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REGIONALISM AS A COMPONENT OF THE POLISH NATIONAL POLICY IN INTER-WAR VOLHYNIA

Abstract. *The purpose of the research is to highlight the essence and forms of regionalism as a defining component of the Polish national policy towards the Ukrainian population of Western Volhynia. The focus has been on the made attempts in order to implement the “Volhynia program” in 1928 – 1938, there has been analyzed its content and the reaction of the Ukrainian and Polish societies to it. It has been proven that the policy of regionalism aimed at weakening the unity of the Ukrainian national movement and accelerate the integration of Western Ukrainian lands into the Polish state. The methodology of the research is based on analytical, chronological methods, structured and critical approaches, which allowed us to consider the content and consequences of regionalism as a defining feature of the Polish national policy towards the Western Ukrainian community. The scientific novelty of the article consists in the fact that documents and interwar periodicals have been found and studied, which enabled us to show theoretical differences in attitudes towards the policy of regionalism*

in Volhynia, in particular regarding the idea of the “Sokal border”, as well as to prove that attempts to divide the Ukrainian society became dominant in the implementation of the national policy of the Polish governments during the interwar period. **Conclusions.** An essential factor in the Polish national policy of the interwar period was the attempt to split the Ukrainian community into separate parts and pit them against each other. There were laid foundations of the regionalism policy in 1923 aimed at accelerating the integration of the non-Polish national groups into the state structure of Poland. In spite of the numerous tactical approaches to resolving the national issue, the strategic goal of all Polish governments of the interwar period was focused on the close incorporation of the territories into Poland, where the national groups lived. The idea of regionalism played a decisive role in it. There was “Volyn experiment” carried out by Voivode Henryk Józewski, was the apogee of the regionalism policy in Volyn, which envisaged changes in all spheres of life in the voivodeship with an emphasis on ensuring the Ukrainian-Polish coexistence and cooperation. The essential thesis of the “Volhynia policy” was the idea of the “Sokal border”. It was created with the aim of separating Western Ukrainian lands and isolating Volhynia from the influence of Galicia, which was entirely in line with the policy of regionalism. This program was supported by a group of former UNR figures, who settled in Volhynia as political emigrants. At the same time, the Ukrainian political and public figures in Galicia opposed it. Despite criticism from some Polish intellectuals and the offers to abolish the “Sokal border” and fight for psychological rapprochement between Eastern Galicia and Volhynia, the idea of regionalism was not subject to revision. In general, the national policy of governments aimed at stabilizing relations with the Ukrainian population could be implemented only on condition that Poland’s state interests, among which was regionalism, were preserved.

Key words: national policy, Poland, Volhynia, regionalism, “Volyn experiment”, “Sokal border”.

РЕГІОНАЛІЗМ ЯК СКЛАДНИК ПОЛЬСЬКОЇ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОЇ ПОЛІТИКИ У МІЖВОЄННІЙ ВОЛИНІ

Анотація. Мета дослідження. У статті висвітлено суть і форми втілення регіоналізму як визначального складника польської національної політики щодо українського населення Західної Волині. Акцентовано увагу на спробах втілити “волинську програму” у 1928 – 1938 рр., проаналізовано її зміст і реакцію на неї українського та польських суспільства. Доведено, що політика регіоналізму мала на меті послаблення єдності українського національного руху та пришвидшення інтеграції західноукраїнських земель до складу Польської держави. **Методологія** дослідження базується на аналітичному, хронологічному методах, структурованості та критичності підходів, що дало можливість розглянути зміст і наслідки регіоналізму як визначальної риси польської національної політики щодо західноукраїнської громади. **Наукова новизна** статті полягає у тому, що віднайдено та досліджено документи, міжвоєнну періодику, які дозволили показати теоретичні відмінності у ставленні до політики регіоналізму на Волині, зокрема щодо ідеї “сокальського кордону”, а також довести, що спроби розділити українське суспільство стали домінують у втіленні національної політики польських урядів міжвоєнного часу. **Висновки.** Істотним чинником польської національної політики міжвоєнного періоду було намагання розколоти українську спільноту на окремі частини та протиставити їх між собою. Основи політики регіоналізму були закладені у 1923 р. з метою пришвидшення інтеграції непольських національних груп до державної структури Польщі. Попри різні тактичні підходи до розв’язання національного питання, стратегічна мета усіх польських урядів міжвоєнної доби полягала у тісній інкорпорації територій, де проживали національні групи, до складу Польщі. Визначальна роль у цьому відводилася ідеї регіоналізму. Апогеєм політики регіоналізму на Волині став “волинський експеримент” воєводи Генрика Юзевського, який передбачав зміни у всіх сферах життя воєводства з акцентом на забезпеченні українсько-польського співжиття і співпраці. Суттєвою тезою “волинської політики” була ідея “сокальського кордону”. Він був утворений з метою розмежувати західноукраїнські землі, відгородити Волинь від впливів Галичини, що цілком вписувалося у політику регіоналізму. Цю програму підтримувала група колишніх діячів УНР, які осіли на Волині як політичні емігранти. Водночас проти неї виступали українські політичні та громадські діячі Галичини. Попри критику окремих польських інтелектуалів і пропозицію скасувати “сокальський кордон” та боротися за психологічне

зближення між Східною Галичиною і Волиню, ідея регіоналізму не піддавалась ревізії. Загалом національна політика урядів, спрямована на стабілізацію відносин із українським населенням могла реалізовуватись лише за умови збереження державних інтересів Польщі, серед яких був регіоналізм.

Ключові слова: національна політика, Польща, Волинь, регіоналізм, “волинський експеримент”, “сокальський кордон”.

Problem Statement. The study on the specifics of the Polish national policy of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth towards the Ukrainian community in various regions of the state becomes relevant in terms of its scientific, practical and socio-political significance, especially under the current conditions of the development of the Ukrainian-Polish relations. Since an unbiased understanding of the Polish-Ukrainian relations history is essential to establishing equal and cooperative relations in the present, studying the above-mentioned issues will provide a chance to reflect critically on the experience of the challenging relations between these peoples during the interwar period, analyse achievements and mistakes, and draw appropriate conclusions.

The purpose of the study is to clarify the essence of regionalism as a defining component of the Polish national policy towards the Ukrainian population. The author has focused on the goals and instruments of the implementation of the “Volhynia experiment”, analyzed the attitude of the Ukrainian and the Polish societies towards it. It has been proven that regionalism policy was aimed to weaken the unity of the Ukrainian national movement and accelerate the integration of Western Ukrainian lands into the Polish state.

Review of Recent Research. There were diverse scholars from many countries, who studied regionalism issue and covered different historical periods. For instance, the study carried by Martin Ferry and Irena McMaster traced the paths of interaction between the national systems of regional policy of individual states and the consolidation policy of the European Union (Ferry, McMaster, 2013). The Polish and Ukrainian scholars studied the Polish national policy during the period between the two world wars primarily. The following studies conducted by Bohdan Hud (Hud, 2011), Mykola Kucherepa (Kucherepa, 2017), Volodymyr Komar (Komar, 2001), Oksana Ruda (Ruda, 2017), Yuriy Kramar (Kramar, 2015) should be highlighted as well the classic works carried out by Andrzej Chojnowski (Chojnowski, 1979), Eugeniusz Mironowicz (Mironowicz, 2005), Jan Kęsik (Kęsik, 1995) and the others.

The studies, done by the Belarusian scholar, who was persecuted in 2022, Viktor Misiyuk (Misiyuk, 2007) on the Polish national policy implementation in Polesie Voivodeship were useful; the studies by Svitlana Shulha (Shulha, 2018) on the attitude of the Polish authorities towards the Czech community; as well as the views of the Polish national democrats on the national issue analyzed by Taras Hrynevych (Hrynevych, 2017) were relevant; the historiographical issues of the Ukrainian-Polish relations of the interwar period in Volhynia, were covered by Oleh Razyhrayev (Razyhrayev, 2025). Another scholars: Ruslana Davydiuk and Inna Martynchuk (Davydiuk, & Martynchuk, 2024) studied the consequences of regionalism policy implementation by the governments of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on the Western Ukrainian women’s movement; Andrii Zhyviuk and Ruslana Davydiuk (Davydiuk, & Zhyvyuk, 2020) covered the theatrical life; Lyudmila Strilchuk and Yaroslav Yarosh (Strilchuk, & Yarosh, 2021) dealt with the development of “Prosvita” Society, etc. The topic on regionalism in the national policy of interwar Poland sparks up interest due to the involvement of new documentary sources in the scientific circulation in spite of the above-mentioned studies on the issue by numerous scholars.

The source base of the scientific research was the archival documents stored in the archives of Ukraine (Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv (CSHAUL); State Archive of Rivne Region (SARR); State Archive of Volyn Region (SAVR)); Belarus (State Archives of Brest Region (SABR)), Poland (Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie (AAN); Lublinie Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie (APL)), as well as the published documents, materials from the interwar periodical press and memoirs.

Regionalism, an attempt to split the Ukrainian community into separate parts and pit them against each other was a significant factor in the Polish national policy during the interwar period. There were laid foundations of the above-mentioned policy in 1923, which was aimed at integrating non-Polish national groups into the state structure of Poland. The national democrats implemented an incorporation policy at that time, in every possible way restricting the rights of the national communities, expanding the dominance of the Poles in the local government bodies in the Western Ukrainian lands. The administrative apparatus became almost entirely Polish despite of the fact that the vast majority of Volhynia Voivodeship inhabitants were not the Poles. The Poles held positions in the post office and railways mostly. According to Oleksandr Karpynsky, the Head of Rivne "Prosvita", the first actions taken by the Polish authorities in Volhynia were to dismiss all railway workers of the Orthodox faith from their positions, without even paying them the necessary funds (State Archive of Rivne Region (SARR), f. 33, d. 4, c. 20, p. 284). Due to oppression, obstacles, and restrictions on the rights of the Ukrainians, the leftist views spread among them, which were fueled by the Soviet side actively. Symon Petliura wrote the following: "The peasants' mood in Volhynia and Kholmshchyna is becoming more and more anti-Polish and rather sympathetic to the Bolsheviks. The main reason for this is the "oppression", which the Polish administration is carrying out recklessly, and forced Polonization, because the Ukrainian school is being persecuted" (Symon Petliura, 1979, p. 545). The national assimilation policy led to the aggravation of the already difficult Ukrainian-Polish relations in the territory of Western Volhynia. After visiting the voivodeship, Vincenti Vitos claimed that hatred for Poland permeated everything (Hud, 2011, p. 334).

There was adopted a secret resolution during the government of Władysław Sikorski, which was entitled "General Directive of Government Policy in the Eastern Borderlands" in March of 1923. In particular, in the document it was emphasized that "Volhynia and Eastern Lesser Poland (Malopolska)" could not be treated as a single territory, and that the "religious, cultural, and social differences between them give us the opportunity involuntarily to deepen this difference in order to prevent the formation of a common idea of the Ukrainian nationalism in the southeastern lands" (Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie (AAN), z. 8. Rkt. 25, t. 32, k. 8–9, 13).

It was believed that the national policy of the government should be aimed at stabilizing relations with the population of the "eastern borderlands", but only on condition that there were preserved the state interests of Poland. The regionalism policy, which was implemented by the Polish administration, was in line with the old slogan "divide and rule", hence, it was beneficial to the authorities, which, despite the changes of governments, kept to it consistently. According to Ambassador Serhiy Khrutskyi in January 1930: "The social and economic utraquism of moral sanitation, which is only a literal repetition of the Endeks call for utraquism, carried out in the so-called regional councils, is a trap for the Ukrainian souls. [...] The authorities do not even lift a finger against regionalism, because they realized immediately that this is an even more cunning and insidious way of their own Endeks policy of publicizing" (Kuhutiak, eds., 2014, p. 61).

The scholars distinguish the following main tactical approaches to solving the national issue in the national policy of Poland: the incorporation of the national assimilation policy and the creation of a mono-national Polish state; the federalist policy of the state assimilation and the doctrine of the “Polish Prometheanism”; the state national assimilation through “strengthening the Polishness in the eastern borderlands” (Chojnowski, 1979, pp. 5–6, 27). The incorporation policy was attempted by the *Endeks* (the People’s Democrats), the federalist policy by the supporters of J. Piłsudski, and after the Marshal’s death the military tried to combine the policy of the state assimilation and the national consolidation. At the same time, all Polish governments of the interwar period shared the principles of regionalism, the strategic goal of which was a close integration of the territories inhabited by the national groups into Poland.

The basis of regionalism policy was the use of diverse forms and methods of the national policy implementation in some specific territories, taking into account the level of the national development of their population, religious, linguistic, economic characteristics, as well as their attitude to the Polish state. Hence, the authorities tried to break the unity of the Ukrainians and prevent the spread of the Ukrainian national consciousness. According to the falsified census of 1921, in order to “blur” the national identity, the Ukrainians were called “Little Russians” (“*Malorosy*”), “the Ruthenians”, “the Rusyns”, “the Ukrainians”, although all these groups should be defined as “the Ukrainians” (Bilorus i Volyn, 1924, 11 *chervnia*, p. 2).

The Polish authorities promoted the theory of a separate “Polish”, “local” nationality, supposedly “intermediate between the Ukrainians and the Belarusians”, and the local officials were supposed to treat this category of people loyally. In 1923, the Polissia voivode Stanisław Downarowicz spoke of a loyal to the state group of the population with an unspecified nationality (“*Polissiesatsion*”). The representatives of this group received the name “*tuteishi*” in state statistics, and their number, due to manipulations in the Polish statistics, was constantly growing (Misiyuk, 2007, p. 240).

Taking into account the information, which was mentioned in the press: there live “people without a homeland” in Polissia and “the Polishchuks belong neither to the Belarusian nor to the Ukrainian people, but form a separate ethnic group, differing from their neighbours in linguistic, anthropological and other aspects” (*Z polskoi presy*, 1939, 25 *sichnia*, p. 4). The thesis was put forward that “the population of Polissia has nothing in common with the tribes that gave rise to the Belarusian, the Ukrainian or the Russian peoples” (State Archives of Brest Region (SABR), f. 1, d. 8, c. 1661, p. 60–61). It was suggested that the “Polishchuks”, who did not identify themselves with either the Ukrainians or the Belarusians, despite the specifics of their language and religion, should be considered the Poles and be fully integrated into the Polish culture (SABR, f. 1, d. 8, c. 1089, p. 1).

The authorities had an intention to pursue a different policy in Chełm Land than in other territories inhabited by the Ukrainians. Due to the ethnic changes, which were caused by World War I, the Ukrainian community of Chełm Land and *Pidliashshia* turned into the national minority, so it was planned to form the Polish national consciousness among the local population. It was stated by the officials: “Taking into consideration the difference in customs, concepts, etc., the Ruthenians of Chełm Land do not constitute a unity with the Orthodox population of Galicia and Volhynia. As they are close to the Polish type, they are prone to Polonization. They all speak Polish” (Lublinie Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie (APL), z. 403, sygn. 419, k. 10). In the 1930s, the policy of the national assimilation in the territories of the Chełm Land and *Pidliashshia* took the form of a “religious revindication” campaign.

Owing to the May coup of 1926 and the return to power of Józef Pilsudski, who considered the existence of Western Ukrainian and Western Belarusian territories as part of Poland an important component of its security in the east from the beginning of his political activity, the implementation of the regionalism policy in Volhynia was brought about. The Marshal stated the following while being fully aware of the importance of a balanced policy in the borderlands: “The border is a meeting of one people with another, one culture with another, one upbringing with another. Hence, the most difficult thing for every politician on the border is to gain strong, firm respect for the authorities” (Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv (CSHAUL), f. 580 т., d. 1, c. 6, p. 105). The representatives of the post-May government of Kazimierz Bartel in their official statements proclaimed the protection of the rights of non-Polish nationality citizens, emphasized the need to settle the national and religious disputes, and set the task of “rejecting the policy of the national assimilation, creating conditions for the state assimilation” (Kedryn, 1976, p. 663). There were taken some steps in order to implement the new policy, a special department of nationalities was established under the Ministry for Internal Affairs; the National Committee and the Bureau of National Policy began to operate under the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of Poland in March 1934 (Madajczyk, 1972, p. 140).

The Pilsudchyky judges believed that preserving the self-identity of the national minorities would help to form a sense of belonging to the Polish state. The Minister of the Interior, Kazimierz Młodzianowski, who developed the main principles of the policy towards the national minorities in 1926, stated that the national issue depended on the local governance efficiency, and not on changing the political system of the state (Komar, 2001, pp. 121–122). J. Pilsudski’s supporters always emphasized the importance of the Ukrainian issue in Volhynia Voivodeship, “because some moves in relation to that population in that area could render services in the area of our policy against Russia” (Kedryn, 1976, p. 667). At the same time, in the context of the specifics of the national policy implementation in the region, they noted that “in this case it is necessary to distinguish between stripes: the northern forest stripe, which is easy to cover with state rule, and the southern fertile stripe, which creates difficulties for rule” (Kedryn, 1976, p. 667). The importance of Volhynia in Poland’s domestic politics should also be explained by its border status, the national structure of the voivodeship, where “the number of Ruthenian people in that area exceeds 80% of the total population”, as well as the situation surrounding the Orthodox Church (Kedryn, 1976, p. 669).

The objective was to separate the Ukrainians from the influence of nationalist forces and surround them with moral and material support groups that favoured the Polish state in order to disrupt their unity in the government policy. Since Hryhoriy Khomyshyn, the Bishop of the Greek Catholic Church (GCC), was more likely than Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky to make amends with the Poles, the government was particularly disposed to help him and his allies (Ruda, 2017, p. 126). The Polish government collaborated with the Ukrainian government and interned the UNR Army soldiers, who later became the political immigrants in order to carry out the schemes of state assimilation of the Ukrainian population. It should be mentioned that diverse former UNR Army officers were enrolled in the Polish army and signed a contract.

Due to the political changes in the state in May of 1926, there was the impetus for the launch of the “Volhynia experiment”. J. Pilsudski’s guidance emphasized that “the government should be strong and strict, but fair” in Volhynia (Madajczyk, 1972, p. 144). It should be highlighted that the Marshal was a staunch supporter of the integration of all lands

of the Polish state, and he recognized concessions in the interests of the national minorities as a potential source of growth of the separatist sentiments (Mironowicz, 2005, pp. 141–142).

The first “rehabilitation” voivode of Volhynia, Władysław Mych, failed to improve the Ukrainian-Polish relations, and the escalation of the conflict with the military leadership of the Corps II District in Lublin, which controlled Volhynia Voivodeship, only accelerated his resignation. The next Head of Volhynia was Henryk Józewski, a supporter of the ideas of the Warsaw Pact, Deputy in 1920 – 1921 of the Minister of Internal Affairs of the UNR government, a member of the expanded composition of the UCC in Warsaw, who was considered the best expert on the Ukrainian issues. He managed to form a multi-vector “Volhynia program”, which provided for changes in all spheres of life in the voivodeship with an emphasis on ensuring the Ukrainian-Polish coexistence and cooperation. The governor wrote about Volhynia: “Many of my friends believed that my appointment to Volhynia from my previous position – Chief of the Cabinet of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers – was a demotion. No one thought that the greatest adventure of my life would come and happen to me in Lutsk ... I was starting the battle for Volyn, Poland, Ukraine, the battle for myself” (Józewski, 1982, p. 134).

The theoretical basis of the “Volhynia experiment” was the concept of Prometheanism and the idea of the Polish-Ukrainian understanding. The goal of this policy was to guarantee peace on the borders of the Second Polish-Ukrainian Commonwealth, as well as to create a counterweight to the national policy in the Ukrainian SSR. A kind of enclave of the Polish-Ukrainian coexistence, built on Jagiellonian traditions and the “ideology of 1920” (Warsaw Pact of Petliura – Pilsudski) was to be formed on the territory of the voivodeship (Kęsik, 1995, p. 121). It would be appropriate to recall the words of Symon Petliura, written by him on July 20 of 1923: “The 1920 understanding was forced and resulted from our political and military situation, as well as from the isolation in which we were then... The agreement was not fulfilled by the other side, not by us... Today there is no agreement. Our presence here is a matter of technical fact, not of principle and policy” (Symon Petliura, 1979, p. 533).

The quintessence of the program of Voivode H. Józewski, announced by him on August 20 of 1928 at the congress of ambassadors and senators of the BBWR in Lutsk, was the initiation of Ukrainian-Polish coexistence and cooperation, so that “the Ukrainians would not have the desire to leave Poland even after the creation of independent Ukraine above the Dnieper” (Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego. Dział Rękopisów (BUW, DR), Materiały H. Józewskiego, № akc. 3189, k. 16). It was planned to extend the declared policy to other eastern voivodeships in the future, in particular Polissia, Nowogródsk, Vilno, and part of Białystok, which was discussed at the Congress of Voivodes of these territories in Lutsk on December 2 of 1929 (AAN, z. 1181, sygn. 979/42, k. 12–13). As a result, the above-mentioned perspective was conditioned by H. Józewski’s conviction that the named voivodeships were a coherent region, different from Eastern Galicia, with a lower degree of the national self-awareness, specific historical past, etc. The voivode wrote the following: “Volhynia life was different, had different opportunities and conditions, was closer to Polissia, Nowogródsk, Vilno. It was like one region. They had the same “kresovist”, different from the Galician “kresovist” (Józewski, 1982, p. 74).

H. Józewski, while implementing the above-mentioned secret “General Directive of Government Policy in the Eastern Borderlands” of 1923, emphasized what had to be done: “Systematically proceed to the formation of Uhodovykh Ukrainian groups. When there is no Uhodova party in the full sense of the word, then it is necessary to look for it or create it.

There is scarcity of the Ukrainian periodicals in Volhynia, they must be created, financially supported, but act exclusively within the framework of the state interest” (AAN, z. 8. Rkt. – 25, t. 32, k. 8–9, 13). He also stressed out the drastic need to develop the Ukrainian cultural, social, and political life loyal to the state, Henryk ignored the idea of autonomy for the region, focusing only on the latter’s integration into Poland. Mykola Syvitskyi emphasized the following: “One could shout out loud about an independent state on the Dnieper in Volhynia, but it was not allowed to spread separatism, talk about secession from Poland and unification with Naddnipryanshchyna (the Dnieper region)” (Syvitskyi, 2000, p. 67). The statements about the formation of Ukrainian Uhodovski groups remained relevant in the future. For example, we may come across in the Theses of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, concluded in January of 1936 the following: “The National policy towards the Ukrainians was to contribute to the creation of a strong Polonophile ideological Ukrainian movement” (Kuhutiak, eds., 2014, p. 294).

Some figures of the political emigration of the UNR shared the view that the only way out in the struggle for the independence of Ukraine was “understanding with neighbouring peoples, even at the cost of some compromises” (Visti UTsK v Polshchi, 1927, sichen-liutyi, p. 3). As a result, there emerged a “group of Petro Pevnyi” within the framework of the “Volhynia experiment” around the editorial office of the periodical the “Ukrayinska Nyva” and strengthened, which later on transformed into a pro-government party – the Volhynia Ukrainian Union (VUO) with the support of the voivode.

The experiment of Volhynia voivode was received in Volhynia critically: “The Polish side wants to create in Volhynia a separate regional type of the Volynian, who is allowed to speak Ukrainian at home, but who must be a one hundred percent Polish statesman in his soul and outwardly” (Nova retsept, 1937, 25 serpnia, p. 1).

The Representatives of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) were uncompromising towards the pro-government Ukrainian camp in Volhynia. We come across the following on the pages of “Rozbudova natsii”: “In general, the “Ukrayinska Nyva” is intended to deepen the Sokalskyi ditch, which has been falling asleep since the annexation of the northwestern lands to Poland...All the forces of the grain-eaters are aimed at undermining the authority of local Ukrainian institutions that have embarked on the path of cooperation with Lviv. On the other hand, the regionalists are building their own educational and economic institutions. The very fact of the existence of these institutions already has a disorganizing effect on the masses of the population. Hence, the rival of Lutsk district the “Prosvita” became “Ridna Khata”. Large funds are being wasted at this organization. Even the Polish magazines emphasize that the premises of this “club” are decorated too ostentatiously for the present time. The “Regionalists” are also establishing a credit bank, despite the fact that the needs of the Ukrainian population could be served successfully in the future by “The Ukrainian Cooperative Bank”. Unhealthy competition may lead to very sad consequences” (“Tykha storona”, 1929, cherven-lypen, p. 228).

An important thesis of the “Volhynia experiment” was the idea of the “Sokal border”, the goal of which was to fence off Volhynia from the influences of the national institutions of Galicia and the Greek Catholic Church, which fully fit into the policy of regionalism. The program of isolation of Volhynia life was carried out primarily by the administrative methods, by prohibiting the activities numerous Ukrainian organizations that were rooted there firmly (Davydiuk, 2006, p. 285).

Some Polish intellectuals had a different vision of the solution of the Ukrainian-Polish relations at that time. Adolf Bocheński gave a piece of advice to the Polish politicians

in his work “Between Germany and Russia”: to abandon “the Sokal border” and, on the contrary, to fight for the greatest psychological rapprochement between Eastern Galicia and Volhynia. The author believed that it was in Poland’s interests to distance psychologically its “eastern territories from the Soviet Ukraine”, hence, bringing them closer to Western Europe: “Volhynia, which is now closer to the Soviet Ukraine than Galicia, must be brought closer to Galicia psychologically. Consequently, it is necessary to eliminate, not support, “the Sokal border”. The Ukrainians unification on the outskirts of Poland will occur by doing the above-mentioned and at the same time the deepening of the difference between the Transnistrian and Transnistrian Ukrainians. That difference lies in Poland’s interests” (Novyny polskoi politychnoi literatury, 1937, 24 lystopada, p. 7). However, the majority of the Poles did not share such views. Ivan Kedryn stated the following quite sadly: “The intelligent articles of some Polish publicists – K. Srokowski, Adolf and Aleksander Bocheński, W. Bączkowski, L. Wasilewski, P. Dunin-Borkowski, Mieczyslaw and Ksaver Pruszyński and some others – did not reach the consciousness of the Polish citizenry and its political elite. And so, until the end of its existence, Poland did not know what its largest “minority” of several million people was actually called» (Kedryn, 1976, p. 248).

The Polish population of the province, which did not recognize the existence of the Ukrainian people, was in opposition to “the Volhynia experiment”. H. Józewski never managed to consolidate the Polish community around his ideas. Taking the above-mentioned into consideration, it became impossible to stabilize the Ukrainian-Polish relations and ensure a constructive, effective dialogue.

The government policy was characterized by the strengthening of nationalism after J. Pilsudski’s death in 1935. The pages of the periodical “Volynske Slovo” noted the following: “Everyone knows that after the death of Marshal Pilsudski, who directed the state policy of the Polish Commonwealth undividedly, many things changed for the worse – at least in the Ukrainian section. Here (in Volhynia – *authors*), where during Józef Pilsudski’s life there existed the idea regarding the national equality, a storm of chauvinism swept through suddenly. Its characteristic consequences were manifested in a whole series of anti-Ukrainian speeches of the people’s democracy” (Dekilka uvah, 1937, 7 lystopada, p. 1).

The programmatic declaration of the new force, the Camp of National Unity (Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego – OZN), led by Colonel Adam Koc, was published on February 27 of 1937, which emphasized the consolidation of all forces around the slogan of “the defense of Poland” (Kramar, 2015, p. 83). The document stipulated that the state should do everything possible to combat separatist sentiments of the national minorities in order to “prevent the crystallization of national minorities into a people” (Kęsik, 1995, p. 136).

Voivode Józewski stated on November 19 of 1937, at a meeting of the OZN: “The formation of Poland’s greatness and power here in Volhynia will always be realized in different circumstances than in the West... Here, the Polish citizenship is only a part of the entire population of the voivodeship – the citizens of a non-Polish origin. This state of affairs required and will require special methods of administration and organization of the Polish labor” (Volynskiy Voievoda, 1937, 12 hrudnia, p. 2). However, the voivode’s thoughts lost their relevance: in April 1938, Henryk Józewski was transferred to the position of voivode in the city of Łódź (State Archive of Volyn Region (SAVR), f. 60, d. 1, c. 8, p. 39).

The end of the 1930s was marked by another intensification of the regionalism issue. In 1938, the “Committee for the Affairs of the Zagrod Gentry in Eastern Poland” was formed. There emerged 141 organizations of the “zagrod gentry” in Volhynia, uniting up to 20

thousand people, who were used in every way to strengthen the power of the Polish state (Hud, 2011, p. 361). On the other hand, the positions of the illegal OUN were strengthening and the influence of pro-government forces weakened in the Ukrainian political camp. "In 1938 – 1939 Poland was a typical police state. In the countryside, the policeman was an all-powerful lord. All manifestations of the Ukrainian national life depended not so much on laws as on the arbitrariness of the police. And this lawlessness made life unbearable," wrote I. Kedryn (Kedryn, 1976, p. 278).

In February 1939, at the initiative of the last Volhynian voivode, Aleksander Hauke-Nowak, a new "Political Program of State Policy in Volhynia" was approved. It was stated in the document to polonize the Ukrainian youth, to strengthen Polish propaganda in the local government bodies, to unify the Orthodox calendar with the Catholic one, and use the "Rusyn", the "Volyniak", the "Polishchuk", and the "tuteishi" instead of the term "the Ukrainian". It also mentioned strengthening the influence of the Polish settlement and introducing the Polish language in the Orthodox Church (SAVR, f. 46, d. 9, c. 4671, pp. 1–18). Only verified people were allowed to familiarize with the program. The new program was approved by the Polish parliamentarians from Volhynia in Lutsk on February 19 of 1939, and a month later, on March 18, it was legally approved as the government's program on the Ukrainian issue. Such a frankly anti-Ukrainian national policy crossed out the idea of the Ukrainian-Polish understanding, actualized within the framework of the "Volhynia experiment".

Conclusions. There were distinguished two directions of solving the Ukrainian issue in the Polish political camp. The policy of the national assimilation offered by the Endeks envisaged the creation of a mono-national Polish state as a result of the forced assimilation of the non-Poles (1923 – 1926). The federalist idea of J. Pilsudski's supporters was characterized by the policy of state assimilation and linked the solution of the national issue with the principles of tolerant coexistence of peoples provided that they recognize and support the state (1926 – 1935). The most striking manifestation of this policy was the "Volhynia experiment" of the voivode H. Jozewski, who enjoyed the support of some political emigrants of the UNR (1928 – 1938). This experiment remained unfinished, hence, the policy of the state-national assimilation was implemented in 1938 – 1939, there was activated both the Polish and the Ukrainian nationalism. During the interwar period, the dominant Polish national policy was regionalism, which consisted in attempts to split the Ukrainian community into separate parts and pit them against each other. This policy echoed the old slogan "divide and rule" and was beneficial to the Polish authorities, which, despite changes of government, consistently adhered to it. The policy of regionalism was implemented with the aim of faster integration of Western Ukrainian lands into Poland.

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