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"UNWELCOME GUESTS": THE SITUATION OF GALICIAN REFUGEES IN AUSTRO-HUNGARY AT THE END OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND AT THE TIME OF THE DISSOLUTION OF THE HABSBURG MONARCHY*

Abstract

This paper investigates the situation of Galician refugees in the Habsburg Empire during the last year of the First World War. The majority of the refugees returned home following the eastward movement of the frontline in 1915 (i.e. after the Gorlice-Tarnów campaign). However, many others stayed deep within the Austro-Hungarian Empire till the end of the war. According to the official reports of the Ministry of the Interior, there were still 90 thousand refugees (25% Poles, 28% Jews, and 46% Ukrainians, then known as Ruthenians) receiving social benefits from the state in the Austrian part of the Empire on 1st September 1918. Moreover, one can add countless refugees who stayed in the interior of the Empire at their own expense. The situation became even more complicated when the feelings of enmity on the part of the local inhabitants escalated. Pressed by society, the local authorities started expelling the refugees. As a consequence, some of them returned home, while others still stayed in exile in search of a better life. What is even more interesting is that some of them (mostly Jews) emphasised the lack of a bond with the new Polish state born in November 1918.

Keywords: refugees, wartime migrations, repatriations, 1918, postimperial space, Galicia

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Introduction

In recent years, numerous books have been published dedicated to World War I. Before this period, the publications, both academic and non-scientific for the general public, have basically presented great history focused on great protagonists who rendered considerable public services between 1914 and 1918, including the shaping of the borders of new East-Central European states. Yet, those states were inhabited not only by great heroes but most of all by ordinary people trying to survive the war. Some civilians had been recruited to serve in the foreign-ruled armies, others remained in their homeland facing the cataclysm. The civilians included a large group of those who had escaped or been evacuated due to hostilities. They are the subject of this paper: Galician war refugees scattered all over Austria-Hungary[1]. This paper will present the situation of those refugees in the last years of World War I, in particular their repatriation and difficult homecoming. Moreover, the tragic economic situation of Galicia, devastated by hostilities and the long presence of the Central Powers and Russia's troops, made the situation related to the possibility of return difficult; hence, for the continuity of the problem, the article will present the background of the events of 1918 and the possibility of returning (or, more often, the lack thereof) to Galicia in the years 1915–1918. The situation was even more complicated, taking into account the fact that the imperial order collapsed at the end of 1918, which was an additional factor complicating returns: both due to communication restrictions and the identity dilemmas of individual refugees from former Galicia. It intensified the crises of identity and the feeling of being different, thus showing that the feeling of "non-belonging" was already visible in the last years of the war.

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[1] Questions about refugees in Austro-Hungarian Monarchy during the First World War were investigated by some scholars like Walter Mentzl (see: Walter Mentzl, "Kriegsflüchtlinge in Cisleithanien im Ersten Weltkrieg" (dissertation, University of Vienna, 1997), manuscript in the collection of the Library of the University of Vienna), Beatrix Hoffmann-Holter (see: Beatrix Hoffmann-Holter, *"Abreisendmachung". Jüdische Kriegsflüchtlinge in Wien 1914 bis 1923* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1995)), Martina Hermann (see: Martina Hermann, "*Cities of Barracks"*: Refugees in the Austrian Part of the Habsburg Empire During the First World War," in *Europe on the Move. Refugees in the Era of the Great War*, ed. Peter Gatrell, Lubov Zhvanko (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 129–155). The author published a monograph on this subject (see: Kamil Ruszała, *Galicyjski eksodus. Uchodźcy podczas I wojny światowej w monarchii Habsburgów* (Kraków: Universitas, 2020)), where one can find the current state of the art. This article also presents the main thesis from the book, regarding Galician refugees within the Habsburg Empire in the last year of World War I, with an additional analysis of unpublished sources. See also comparable and interesting remarks in the chapter by Alex Dowdall (see: Alex Dowdall, "Citizens or Subjects? Refugees and the State in Europe during the First World War," in *Breaking Empires, Making Nations? The First World War and the Reforging of Europe*, ed. Richard Butterwick-Pawlikowski, Quincy Cloet, Alex Dowdall (Warsaw: College of Europe Natolin & Natolin European Center, 2017), 98–123).

Leaving the outskirts of Empire: escapes and evacuations of Galicians

Undoubtedly, during the Great War Galicia was an arena of bloody battles between the Central Powers (Austria-Hungary and Germany) army and the Russian army. Some civilians escaped or were evacuated by the Austrian authorities at the beginning of or during the war. Spontaneous escape was often influenced by crowd psychology, pressure, a sense of threat, and the decision was often made without understanding, which stemmed from ignorance of what war really was or who the hostile "Moskal" (Russian) or "Cossack" were. The attempts people made on their own ended differently. Sometimes they meant relocation to a "safe place" in Galician people's opinion, i.e. to the closest family, living ten or fifty kilometres away. These seemingly safe places would often become dangerous when the war encroached. Therefore, escapes turned into further wandering to more far-away places. On the other hand, Austria would evacuate civilians. When talking about the waves of forced migration of refugees (save for those interned) within Austria-Hungary from Galicia, we need to mark several stages: from spontaneous escapes which had started in the late summer and early autumn of 1914 (stage 1), Austrian evacuation of civilians from autumn 1914 to winter 1914/1915 (stage 2), further evacuation in Galicia influenced by warfare between 1915 and 1916, including the evacuation threat of Cracow and the plans to relocate civilians to the Hinterland (stage 3), evacuations of civilians after the Brusilov Offensive in the summer of 1916 (stage 4) and further evacuations resulting from the hostilities after the Kerensky Offensive in the autumn of 1917 (stage 5). It is worth mentioning that the initial stages (1–3) were long-distance ones, i.e., they relocated Galician refugees to other Austrian lands. In the course of the war, both for the refugees and for Austria, with successive waves of war refugees from the Italian front from the second half of 1915, the stages of Galician evacuations were limited to the crown land of Galicia (its western parts, free from enemy invasion) and in some cases to the closest crown lands (Silesia, Moravia and Bohemia).

Thus started the refugee experience for the people remaining within the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Despite the fact that it was the state they were citizens of, they felt alienated and inferior there. It seems that it was World War I that first confronted the residents of the western (Austrian or Bohemian) provinces of the monarchy with the deeply rooted stereotype of Galicians, including in many cases the stereotypes that were disseminated in the previous century, but most of all the war crisis did not favour confrontation but even more antagonised society. On the other hand, for many people, it was that refugee experience that was the first opportunity ever to travel outside their small homeland[2].

Galician refugees were a very diverse group in many aspects. They included Poles, Jews and Ukrainians, as well as a minority of, for example, Germans. As regards social stratification, they represented all groups and professions: from

2 Cf: Tomasz Pudłocki, "In the time of forced evacuation of the Galician people. Rev. Dr. Jan Trznadel in Styria," *Kronika* 69, No. 1 (2017): 53–66.

intellectuals, officials, teachers, to craftsmen; from village people to residents of Galician towns and cities. Finally, those people constituted a large group, which initially was difficult to count, as no evacuee records were kept. Moreover, there were those who found themselves in exile at their own expense and who was a group about half a million strong – though, to repeat, the statistics vary considerably[3].

The refugees ended up in unfamiliar territory and were forced to live in barrack camps or special converted establishments, close to the local residents, who instead of being hospitable, often showed reluctance towards the Galician Jewish, Polish or Ukrainian strangers. It was only when the situation on the military front changed (the battle of Gorlice in May 1915, when the Russian occupiers left most of western and central Galicia) that the first refugees could return. The process was not easy, however, and the Russians leaving Galicia only seemingly created favourable conditions for returning. It turned out that most houses owned by the refugees lay in ruin and the economy in their hometowns was in decline. The homecoming, which often continued well after the end of the war, was very complicated.

Willingness to return

The vast majority of Galician refugees wanted to return to their homeland as soon as possible. This was the result of bad living conditions where they had been accommodated, the reluctance on the part of the locals and, in many cities of the monarchy, a too high cost of living. The sentiments were shared by most of the exiles. What added to their hardships was also the fatigue of staying away from home, and homesickness. They would rather camp in the ruins or former military trenches than stay in exile any longer. Typical are the words quoted by Leon Biliński – a statesman who was a Minister of Finance of Austria during the war, engaged in different ways to help refugees from Galicia (also as a leader of the Polish Refugee Relief Committee established in Vienna) – in his letter, written by Polish refugees from Galicia who had stayed in a camp in Wolfsberg (Carinthia). They made it clear that they had had enough of the humiliating conditions, threats, arrests, and stones thrown at them:

> "We are therefore asking: please, have mercy on us, women, old men and poor orphans, let us be free from these barracks and bring us to that poor Galicia; even the nettles which we pick up on our own will feed us better and make us healthier and we won't be as miserable any more as we are on those German delicacies […] what's more, we must be getting our share of stones and handcuffs."[4]

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[3] About a critique of different data and estimations of a number of Galician refugees see: Ruszała, *Galicyjski eksodus,* 93–96.

[4] Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi istorychnyi arkhiv, m. Lviv (TsDIAL), sign. 717/1/74, p. 27.

The Galicians in exile were looking forward to repatriation, or simply returning home. The term used from the very beginning in Austrian sources was repatriation (Repatriierung), which was quite justified, considering its Latin etymology, *repatriatio* meaning return to the homeland. From the legal point of view, however, repatriation concerns returning from one state to another; during the war, Galicia remained within Austria, hence the modern understanding of the term with reference to the situation before 1918 is different and justified only after the collapse of Austria-Hungary. It is safest to talk here about the return of the refugees. The defeat of the Russian army on the Gorlice-Tarnów line in May 1915 by the united armies of Austria-Hungary and Germany made it possible to liberate a large area of western Galicia. Similarly, regaining Lviv on 20 June 1915 was more good news for the whole monarchy, and especially for the refugees, at least those more aware, who tried to follow the major events.

Returning home: between possibility and reality

Some wanted to leave their current places of abode as soon as possible, without waiting for final guidelines or ministerial instructions. Issuing the latter was supposed to prevent situations such as those described in the letter of 2 July 1915 by the Minister for Internal Affairs addressed to the Minister of War, which said that refugee returns had become acts of lawlessness, and pointed out instances of abuse, as family members would receive benefits, also in the name of the people who returned to Galicia without permission[5]. That is why issuing suitable orders seemed necessary. The situation was spiralling out of control, so different actions were taken, like strict control of refugee camps, e. g. in Gmünd (Lower-Austria), where all the documents of those leaving through the gate were carefully checked[6].

The first directive on returns was issued on 11 July 1915[7]. It regulated the possibility to return to Galicia which was divided into three zones: A, B and C. Zone A included districts to which one could return without restrictions, unless otherwise stated in the directive (e.g., the ban on returning to completely destroyed towns – Gorlice, Bóbrka, Sołotwina, Gródek Jagielloński). Zone B included places to which selected groups of residents were allowed to return first, like craftsmen and traders in order to reconstruct economic life in the area. Zone C was an area closed to civilians; only people who took public offices could be let in. Gradually, there appeared permissions to return to successive districts of

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5 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (AVA), Ministerium des Innern (MdI), Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 1940, Zl. 45046/1915.

6 Niederösterreichsches Landesarchiv (NÖLA), Statthalterei (Statth.), Präs. „P" 1916, XIIe, Kt. 713, Zl. 5129P/1916.

7 Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie (ANK), Akta Miasta Krakowa 4743, no pagination; Národní archiv České republiky (NAČR), PP 1916–1920, sign. M34/1, Kt. 3017, Zl. 21241/1915.

Galicia. The lists were subject to alteration, which was a consequence of the ongoing war and the economic state of particular Galician districts.

The permission to return to Galicia declared by the central authorities sounded like the end of exile. To the refugees' disappointment, in reality, it was not always possible to go back to one's hometown. This was due to several factors, including transport issues, the state of the economy and the scale of destruction in a given area. East Galicia had remained under Russian occupation for a long time, was a theatre of war or was very close to the hostilities. As events on the front line were not predictable, it was not possible to permit people to return to territories situated right near the front. On the other hand, even travelling within a war-stricken area was impossible without suitable permission from the military authorities, which fully controlled any means of transport. Transporting troops to the frontline and the wounded from the front to hospitals was given high priority. It was the military who were to decide which areas refugees could return to. There were sometimes misunderstandings when, despite declaring an area free by military authorities, government authorities would not allow refugees to leave barrack camps.

It could happen that military authorities, while informing civilian authorities about liberated areas, at the same time introduced restrictions connected with the returns. For instance, on 1 July 1915, i.e., before the official ministerial declaration on the possibility to return, there came news about a ban on any homecoming to Przemyśl, on account of terrible sanitary conditions and food shortages. At the same time shopkeepers, craftsmen etc. were allowed to return, as the necessity to revive the economy was emphasised[8].

Galicia, destroyed by warfare and exhausted by the presence of the armies of the two fighting sides, was not able to accept back the same number of people that had left it before. Arable land was completely destroyed, and the fields contained graves of killed soldiers. Sometimes hasty burials and shallow graves constituted an epidemiological hazard[9]. Therefore, many Galicians, on return to their houses, could not live on their own without support; let alone till the soil, grow plants, or reconstruct their houses, in short: live more or less normal lives. Galicia waited a very long time for specific measures taken by the Austrian government aimed at the reconstruction of infrastructure and the economy. This period of waiting also postponed the process of refugees returning to their homeland. It was only in the spring of 1916 that a body was set up on the government's authority which took some specific steps in order to revive the country – this was the National Head Office for the Economic Reconstruction of Galicia[10].

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8 ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 1938, Zl. 38488/1915.

9 Cf: Kamil Ruszała, "Life among the graves, ruins and trenches. Landscape of West Galicia during the First World War," in *Léta do pole okovaná 1914–1918. Sv. 2. 1915 – noví nepřátelé, nové výzvy*, ed. Jaroslav Láník, Tomáš Kykal et al. (Prague: Ministerstvo obrany ČR – VHÚ 2016), 296–316.

10 Cf: Tomasz Kargol, *Odbudowa Galicji ze zniszczeń wojennych w latach 1914–1918* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze "Historia Iagellonica", 2012).

In the next years of the war, Galician residents in exile faced a dilemma: to return to the home side, if the authorities had made it possible, or to stay in exile, as they knew they might find their homeland in poverty and ruin. The authorities realised what the economic condition of the country was like, and therefore it was important to make it possible for farmstead owners to return home and start fieldwork[11]. Soon there were two movements in Galicia: the return movement from the western countries of the monarchy to the open districts of East Galicia and the other, from the districts situated near the front line to ones more to the west[12]. This complicated the situation even further.

The destruction of Galicia and excessive migration of the returning evacuees forced the state authorities to face the problem of expected lodging places. It was decided to create temporary lodgings, i.e., wooden makeshift barracks for the locals. This question, however, remained very controversial. Following numerous attempts to create such structures in East Galicia, the plan was eventually abandoned in many districts, because – as the explanation went – their construction would not be financially possible, and besides, there were other obstacles like the lack of craftsmen or any idea of how to deliver building materials. It seemed more economical to place the homeless in particular communes and to use the relevant financial means in peacetime to reconstruct houses and farms[13]. Nevertheless, in other places there did appear such establishments adapted for housing needs, e.g., in war-ravaged Gorlice, where there was no other possibility[14].

The economic situation in Galicia, mainly in its eastern part, considerably destroyed by the war, did not allow for further construction of temporary barracks, as the action of reconstruction of the country would have been limited only to that task. This is why it seemed necessary to create a temporary place on the outskirts of Galicia to lodge the returning people. In the spring of 1916, an emigration station (*Saisonwandernstation*) was established in Oświęcim[15]. It was dedicated to the people returning to Galicia, most of them seasonal workers but also refugees. In fact, it was planned to gradually relocate the Galicians from refugee camps in the lands of the monarchy to Oświęcim, but the reality was different, and the barracks were not big enough to house both the refugees and the returning seasonal workers[16].

Similarly, a large number of returning refugees had stopped in Silesia, which was also overcrowded. The most significant transfer took place in early 1917 and

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11 Cf.: The letter of Galicia Governor Witold Korytowski to military authorities of 20 June 1915: ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 1935, Zl. 32222/1915.

12 TSDIAL, f. 146, op. 32, spr. 181, p. 1 and further.

13 For more on the barracks in east Galicia see ANK, COG 12, 83 and further.

14 See more in: Kamil Ruszała, *Wielka Wojna w małym mieście. Gorlice w latach 1914–1918* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze "Historia Iagellonica", 2015), 80.

15 TSDIAL, f. 146, op. 32, spr. 6, p. 10. For more about the emigration station in Oświęcim see: TSDIAL, f. 146, op. 32, spr. 132; ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 1964, Zl. 39931/1916.

16 See e.g. the request from the peasants from the Pidhaitsi (Podhajce) district to be relocated to Oświęcim: NAČR, PP 1916–1920, Kt.3021, Zl. 17955/1917; a negative response of autumn, see ibidem, Zl. 16278/1917. Another rejection of 23 December 1917, see ibidem, Zl. 20501.

it concerned the migrants from the *Havlíčkův Brod* camp (Bohemia). As regards the plans for that transfer, the province president of Silesia Adalbert von Widmann expressed his opinion. In a letter to the Ministry of Internal Affairs he indicated that in the case of such a move, the country would become overfull of refugees, and estimated that it would exceed the standard established in the emperor's directive about the maximum number of refugees in communes (not more than 2% of the local population). The president estimated that the norm had been exceeded by 5–10%[17]. Despite von Widmann's written protest, the planned relocation was brought about. This was not the end: in the late summer of 1917 Jews came to Silesia, transferred from closed barrack camps in Pohořelice and Kyjov (Moravia)[18]. In May 1917, over 12,000 Jewish refugees were registered in Silesia. No wonder then that in March 1918 people demanded the expulsion of Galician and Bukovinian refugees from Silesia, which was in a very bad economic situation. Proof of those sentiments is the letter of representatives of towns and communes from Silesia who had gathered on 24 March 1918 in the town hall in Karniów. Their resolution to the ministerial authorities included a clear demand to get rid of war refugees[19]. The number of refugees in that crown land was gradually decreasing: the records for 1 September 1918 give the number of 1,130 refugees in Silesia[20]. Still, a number of Galician refugees remained in the monarchy.

Stranger and competitors?

In the following years of the war, inhabitants in Austro-Hungary had had enough of it all, including the refugee strangers, whom they blamed for the bad living conditions, increase in prices and supply shortages. The hostility was openly manifested in the hope that, faced with reluctance, the refugees would leave. That was not possible, however, as staying in a given place meant for them receiving a benefit, their only source of maintenance. Besides, they could not return to all regions, having to wait for the issuing of successive rescripts by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This is why local authorities would occasionally remove the Galician refugees of their own accord.

At the turn of 1918, the Hungarian Ministry of Internal Affairs in Budapest emphasised the necessity for the "Austrian refugees" to leave the Lands of the Crown of Saint Stephen, as they held different citizenship[21]. Ever since the beginning of 1918, Galician Jews had been ruthlessly removed from the Hunga-

17 ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 1980, Zl. 6492/17.
18 ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 1939, Zl. 42143/1915.
19 ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 2013, Zl. 22137/18.
20 ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Präs., Varia, Erster Weltkrieg 1914–1918, Kt. 31. Zl. 59921/1918.
21 See: Robert Nemes, "Refugees and Antisemitism in Hungary During the First World War," in *Sites of European Antisemitism in the Age of Mass Politics, 1880–1918*, ed. Hilel Kieval, Daniel Unowski, Robert Nemes (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014), 254.

rian capital, which was widely reported by the press. The "Az Est" newspaper described the manner in which it was done. It said there were 25,000 people in "kaftans", which was a pejorative word for the gabardine coats Jews wore, an equivalent of the Austrian "Kaftanjuden". At the beginning of 1918, the police would throw them forcefully out of their dwellings, sometimes even straight out of their beds[22]. It was not only in the capital of Transleithania but also in the provinces that steps were taken to drive the refugees away: on 16 May 1918 in the town of Érsekújvár (now a town in Slovakia called Nové Zámky), the mayor Aladár Mikloska issued a proclamation whereby he appealed to the Galician refugees to leave the town in 8 days. As the reason for his decision, he gave the terrible food shortages and housing problems[23]. A number of refugees were Jewish people from Galicia, who throughout the war were accused of making the economic situation worse, e.g., by selling goods at inflated prices. Condemnation also came from above: for example, in August 1918 Ottokár Prohászka, Roman Catholic bishop of S*zékesfehérvár, in his speech in Hungarian Parliament attacked socialists, radicals and "Galitzianers"*[24]*. If negative words about Galician Jewish refugees were heard in Parliament, from a bishop of the Hungarian Church, it was hard to expect different attitudes from ordinary citizens.*

The situation was similar in Cisleithania, the other part of the monarchy. The economic situation was getting worse with every year of the ravaging war. The refugees were perceived as rivals who would compete for provisions and housing. Housing problems reached an apogee in 1918. Examples come mostly from larger cities of the monarchy, above all from Vienna. As the mayor of Vienna Richard Weiskirchner informs us, until 1917 alone, 7,710 apartments were taken for the needs of refugees. The situation got worse in the first months of 1918. The mayor urged the government in his letter to continue the returns of refugees, as this caused further upset of public feeling in the city[25]. The problem did not concern the capital alone. It also appeared in other big and small towns of the monarchy. For instance, during the 9th sitting of the city council in Wiener Neustadt on 18 June 1918, a decision was taken about forcible repatriation of refugees who belonged to Galician districts and were able to return, according to the list under the directive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs[26]. For local authorities in particular Austrian countries, it was not fully understood why Galician refugees still remained there. For example, a group of intellectuals from Linz, including a native citizen of Upper Austria and well-known surgeon Professor Anton von Eiselberg, in a letter of August 1918 to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, expressed their lack of understanding of the situation, arguing that the refugees should not wait until Galicia was reconstructed, but they ought to return on their own and partake in the process. Further, the letter stated that the refugees not only competed for food

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22 *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny* 143 (28 August 1918): 3.

23 ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 2026, Zl. 30139/1918. See: Nemes, *Refugees and Antisemitism in Hungary*, 236.

24 Nemes, *Refugees and Antisemitism in Hungary*, 252.

25 ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 2006, Zl. 15078/1918.

26 ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 2015, Zl. 39929/1918.

with the locals, but they were a real sanitary hazard for the native residents of Upper Austria, by failing to observe basic hygiene rules and possibly spreading infectious diseases[27]. In the earlier correspondence, Professor Eiselberg indicated the necessity of getting rid of the refugees, whom he referred to as "that alien element" ("diese landfremden Elemente") or "unwelcome guests" ("unerwünschten Gästen")[28].

In Prague, for instance, numerous protests were held against urgent economic problems, where the presence of the refugees was quoted as a reason for the shortages of provisions[29]. The issue was felt in the provinces, too; e.g., in the town of Dobříš (Bohemia), where the local mayor in June 1918 appealed to the ministerial authorities to remove the refugees from the town. Despite the early waves of returns, many Galician Jewish families remained in Dobříš until the late spring of 1918. They argued that in exile they did not have to worry about the provisions and benefits, while on return they would lose a wide range of state support. With that attitude they earned general reluctance, particularly as they were also accused of illegal trading practices, not to mention the housing problems in the whole monarchy[30].

Autumn and winter 1918

In the autumn of 1918, the problem of refugees remained in the background of political issues. It was the time of passing pro-independence resolutions and setting up local administration organs. In Kraków at the end of October, the Polish Liquidation Committee for Galicia was set up, although in connection with the events following 1 November 1918 and the Polish-Ukrainian fights, the committee dealt only with the area of Western Galicia; the refugee issues were not taken up by it at all. The collapse of the empire made refugees even more unwanted guests than prior to autumn 1918.

In the background of those political changes and countless new economic and social problems, there still remained the Galicians in exile. According to the official statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of 1 September 1918, in Cisleithania there were almost 89,000 of them, of which 25% were Poles, 28% Jews and slightly over 46% Ukrainians. Statistics showed also over 100 Romanian citizens, one Italian, 29 others and almost 200 Germans[31]. The same data showed that in the Austrian countries (i.e. Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Styria, Carinthia, and Alpine countries: Salzburg, Tyrol and Vorarlberg) there remained slightly over 400 Poles, around 450 Ukrainians, and the largest number were

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27 ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 2018, Zl. 48277/1918.
28 ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 2021, Zl. 526/1918.
29 NAČR, PP 1916–1920, M34/1, Kt. 3022, letter Food Supply Institute of the City Prague to Police Department, 15 April 1918.
30 NAČR, MRP/R, Kt. 81, Zl. 6581/1918.
31 ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Präs., Varia, Erster Weltkrieg 1914–1918, Kt. 31. Zl. 59921/1918.

Jews, nearly 20,000, of which the majority (87%) lived in Vienna. At the same time, Bohemia was home to over 9,500 Jews, almost 400 Poles and slightly over 150 Ukrainians. In Moravia, there were plenty of Italian refugees, over 6,800 Jews, over 300 Poles and over 500 Ukrainians. In Silesia, there were over 1,100 Jews, single Polish refugees and one Ukrainian[32]. It is worth emphasising that the statistics refer only to the people who were registered and as war refugees received a government benefit. Besides, there were also people of means who wanted to take advantage of the situation and remain in the newly created republic instead of returning to Galicia.

With new successor states appearing after the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy and creating new legal bases concerning citizenship, many Galician refugees found themselves trapped. Some of them wanted to return but did not have adequate means to buy the tickets, others were chased off by the local authorities. For instance, on 24 October 1918, the Jewish refugees in Prague were called on to leave the city. It was quite a large group of people: according to the data of late October, in the police region in Prague, there were 1,300 Jewish refugees living on state benefits and 4,000 unsupported by the state, 5,300 people altogether[33]. Soon, i.e., on 26 October 1918, a similar decision was made in Vienna, where the Galician Jews were ordered to leave the city in 30 days. The message reached Bohemia and was made public. A correspondent asked in a newspaper article, what was going to happen to thousands of Jewish refugees from Galicia and Bukovina, considering the far smaller food supplies and worse housing conditions than in Vienna[34].

With regard to the other Galician Jews in Bohemia, initially uncompromising rules were applied, connected with their expulsion from the newly created Czechoslovakia. They did not remain without support, however, and their best interest was seen by a newly appointed National Jewish Council (*Národní rada židovská*) headed by Max Brod. Among other things, it managed to negotiate to postpone the date of the expulsion of Galician Jews out of Czechoslovakia to 15 December 1918 in connection with the pogroms taking place in Poland. Until that day the Jews also received adequate financial support[35]. A tell-tale article titled "The refugee question" was published on 22 November 1918 in the Viennese "Jüdische Zeitung" and reprinted a few days later in the Prague newspaper "Židovské Zprávy". Its author stated that the fate of Jewish refugees had never before been so tragic. On leaving their homelands for fear of the Russian onslaught, they were Austrian citizens, no matter whether in Galicia, Moravia, Bohemia or Austria. Living in difficult conditions, they could not wait for an

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32 ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Präs., Varia, Erster Weltkrieg 1914–1918, Kt. 31. Zl. 59921/1918.

33 *Věstník obecní královského hlavního města Prahy* 20 (1918): 302–303.

34 *Národní politika* 247 (26 October 1918): 4.

35 Kateřina Čapková, *Češi, Němci, Židé? Národní identita Židů v Čechách 1918 až 1938* (Praha-Litomyšl: Nakladatelství Paseka, 2013), 232. Further see: Michal Frankl, Miroslav Szabó, *Budování státu bez antisemitismu: Násilí, diskurz loajality a vznik Československa* (Praha: Lidové noviny, 2015), 191 and further (subchapter: "Uprchlíci, občanství a komunita v národním státu").

opportunity to return home. When that opportunity arose, not all of them could go back. Many of them ended up in a situation where the state they had been citizens of ceased to exist. All of a sudden they had become "enemy foreigners"[36].

There were some refugees who had no intention of returning to Galicia. They would rather seek a better life elsewhere. The economic emigrants would mix with the refugees or pass themselves off as war exiles. In a Budapest newspaper, an article appeared about alleged refugees arriving in the Hungarian capital day by day, in fact immigrants seeking a better future in Budapest[37]. It was similar in the case of the Galician Jews who had remained in Vienna[38]. In response to the situation, the satirical magazine "Kikeriki" published a dialogue between a schoolgirl, daughter of Galician refugees in Vienna, and her teacher:

> The newspapers say that refugees are gradually returning to their homelands. Are you going back soon too?
> Oh, no, only grandfather has gone back.
> Oh? Why only grandfather?
> To bring the others along[39].

Who were they? The identity question.

Finally, there was the question of the sense of belonging. From the newly created Czechoslovakia there came interesting examples of arguments given by the people who wanted to stay there, most of all in Prague. For instance, there were some senile persons in need of medical attention; because of their poor health, they would not or could not return to Galicia[40]. In other cases, the desire to stay was the result of having a job which enabled one to maintain one's whole family[41], which would be hardly possible in the destroyed Galicia. Another argument some families gave was that their house had been completely ruined and they had

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36 *Židovské Zprávy* 18 (4 December 1918), 8–9.

37 *Budapesti Hírlap* 203 (31 August 1918), 5.

38 See: Hoffmann-Holter, *"Abreisendmachung"*, 120 and further; Margarete Grandner, "Staatsbürger und Ausländer. Zum Umgang Österreichs mit den jüdischen Flüchtlingen nach 1918," in *Asylland wider Willen*, ed. Gernot Heiss, Oliver Rathkolb (Wien: J & V Edition, 1995), 60 and further; Hannelore Burger, *Heimatrecht und Staatsbürgerschaft österreichischer Juden: vom Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts bis in die Gegenwart* (Wien: Böhlau, 2014); Hannelore Burger, "Zum Ausschluss (ost-jüdischer Flüchtlinge aus der österreichischen Staatsbürgerschaft In der Ersten Und Zweiten Republik," in *Aufnahmeland Österreich. Über den Umgang mit Massenflucht seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Kuzmany Börries (Wien: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2017), 156 and further.

39 *Kikeriki* 47 (24 November 1918): 3.

40 Request of 80-year-old Ignacy Neustein from Przemyśl in Galicia: NAČR, PP 1916–1920, M34/1, Kt. 3022, Zl. 8452/1919.

41 Request of 40-year-old Ascher Halpern from Łopane in Galicia: NAČR, PP 1916–1920, M34/1, Kt. 3022, Zl. 41500/1919.

nothing to return to[42]. Among the applications, there were also interesting examples of people who did not feel attached to the Poland created after the Great War and that was why they did not want to go back to it. They included immigrants who had left Galicia many years before the war and after its outbreak found themselves in Prague; there they lived to see the collapse of Austria-Hungary and since they had Galician roots, the local authorities wanted to expel them from Czechoslovakia the same as the refugees[43]. Indeed, not everyone felt a bond with the new Poland. Among Jews there was also fear of anti-Semitic pogroms. Not without significance was also the political situation, e.g., the news of the Lviv events of 1 November 1918 and the Polish-Ukrainian war for the former Galician capital. Moreover, some Poles from small towns in Eastern Galicia did not want to return as the territories were now controlled by the West Ukrainian People's Republic. To illustrate the issue, let us quote the words of Lazar Weiss, a Jew from Turka in Eastern Galicia, since March 1915 in exile in the Prague district of Žižkov, who wrote in his request to the Czechoslovakian Ministry of Internal Affairs that his town was now situated in Ukraine, and he was neither a Ukrainian nor a Pole[44]. This raised a dilemma among a huge number of refugees, especially Jews[45].

The debate on refugee repatriation continued many years after the war. It must be admitted that a definite majority of the refugees had returned already during the war. Some of them stayed back, mainly in the "new" Republic of Austria. What citizenship did the Galician refugees have then, if not Austro-Hungarian? It all depended on individual decisions of particular refugees or refugee families. Some of them would temporarily remain "stateless", e.g., between the establishment of the Republic of German-Austria and the enforcement of the law on citizenship. Others waited for legislation on repatriation, also from the host countries. Nonetheless, it was not for everyone that the Galician WWI exodus had ended at that stage.

Conclusion

The experience of Galician civilians from World War I was overshadowed by the military and political history of the years 1914–1918. Without a doubt, war refugeedom was a sensitive element that affected not only the Galicians but also the residents of the former crown lands, and then the successor states after the collapse of Austria-Hungary, like Czechoslovakia, Austria and Hungary. Flight and evacuation did not end with the return. The way back remained very long,

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42 Request of Mojżesz Fleischer from Tuchów in Galicia: NAČR, PP 1916–1920, M34/1, Kt. 3022, Zl. 39082/1919.

43 See the case of Salomon Fainer, an emigrant from Galicia in Belgium, who had been sent to Prague at the end of 1914: NAČR, PP 1916–1920, M34/1, Kt. 3022, Zl. 8668/1919.

44 NAČR, PP 1916–1920, sign. M34/1, Kt. 3023, Zl. 39593/1919.

45 See important remarks: Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing National Identity. The Jews of Habsburg Austria During World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

dependent on a lot of factors: military, infrastructural and above all, economic. What prevented the efficient return of Galician refugees to their homeland was the total destruction of the crown land. Also quite significant were the stated policies, inept in the opinion of Galician politicians, who pointed out that Austria treated their crown land like some alien training ground, with a military, not civilian, governor, and not like a component part of the monarchy.

The lingering presence of war refugees in the western parts of Austria-Hungary would bring about discontent and often aggression. What added to the stereotypes was the experience of everyday war hardships and supply shortages. Refugees were no longer treated as citizens; they were now a suspicious element, competing for food, fuel, and clothes. Everything was taking place on a micro-scale, where decisions were often made to chase out the refugees without determining the destination, which proved a lack of interest in those individuals. One could acknowledge it was lawlessness, decisions not approved by state authorities. The number of decisions to expel refugees increased after the collapse of the monarchy. Some refugees did not want to return to Galicia, which did not function in the same way as when they had left it due to evacuation, escape or emigration. The reasons were varied: from economic ones and a desire to start a new life in Czechoslovakia or Austria to a fear of religious or ethnic-based violence in Galicia; it was rarely an open demonstration of a lack of political affiliation, also mentioned in the sources. The apparent alienation of refugees caused by the wartime crisis may not have been unusual in the post-imperial realities: alienation, the sense of identity, and the resulting antagonisms in interwar Europe had their roots in the earlier system.

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