities, including Tarnów.²⁶

A large part of the population of occupied Eastern Galicia manifested an open aversion to both the Russian army and the policy of the occupation which was identified with the figure of Yuri Bobrinsky – the provincial governor general. This was also true for Sambor. Bobrinsky supported the activities of pro-Moscow groups and conducted a policy of Russification. City officials were replaced by local Russophiles, whose place was filled by an influx of people from the depths of the empire. For nationally conscious Ukrainians (not to mention Poles), the introduction of Russian as an official language was difficult to accept. The Russian clergy, administration and army were seen as crude and immoral in their behavior.²⁷ Greek-Catholics, predominant among Sambor's Ukrainians, were urged to convert to Russian Orthodoxy, but there were

²⁴ Ibid., l. 82.

²⁵ Ibid., l. 92.

²⁶ W. Szczepanik, "Życie codzienne w okupowanym mieście – Tarnów w rękach rosyjskich (10 listopada 1914 – 6 maja 1915)", in: *Wielka Wojna poza linią frontu...*, p. 310.

²⁷ A. Szczupak, op. cit., p. 182.

no takers.²⁸ Another form of repression aimed at the Greek Catholic Church by the Russian authorities was to limit the celebration of services. This situation also pertained to the district, where the local Moscovophile intelligentsia (about 80 people) asked the authorities for a total ban. They did not achieve their goal, since the services were still celebrated, only the time had changed to the early mornings.²⁹

As one of the elements of the Russification policy pursued by Bobrinsky, Russian language courses began to be organized in December 1914, which were indispensable, because instruction in state schools was to be conducted in Russian. Only 65 people attended the classes.³⁰ In the spring of 1915, the Governorate of Przemyśl planned to create a two-class school with Russian as the language of instruction, but problems with incomplete paperwork prolonged the process.³¹ At the same time, the remaining schools remained either idle or functioned intermittently, which was tied to their failure to meet the conditions imposed by the governor-general of Galicia³² or with the occupation of their premises for other purposes (primarily hospitals).³³

To raise soldiers' morale and positively prime the local population, a visit by Tsar Nicholas II to Galicia was organized for the end of April 1915. The ruler also visited Sambor, but it did not bring the expected results, because everything was carefully arranged and very remote from the impoverished, everyday life of the inhabitants.³⁴ The experience of the Russification policy led the population to long for the Austrian authorities. Everyone, though the most affluent to a lesser extent, was affected by problems with provisions, hunger and requisitions.³⁵ Trade between the city and the countryside was difficult, so the provisioning opportunities in Sambor diminished further. For people affected by the war, the "Rescue Committee" was created with the consent

²⁸ TsDIAL, f. 146 (The Galicia Governorate), op. 4, spr. 5189, l. 19.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, l. 111.

³⁰ TsDIAL, f. 768 (The Directorate of Galician Folk Schools in Lwów), op. 1, spr. 10, l. 16; see also: TsDIAL, f. 768, op. 1, spr. 7, ll. 77–79.

³¹ TsDIAL, f. 645 (Chancellery of the Governor of Przemyśl), op. 1, spr. 54, l. 5.

³² The conditions for the opening of schools in Galicia were formulated in a January 1915 proclamation (cf. "Obwieszczenie Pana generał-gubernatora Galicji", *Kurier Lwowski*, no. 13, 13 Jan. 1915, p. 1).

³³ *Sprawozdanie dyrekcji państwowego gimnazjum I im. Adama Mickiewicza w Samborze*, Sambor, 1921, p. 1.

³⁴ J. Bator, op. cit., pp. 256–257.

³⁵ Cf. K. Serakowska, "Braki w zaopatrzeniu – niedożywienie – głód. Ziemie polskie w latach 1914–1918", in: *Wielka Wojna poza linią frontu...*, pp. 71–72.

of Bobrinsky. It was a citizen's organization, but regarded as "Russian".³⁶ Meanwhile, the residents did not want the support offered to the poorest by Russian aid committees³⁷ and sought other sources.

Historical records also allow for reflection on the situation of individual nationalities. In a letter of the district governor to the Presidium of the Imperial-Royal Representation from October 1915, we read: "During the invasion, the Russians were equally hostile to the Ukrainians as to the entire population of the district. The only distinction I observed was that the Russians probably did not acknowledge the Ukrainian language, because all of their announcements were issued only in Russian and Polish. In private use, Ukrainian was allowed as well as Polish."³⁸ However, Ukrainian associations suffered badly – they were banned, their equipment stolen or destroyed. In the suburbs, soldiers destroyed public places, and sometimes also private houses – so burned or ruined that their inhabitants did not have anything to come back to after 1915.³⁹ Losses were suffered by merchants and producers; two large Jewish enterprises were devastated – M. Tieger's spirits distillery and a brickyard.⁴⁰ Sambor's Jews suffered during the invasion and had an unambiguous attitude towards the Russians, but their situation was relatively good compared to other places.⁴¹ This is attested to by a large influx of Jews to Sambor fleeing from other Galician towns.⁴² The resentments of the Polish and Ukrainian populations were effectively by the authorities, which resulted in their favorable disposition towards anti-Jewish policies.⁴³

In his policy of Russifying Galicia and attempting to integrate it into the rest of the Russian Empire, Bobrinsky was rather restrained, fearing revolts of the local population.⁴⁴ He also sought (though unsuccessfully) the support of influential groups and the aristocracy.⁴⁵ Less restraint characterized the officers

³⁶ The Lwów press wrote about its creation: "Komitet ratunkowy", *Kurier Lwowski*, no. 44, 31 Jan. 1915, p. 6.

³⁷ Sz. An-ski, *Tragedia Żydów galicyjskich w okresie I wojny światowej. Wrażenia i refleksje z podróży po kraju*, Przemyśl, 2010, pp. 188–189.

³⁸ TsDIAL, f. 146, op. 4, spr. 5189, l. 19.

³⁹ Ю.Е. Раби́й, op. cit., p. 119. See also: TSDIAL, f. 146, op. 4, spr. 5357, ll. 2–3.

⁴⁰ TsDIAL, f. 146, op. 4, spr. 5357, ll. 3–4.

⁴¹ *The Book of Sambor and Stari Sambor: a Memorial to the Jewish Communities*, ed. by A. Manor, Tel-Aviv, 1980, p. XIX.

⁴² P. Szlanta, "Doświadczenia wojenne Żydów galicyjskich", in: *Żydzi i Polacy w okresie walk o niepodległość 1914–1920*, ed. by H. Węgrzynek, Warszawa, 2015, pp. 70–72.

⁴³ Cf. Sz. An-ski, op. cit., pp. 33–34.

⁴⁴ A. Szczupak, op. cit., p. 103.

⁴⁵ W. Najdus, *Ż. Kormanowa*, op. cit., p. 81.

and Cossacks who destroyed the property of residents and local organizations. Requisitions made in Sambor and surrounding villages were not organized (as they were on large farms), so they were perceived by the inhabitants as robberies and looting. The Cossacks were particularly infamous – to them was attributed the most brutal devastation, and also the rapes of women.⁴⁶

It is worth noting that in the sources on Sambor, the portrayal of both Magyars and Cossacks are stereotypical: the first were degenerate barbarian alcohol abusers, the second were crude degenerates, destroying everything that stood in their way. The information and rumors that came to Sambor from the inhabitants of other Galician towns influenced this unambiguously negative image. There were said to have been attacks and pogroms, where the Cossacks burned entire districts and murdered all of the inhabitants.⁴⁷ Narratives assigned them the role of the alien, whose traits are the opposite of the heroism and steadfastness of “our” soldiers on the front – though sometimes fighting in opposing armies.⁴⁸

It would be an oversimplification to say that no one from the local community supported the Russian authorities, or at least was able to use the invasion for their own purposes, including enriching themselves. Among the residents there was a group of declared Russophiles, who were organized in several associations. Through less than nine months of occupation, some quickly gained clerical careers in the county administration or the municipal coffers.⁴⁹

In May 1915, the battlefield between the Austrian and German allies and the Russians was gradually shifting to the East due to the former’s victories. From 15–20 May, it rolled through the Sambor district. As part of the “scorched earth” policy, several buildings were destroyed, including the district governor’s. The Russians also took hostages, including the former

⁴⁶ TsDIAL, f. 146, op. 4, spr. 5126, l. 89.

⁴⁷ Cf. stories recorded by Sz. An-ski, op. cit., pp. 125, 190–191.

⁴⁸ It is worth mentioning that the Jews, appreciating their soldiers fighting in both the Russian and Austrian armies, passed on information about their steadfastness of spirit and willingness to help their fellow citizens. An-ski even transmits a (simply unbelievable) story about Jewish soldiers in the Russian army who, along with others, robbed shops but then returned stolen goods at night (ibid., p. 140).

⁴⁹ Among them, Alojzy Horwath, the acting mayor during the invasion. The assessment of his actions is not unambiguous – on the one hand he was accused of embezzling money from the city coffers, on the other hand he tried to protect the population against the abuse of Russian troops and allocated money to help the poorest; cf. TsDIAL, f. 146, op. 8, spr. 1896, l. 6; DALO, f. 1209 (Magistrate of the city of Sambor), op. 1, spr. 79, ll. 7, 9; “Z kraju”, *Gazeta Narodowa*, no. 16, 18 Jan. 1915, p. 3.

director of the district hospital, two other doctors, several Jewish merchants and representatives of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, including Danylo Stakhura. First, they were imprisoned in Lwów, then transported to Russia. They were to guarantee that the Austrian government would not repress pro-Russian Samborians.⁵⁰ It was hoped that the return of the monarchical government would lead to the normalization of relations, the reconstruction of the city and would gradually eliminate the food supply difficulties faced by the district population.

The Monarchy Rules Again

“Here you can see trenches in all directions and traces of smaller cannonshot. All manors destroyed completely, no inventory at all [...]. I found Sambor relatively undamaged, several burned buildings, including the train station and railway buildings, of which there barely remained a trace. The district governor’s building was completely destroyed [...]. Private apartments, those in which no one remained, looted. Everywhere looted fences and railings, from the outside, the city also makes a sad impression”.

This is how the governor of Sambor described the city in a district status report after the Russian invasion.⁵¹ In such depressing surroundings, the Sambor population enthusiastically welcomed the Austro-Hungarian armies entering the city, although German troops accompanying the liberators aroused uneasiness, especially among the Polish community.⁵² In July 1915, the pre-war mayor Józef Steuermann returned.⁵³ Despite obstacles, the district governorate, magistrate, post office, some schools and other institutions, began to function again. Along with them came calm and the much awaited normalization, but there could be no question of returning to the daily life remembered from before July 1914. There was a shortage of supplies, sanitary problems and insufficient funds to rebuild the most important buildings.

⁵⁰ DALO, f. 1223 (Magistrate of the city of Sambor), op. 1, spr. 81.

⁵¹ TsDIAL, f. 146, op. 8, spr. 1896, ll. 4–5.

⁵² Ibid., l. 5. An analogous situation is described by K. Ruszała in relation to Gorlice (id., “Wybrane problemy z funkcjonowania miasta Gorlice i życia mieszkańców po przejściu frontu w 1915 r.”, in: *Wielka Wojna poza linią frontu...*, pp. 321–333). In turn, on reluctance towards the German ally: J.Z. Pająk, op. cit., pp. 151–153.

⁵³ Before his return, the government commissioner, Adam Skarżyński, was in charge of the city for two months. Cf. DALO, f. 1209, op. 1, spr. 79, l. 7.

Meanwhile, in the opinion of the residents, the authorities did not focus on their everyday problems – they did not react to prevailing sanitary conditions and troubles. The population demanded their rights and an improvement to the situation by writing applications and requests to the authorities, because they had been brought up in the spirit of legalism.⁵⁴ The 2nd Army Stage Command in the eastern area was the *de facto* Austrian government in the district.⁵⁵ Most of the bureaucrats did not speak Polish, so German was introduced in official situations.⁵⁶ For the local community, this was a step backwards in terms of socio-political rights, which they now shared in after Galicia had been granted autonomy. The initial enthusiasm of the Samborians was quickly dampened by the fact that the Austrian civil and military authorities spent a lot of their time tracking down traitors and Moscovophiles. Denunciations were the basis for pursuing everyone who had any relations with the Russian authorities. The atmosphere of suspicion known before the invasion returned on a much larger scale. The Ukrainians found themselves in the most difficult situation. The authorities also became suspicious about the hostages taken by the Russians and were sluggish in trying to secure their return – the residents and the district governor had asked about Danylo Stakhura and the two Sambor doctors several times.⁵⁷ Despite their efforts, the hostages did not return to the city until February 1918. The dislike for the Austro-Hungarian military authorities, as well as for the previous occupation and frontline activities, favored the shaping of national consciousness. It was noticed that the partitioning powers did not care about the area and its inhabitants.

A matter of primary importance for the functioning of the Sambor community, after the Russians left the city, was to improve the sanitary situation. Filth dominated the landscape, and partially destroyed buildings were littered with scraps of food and dead animals. The municipal cemetery, partially destroyed by the Russians, required urgent renovation, threatening a sanitary catastrophe

⁵⁴ More about this: W. Najdus, *Ż. Kormanowa*, op. cit., p. 189. It is worth noting that these applications and requests are today a valuable source, showing the contemporary everyday life and problems of the inhabitants of Galicia.

⁵⁵ A similar situation, where the actual power was exercised by military commands that dominated the civil administration, took place in Galicia, cf. *ibid.*, p. 183.

⁵⁶ J.Z. Pająk, op. cit., p. 164.

⁵⁷ TsDIAL, f. 146, op. 4, spr. 5128 (A letter from Imperial and Royal District Commissioner of Sambor to the Imperial and Royal Presidium, 9 Dec. 1916), l. 111; cf. also: TsDIAL, f. 146, op. 8, spr. 1896, l. 10.

and hindering the burial of the dead.⁵⁸ Equally serious was the deteriorating provisioning situation and difficult access to cultural life, the press and other sources of information. The briefest of newspaper articles became a canvas for discussions and analyses.⁵⁹ The stagnation and fatigue spreading to many places, was aptly described by Szymon An-ski: "the city [looked] like someone had sucked all the juices out of it [...]. I saw the same picture in all major cities. They all looked like they were meant to die."⁶⁰ The re-opening of the middle school in August 1916 was an attempt to normalize the situation, but the conditions of its operation were very difficult. The pre-war building, occupied by other institutions, could not accept students. The school dormitory loaned out several rooms and classes were held there until 1920. The learning lacked its old regularity, the beginning of the year was moved, it was impossible to predict when it would end and whether breaks (caused for example by the lack of fuel in winter) would not impede the implementation of the already-truncated material.⁶¹ Many students were forced to interrupt their education because of illnesses that affected them or their family members. The city was also plagued by epidemics of infectious diseases (including Spanish influenza at the end of the war).⁶²

A new element was the ever-increasing number of wounded, including soldiers returning from the front. The military hospital took over the buildings of the municipal treasury, the middle school, teacher's college and school dormitories. Many residents applied for work as auxiliary medical staff. Others, if able, provided food items, especially milk and eggs.⁶³ The constant influx of new wounded stimulated the sacrifice of the local community, but at the same time they made a depressing impression and negatively influenced its morale.

Alongside individual help, Samborians increasingly organized into aid groups and committees, which was characteristic of larger towns. It was there, by and large, that people interested in public affairs lived, among

⁵⁸ The area of the cemetery was enlarged even before the beginning of the war, but then a new part was used for the organization of war cemeteries – Austrian, Polish, and Russian. In the end, there was again a shortage of space, frequent burials intensified the chaos, and in hurried conditions, care was not always taken to comply with sanitary standards; DALO, f. 1223, op. 1, spr. 81, ll. 41–45.

⁵⁹ Sz. An-ski, op. cit., p. 395.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 359.

⁶¹ DALO, f. 1262, op. 58, spr. 260, ll. 10, 16, 21.

⁶² In the report on infectious diseases from the spring of 1915, typhus and scarlet fever appeared most frequently, see: TsDIAL, f. 645, op. 1, spr. 45.

⁶³ Ю.Е. Раби́й, op. cit., p. 133; TsDIAL, f. 146, op. 8, spr. 1896, l. 10.

whom the representatives of the local intelligentsia predominated.⁶⁴ There are traces of the aid committee activity in Sambor in most sources.⁶⁵ It was widely believed that it would be easier to deal with supply shortages and to organize help for those in need as a group. Cooperation was also likely a remedy for loneliness for those who awaited the return of loved ones. These (often informal) organizations were hybrid in nature – they appeared and disappeared, sometimes reviving in a new form, responding to newly emerging needs. Some of them were ethnically homogeneous; others attracted residents regardless of their background. An example of the latter was the committee established in 1916 for the occasion of the celebration of Easter. Its task was to collect gifts for soldiers from Sambor on the front and support for their families who remained in the city. Mostly women – wives of lawyers and teachers – were involved in its function. The composition of the board was also interesting: the aforementioned Józefa Błotnicka, Józef Steuermann – an assimilated Jew, representing the city council, Aron Lewin – a Sambor rabbi and Andriy Tchaikovsky – a lawyer, and later district commissar in the short-lived West Ukrainian People's Republic. In 1917, the same organization expanded its activities to look after the graves of fallen soldiers from the district.⁶⁶

When necessary, external help was requested. For Jews, of whom almost half of the 7,000 staying in the city needed help, support was provided by the Jewish residents of Vienna.⁶⁷ Lending and subsidies were also sought – most often for the rebuilding of houses or factories or for the purchase of livestock that was requisitioned or seized during the invasion.⁶⁸ In the city itself, the situation of craftsmen, especially tailors, was difficult. They did not have enough work to support themselves or to pay for materials. They asked the Lwów Chamber of Commerce and Industry for support. Consent to use the Chamber's resources enabled them to survive in the most difficult moments, but did not solve their problems in the long run.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Cf. Sz. An-ski, op. cit., p. 359.

⁶⁵ See i.a.: DALO, f. 1209, op. 1, spr. 80, ll. 1, 14; TsDIAL, f. 146, op. 4, spr. 6057, ll. 98–100; *Gazeta Lwowska*, 13 Feb. 1917, p. 4; *Gazeta Lwowska*, 18 Mar. 1917, p. 4.

⁶⁶ DALO, f. 1209, op. 1, spr. 80, ll. 2, 14.

⁶⁷ *The Book of Sambor...*, p. XIX.

⁶⁸ Most of the distilleries in the county were destroyed. The owners of farms, who suffered losses, asked for subsidies for the purchase of livestock; cf. TsDIAL, f. 191, op. 2, spr. 15, ll. 1, 2, and spr. 54, l. 67.

⁶⁹ TsDIAL, f. 461, op. 1, spr. 83, l. 9.

The rebuilding dragged out over time, because high prices also affected the cost of building materials. The result was growing housing problems in the city, both for private individuals and institutions.⁷⁰ Unfinished buildings were uninhabitable, and many others were occupied by the military. The difficulties associated with the inventory of usable buildings was evidenced by the fact that the municipal treasury was moved to the detention center cells next to the county court building, where the offices of the district governorate had already been relocated.⁷¹

Assistance and support was organized not only for the residents, but also for evacuees from the eastern districts where war was raging. The wave of migration was triggered by General Alexei Brusilov's offensive in the summer of 1916 and continued in the following months. The Russian army surprised the Austro-German army and occupied Brody, Halicz and Stanisławów, its progress halted only by a lack of ammunition.⁷² Refugees from the frontier areas were sent to refugee camps located in Ungarisch Hradisch⁷³ or to Galician districts located west of the front line. Due to its strategic location, they were directed to the Sambor railway station and there it was decided in which direction the journey would continue. Every few days transports (usually several dozen people) from Przemyśl, Bursztyn and other towns, were transported to the city.⁷⁴ Some of them remained in the municipalities of the Sambor district, and in the city itself, large, though partly destroyed, former hotel buildings, were prepared for them. According to a document from a district representative, the number of refugees remaining in the Sambor district in the first months of 1917, was estimated at around 2,500 people. In the same document, we read that the army should care for evacuees in cooperation with the district governorate. The changing situation on the front however, meant that the responsibility fell to the local community.⁷⁵ It rose to the occasion, even though the residents themselves were suffering due to the shortage of food.

Here we come to the most important set of elements, which at that time determined the attitudes of the population towards the army, the authorities and the sequences of coping tactics the inhabitants employed. In 1916 and 1917, provisioning problems were the key to functioning. A rationing system

⁷⁰ TsDIAL, f. 146, op. 23, spr. 2386, ll. 9, 13.

⁷¹ Ibid., l. 1.

⁷² J. Pajewski, *Pierwsza wojna...*, p. 361.

⁷³ P. Szlanta, op. cit., p. 68.

⁷⁴ TsDIAL, f. 146, op. 4, spr. 5991, ll. 67, 97, 104, 111 et al.

⁷⁵ Ibid., l. 92.

was introduced, and crop yields remained at the disposal of the army. However, local needs in Galicia were addressed – the rations of grain from 1916 to 1917 were constantly decreasing.⁷⁶ Refugees from the eastern districts remained destitute, unless they were able to find paid employment.⁷⁷ To augment supplies, Samborians bought agricultural produce on the black market from neighboring villages.⁷⁸ Even there, however, there was a shortage of food. In such a situation, the soldiers staying in the city were seen through the prism of food distribution. In addition, there were complaints that the military was effectively avoiding assisting with haymaking as they had promised.⁷⁹

Relations were also worsened by the overall weakening of pro-Austrian sentiments in mid-1917. Józef Piłsudski's legionnaires refused to take a loyalty oath to the German emperor. This led to the internment of a significant group of people and the incorporation of the rest into the Royal Polish Army, created within the framework of the Kingdom of Poland. Meanwhile, from the disappointment towards the conciliatory policy by some of the Ukrainian leaders, the Ukrainian Military Organization was formed in the same year. Its commanders supported the Ukrainization of Eastern Galicia as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and opposed the annexation of Ukrainian lands into the Polish State.⁸⁰ There was no agreement among the Ukrainians themselves, even in one locality. The pro-Russian elements organized socialist rallies, wanting to gather support for building a broadly autonomous state within Russia.⁸¹

Parallel to the development of political debate in the city, the cultural sphere was reviving. One element was the lectures presented by the Lwów University and Polytechnic in the Province. Dr Józef Szafran (headmaster of the middle school), among others, led them in Sambor.⁸² Stefan Turski, then a popular artist, gave concerts in several Galician cities. As the press reported: "the program will be filled with merry war episodes, current songs and couplets."⁸³ Cultural events were a backdrop for the private expectations of people looking for the return of loved ones – fathers and sons who fought as soldiers on the front. The train station again became the most important point in the city. Returns were

⁷⁶ W. Najdus, *Ż. Kormanowa*, op. cit., p. 176.

⁷⁷ Cf. J.Z. Pająk, op. cit., p. 177.

⁷⁸ Ю.Є. Рабій, op. cit., p. 135.

⁷⁹ *Gazeta Lwowska*, no. 291, 22 Dec. 1917, p. 1.

⁸⁰ J.Z. Pająk, op. cit., p. 197.

⁸¹ *TsDIAL*, f. 146, op. 4, spr. 7170, ll. 80–84.

⁸² *Gazeta Lwowska*, 14 Feb. 1918, p. 5.

⁸³ *Gazeta Lwowska*, 28 Mar. 1918, p. 4.

joyful, but also accompanied by fear of what would happen next. The returning legionnaires sometimes had nothing besides the uniform on their back.⁸⁴

The beginning of 1918 was spent on Polish-Ukrainian tests of force in Galicia related to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which did not mention the territory of the Kingdom of Poland. The Polish community organized numerous manifestations, including a protest against the separation of the Chełm Land from Poland and joining it to the Ukrainian People's Republic and the division of Galicia into Polish and Ukrainian parts.⁸⁵ In Sambor, in the "Falcon" hall, on 4 February 1918, about 1,000 Polish citizens gathered, passing a resolution proclaiming that since Galicia historically belonged to Polish lands, it should still remain so.⁸⁶ The issue of releasing interned legionnaires was also raised. Another manifestation of this, organized on 18 February, gathered over 10,000 people, including almost all local Polish and Jewish intelligentsia and a substantial group of middle school students.⁸⁷

In the autumn of 1918, when the breakup of Austria-Hungary was already underway, the Ukrainian National Democratic Party (being the largest Ukrainian force in Galicia) began efforts to reach political agreement with other parties and select people capable of managing the administration in the districts. They were sought among the local Ukrainian intelligentsia and close cooperation with the army was assumed.⁸⁸ In anticipation of the decisions from Vienna, *de facto* dual power was introduced – Ukrainian alongside Austrian. The western Ukrainian state, which did not have the support of the majority of residents of Sambor, had a chance to survive only in the event of the establishment of efficient and effective administrative structures. In the ranks of administration in this transitional period, we find both Poles and Ukrainians, representatives of the city's intelligentsia, who cooperated with the populace regardless of nationality. Then, the Ukrainians took power in many of Galicia's cities. In Sambor, it took place on 5 November 1918.⁸⁹ In the first days of November, the most

⁸⁴ J. Kowalczukówna, "Pamiętnik", in: *Lwów i Lwowianie. Pamiętniki – wspomnienia – relacje*, pt. 2, ed. by J. Kowalczuk, Kraków, 2011, p. 95.

⁸⁵ More about manifestations related to the Brest Treaty in: W. Najdus, Ż. Kormanowa, op. cit., pp. 380–383.

⁸⁶ J.Z. Pająk, op. cit., p. 204.

⁸⁷ TsDIAL, f. 146, op. 4, spr. 7162, l. 19.

⁸⁸ О. Павлишин, "Організація цивільної влади ЗУНР в повітах Галичини (листопад–грудень 1918 року)", *Україна модерна*, pt. 2–3, 1997–1998, [1999], pp. 132–193.

⁸⁹ М. Гуцуляк, *Перший Листопад 1918 на західних землях України*, Київ, 1993, pp. 362–363.

important activities were those of the pupils of local schools organized in Płaść with Ukrainian privates from military units who obtained ammunition, occupied offices and disarmed the gendarmerie. The local peasants helped in this, but so did people from outside the district. Sambor was one of the few cities where the Poles tried to resist with force, and were even the first to occupy the city. The Ukrainians were helped by the peasants from Stary Sambor, which provided their advantage.⁹⁰ Andriy Tchaikovsky, who assumed the power of commissar in Sambor, had the support of the earlier commissar, who served him in an advisory capacity. Among the Poles there were people ready to cooperate with the Ukrainian administration (though not necessarily to swear an oath of loyalty to the Ukrainian state).⁹¹ Sambor's schools did not cease their activities, although Polish students often abandoned their studies.⁹² The proclamation of the West Ukrainian People's Republic and the struggle between Poles and Ukrainians for Eastern Galicia, which began in November 1918, opened a new chapter in the history of those areas. Middle school students from one class or people who could have fought in one army together just a short time earlier, stood on opposite sides.⁹³ The events from the turn of 1918–1919 hampered future Polish-Ukrainian agreements, and also influenced the alienation of the Jewish population, which was considered disloyal by both groups.⁹⁴

The preceding overview shows that both actions undertaken by the residents of Sambor (or other Galician cities), as well as relations between them and the army, are a complex topic. A basic tactic was undoubtedly the maintenance of good neighborly relations, which could help in the organization of food in a situation of scarcity. It was a wider phenomenon to join into committees or organizations, because it was easier to cope with everyday life in wartime in a group. At the same time, it was also possible to help other people – soldiers, their families, or evacuees coming to the city. The war years more fully exhibited the functioning of pro-social attitudes, which were especially visible among the intelligentsia. It was a significant proportion of this group that constituted the membership of self-help committees or the Polish Women's

⁹⁰ А. Чайковський, *Чорні рядки. Мої спомини за час від 1 листопада 1918 до травня 1919*, in: id., *Спогади, листи, дослідження*, vol. 1, Львів 2002, pp. 210–212.

⁹¹ О. Павлишин, op. cit., p. 8.

⁹² DALO, f. 1262, op. 58, spr. 260, ll. 51–56.

⁹³ М. Гуцуляк, op. cit., p. 369.

⁹⁴ It could be one of the reasons for the pogrom that occurred in the summer of 1919 in Sambor. See: TsDIAL, f. 146, op. 8, spr. 3025.

League. At the same time, the Great War (with particular reference to the last two years) was the time of development of nationalist attitudes. The idea of the nation was a strong factor integrating groups, but also dividing the borderland community of the Galician towns. Aside from the attitudes and tactics described above, individual actions were sometimes at the borderline of the law (trade on the black market), and sometimes sanctioned by the authorities (informing to gain property benefits).

Most of the tactics undertaken were an aggregate of bottom-up activities, being a reaction to strategies – conditions determined by the administration and military and civil authorities in the city. The moods prevailing among the local community were a function of these conditions; in particular the amount of space left for the efficient activity of individuals and groups. The lack of influence on the surrounding reality possibly intensified the mood of uncertainty and peril among the people of Sambor, thus providing fertile ground for the development of rumors and hearsay.

The attitude to the army and military authorities was in turn dependent on many factors. Among the people whose relatives fought on the front, the army was seen through the prism of private experience, fear and expectation. In addition, soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian Army were treated to a large extent as “our own”, although feelings towards them were ambivalent, and also dependent on the timeframe and political context. On the basis of the analyzed sources, it seems correct to distinguish between attitudes towards the military on the front and those staying in the city. The former were assessed more positively – they were marked by heroism. The army staying in the city (even if it had fought recently in the past) was associated with requisitions, arrests, sometimes robberies or drunken officers, or more neutrally – with wounded people in need of help. Many factors influenced the attitude of the inhabitants towards the army and military authorities, including the most important, such as provisioning and the state of satisfying the basic needs of residents, the sting of requisitions and reprisals, but also nationality or the lack of access to information.