Summary

In the interwar era Ukrainians were the largest ethnic minority in Poland; in the district of Przemyśl they comprised about 60 percent of the total population. In this age the antagonism between them and the Poles, that had existed since the Springtide of Nations, was still present in the public space. Like in the times of the Galician autonomy conflicts between the two nations erupted; the difference was that in the Second Republic the Ukrainians were trying to achieve the goal of the samoistną Ukraina. The Ukrainian minority was mainly (90 percent) composed of peasants, with a handful of smalltime entrepreneurs, traders, laborers, artisans and some intellectuals - mainly in the city of Przemyśl. Education has always been an important part in the existence of ethnic minorities - the reason why the Ukrainians fought for its autonomy, and political decisions concerning the sphere were widely commentated and closely observed. In the district of Przemyśl and the city itself was a high number of Ukrainian or utraquist schools. In Przemyśl and the surrounding villages existed a large quantity of cultural, educational, religious, sport and economical organizations. The most powerful political party was still UNDO, that competed with the political circle of Lwów. The nationalist organizations were also quite strong in the region. The outbreak of World War II and the German occupation provided the means for increased Ukrainian activity. The Ukrainian Central Committee was allowed legal action, including a branch in Przemyśl. The school and co-operative system was established. The Ukrainians, seeing the Third Reich as a guarantee of their independence, collaborated with the regime and created allied military division, including the infamous SS Galizien. Immediately after taking control of the region, the communists allowed some degree of autonomy, allowing the schools to function and reestablishing some of the institutions that existed before the war. But then came the escalation of activities taken by the UPA organization, including massacres of polish civilian population. In consequence came the “Wisła” action- the Ukrainians were resettled in the “reclaimed” western parts of Poland. In the years 1944-1947 the long tradition of Przemyśl as a multicultural city and its district that held a large Ukrainian minority has ended. The holocaust, relocation of Ukrainians to the CCCP and the resettlements during the “Wisła” action dramatically changed the demographic, economic and social structure in the region.

Wojciech Łuczyk