

# Citizenship and National Identity: the Peasants of Galicia during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

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Using the example of Austrian Galicia, the following article will discuss on how peasants acquired and actually performed citizenship in the political sphere, and which roles the changing and competing concepts of national identity had in their ability to participate in the political process. The paper will focus on the rights and the actual practice of peasant participation within the institutionalized processes of political decision-making, or more precisely, on the representation and participation of peasants in political movements and parties as well as in parliaments.

It will be argued that for the actual practice of the rights that, in principle, the peasants had held since the 1860s, the following were both crucial: the formation of a civil society, and a public sphere that included peasants.<sup>1</sup> The development of structures of a civil society and a public sphere was to a high degree identical to Polish and Ruthenian nation-building.<sup>2</sup> In the Polish case, the formation of a modern nation meant, in principle, the opening up of the early modern concept of the Polish nation (consisting of the *szlachta*, the nobility) for other social strata as well, especially the peasantry. The

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<sup>1</sup> *Civil society* is understood here as that sphere between state and economy where citizens can associate and communicate freely. The development of a strong civil society is clearly a precondition for a working democracy; see Kocka, Jürgen, "Zivilgesellschaft als historisches Problem und Versprechen", in: Hildermeier, Manfred; Kocka, Jürgen and Conrad, Christoph (eds.), *Europäische Zivilgesellschaft in Ost und West. Begriff, Geschichte, Chancen* (Frankfurt/M. u.a.) 2000, p. 13–39. It is closely interrelated with the concept of *public sphere*, see on that concept and its applicability for historical research Eley, Geoff, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century", in: Nicholas B. Birds et al. (eds.): *Culture/Power/History. A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory* (Princeton 1994), p. 297–335. On the development of civil society and the public sphere in Galicia see also Janowski, Maciej, „Galizien auf dem Weg zur Zivilgesellschaft“, in Rumppler, Helmut and Urbanitsch, Peter (eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, vol. 8/1: *Politische Öffentlichkeit und Zivilgesellschaft* (Wien 2006), p. 805–858.

<sup>2</sup> For more extensive discussion on these processes, and a comparison of the Polish and Ruthenian cases, see Struve, Kai, *Bauern und Nation in Galizien. Über Zugehörigkeit und soziale Emanzipation im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen 2005). On the Polish case in western Galicia, see also Molenda, Jan, *Chłopi – naród – niepodległość. Kształtowanie się postaw narodowych i obywatelskich chłopów w Galicji i Królestwie Polskim w przededniu odrodzenia Polski* (Warszawa 1999), and Stauter-Halsted, Keely, *The Nation in the Village. The Genesis of Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848–1914* (Ithaca 2001).

Galician Ruthenians, however, became a modern nation through a transformation from a primarily religious identity into a national one. The *Rusyny*, as they called themselves (or in some regions also *Rusnaky*), were those who adhered to the *rus'ka vira*, the eastern rite. They were mostly peasants, their elite consisted mainly of Greek Catholic clergymen and they represented the majority of the population in eastern Galicia. The numbers of secular Ruthenian intelligentsia increased only towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; in earlier decades most of the Ruthenians who had acquired a better education began to consider themselves to be members of the Polish nation.<sup>3</sup> During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were two more relevant options as to how to understand Ruthenian identity in national terms, i.e. as belonging to the Russian nation, or as belonging to a Ukrainian nation. For the Russophile of that time, the medieval Rus', Orthodoxy, the contemporary Russian state, Church Slavonic, and the modern Russian language were all important points of reference for their nation-building project, while the Ukrainophiles created a standardized version of the vernacular language and referred to folk culture and cossack traditions. Compared to the rather elitist concept of the Russophiles claiming a Ruthenian national identity, the Ukrainophiles, or *narodovitsi* as they were called in Galicia, referred more strongly to the peasantry and their culture. Though both currents had different ideas about the national identity of the Ruthenians, they will be treated here as two competing orientations within one Ruthenian movement, one that asserted that the Ruthenians deserved equal treatment as one of the nationalities of the Habsburg monarchy.<sup>4</sup>

The paper will start with a discussion of the situation of peasants in the early modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its legacy for the relations between peasants and other social groups during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## The early modern legacy and the changing image of the peasantry

A deep division between enserfed peasants and gentry landowners had developed in the early modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The noble

<sup>3</sup> *Gente Rutheni, natione Poloni* was a famous saying during the 19<sup>th</sup> century used to describe their national identity. The saying was ascribed to the 16<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Stanisław Orzechowski.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the different national options of Galicia's Ruthenians, see Himka, John-Paul, "The Construction of Nationality in Galician Rus': Icarian Flights in Almost All Directions", in: Suny, Ronald Grigor and Kennedy, Michael D. (eds.), *Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation* (Ann Arbor 1999), p. 109–164. On the national movement among the peasants, see also Himka, John-Paul, *Galician Villagers and the Ukrainian National Movement in the Nineteenth Century* (Houndmills 1988). On the Russophiles, see the comprehensive treatment by Wendland, Anna Veronika, *Die Russophilen in Galizien. Ukrainische Konservative zwischen Österreich und Rußland 1848–1915* (Wien 2001).

estate, the *szlachta*, monopolized the political rights and consequently only the *szlachta*, as constituted by the Commonwealth's sovereign, according to the early modern understanding of the concept, as well as the Polish nation and its members, were considered to be citizens.<sup>5</sup> This understanding began to change only at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, during the political debates concerning a reform of the Commonwealth under the influence of Enlightenment ideas. These debates resulted in the Constitution of 3 May, 1791. However, the constitution itself remained ambivalent with respect to the terms "nation" (*naród*) and "citizen" (*obywatel*). In some paragraphs these terms referred to the landowning gentry, in others to all inhabitants of the state. Much more clearly, the latter Enlightenment concept of nation took hold then only in the ephemeral constitutional laws that were issued during the Kościuszko Uprising in 1794.<sup>6</sup>

After the defeat of the Kościuszko Uprising in 1795, with the final partition the state disappearing, a definition of Polish national identity had to be found that was based more on history and culture than on state or estate. The new ideas of Romanticism contributed to the fact that Polish intellectuals discovered folk culture and the peasantry as one of the main pillars of Polish history and culture. While in the early modern period the peasants had been excluded from the nation, and even theories about the different ethnic descent of nobility and peasants became popular among the *szlachta*, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Polish national movement began to consider the peasants to be the basis and core of the existence of the Polish nation. The hope for the resurrection of an independent Polish state began to rest increasingly on a mass peasant patriotic uprising. This was especially true after the failure of the November Uprising of 1830-31.<sup>7</sup>

However, the hope for a patriotic rising of the peasantry was to a high degree a contrafactual invocation. The depth of the divide between peasants and landlords and the peasants' hostile attitude towards the aims of the Polish national movement became strikingly clear during the next Polish national uprising in 1846, this time in the Poznań region and in Galicia. In Galicia, the uprising ended in a kind of traumatic catastrophe for the Polish

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<sup>5</sup> The fact that the Polish term *obywatel* („citizen“) could be used as a synonym for gentry landlords until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century shows how strong this concept was within Polish culture.

<sup>6</sup> Walicki, Andrzej, *The Enlightenment and the Birth of Modern Nationhood. Polish Political Thought from Noble Republicanism to Tadeusz Kościuszko* (Notre Dame, Ind. 1989); Müller, Michael G., "Poland", in: Dann, Otto and Dinwiddy, John (eds.), *Nationalism in the Age of the French Revolution* (London 1988), p. 113-128; Kowecki, Jerzy, "U początków nowoczesnego narodu", in: Leśnodorski Bogusław (ed.), *Polska w epoce oświecenia* (Warszawa 1971), p. 106-170.

<sup>7</sup> Ziejka, Franciszek, *Złota legenda chłopów polskich* (Warszawa 1984); Cesarz, Elżbieta, *Chłopi w polskiej myśli historycznej doby porozbiorowej 1795-1864. Syntezy, parasyntezy i podręczniki dziejów ojczystych* (Rzeszów 1999); Brock, Peter, *Polish Revolutionary Populism. A Study in Agrarian Socialist Thought from the 1830s to the 1850s* (Toronto 1977); Kieniewicz, Stefan, *The Emancipation of the Polish Peasantry* (Chicago 1969).

national movement, not because it was crushed, like in Poznań, by the partitioning power, but because of a *jacquerie* of mostly Polish speaking Roman-Catholic peasants in western Galicia that began as a fight against the Polish insurgents. The peasants brought the uprising down, except for the territory of the Free City of Cracow, within some hours after its beginning. Peasants killed the assembling insurgents, mostly landlords and officials of the manors, or delivered them to the Austrian authorities. But the peasant unrest did not stop at that point; it continued by plundering and destroying about four hundred manors and killing more landlords and their servants, altogether about one thousand people. Austrian officials in the districts of Tarnów and Bochnia, the core area of the *jacquerie*, had encouraged the peasants to defend the emperor against the complot of their landlords, but the real cause behind this massacre of Polish patriots by peasants was the strong social tensions between peasants and landlords. The peasants feared the re-establishment of a Polish state because they expected it to be the state of their landlords. Their memory of independent Poland, conveyed from one generation to the next, was one of landlord wilfulness and a lack of rights.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, Austrian rule had brought the peasants a limited improvement of their legal status. Serfdom was abolished, some restrictions on the *corvée* introduced and, perhaps most important, some legal mechanisms, though not very effective, were implemented that allowed peasants to call state authorities and courts to protect them against the landlords' infringements of their rights.<sup>9</sup> One should not wonder that the peasants preferred the emperor's rule to that of an independent Poland that their landlords wanted to re-establish. The peasants made use of the occasion of a breach between the two sources of power that prevented them from realizing their central interest, i.e. the abolition of the *corvée* and other feudal duties. However, during the following months the Austrian authorities started to force the peasants back to work on the estates with the help of the army as well as the massive use of flogging. The peasants failed to achieve their aim, but had thrown the Polish national movement into a deep crisis.

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<sup>8</sup> On the events of 1846, see Simons, jr., Thomas W., "The Peasant Revolt of 1846 in Galicia: Recent Polish Historiography", in: *Slavic Review* 30 (1971), p. 795–817; Kieniewicz, Stefan, *Ruch chłopski w Galicji w 1846 roku* (Wrocław 1951); Gill, Arnon, *Die polnische Revolution 1846. Zwischen nationalem Befreiungskampf des Landadels und antifeudaler Bauernerhebung* (München 1974). See also the instructive case study Rozdolski, Roman, "Do historii 'krwawego roku' 1846", in: *Kwartalnik historyczny* 65 (1958), p. 403–422.

<sup>9</sup> Rozdolski, Roman, *Stosunki poddańcze w dawniej Galicji*, 2 vols. (Warszawa 1962); Mises, Ludwig von, *Die Entwicklung des gutsherrlich-bäuerlichen Verhältnisses in Galizien (1772–1848)* (Wien 1902).

## Citizenship in a rush: The revolution of 1848

Despite the improvements in their legal status after 1772, peasants remained far from reaching any formal political participation, though some form of village self-administration was introduced that, nevertheless, remained to a high degree dependent on the landlord.<sup>10</sup>

The peasants' exclusion from any form of political participation changed radically during the revolution of 1848. The political weight of the peasantry could be felt already in the initial phase of the revolution. The first and most important consequence of the revolution for the peasants was that the *corvée* was abolished and the peasants received full property rights to their farms. In Galicia, this step was announced earlier than in the rest of Austria because of a competition between the Polish national movement and the Austrian authorities for the support of the peasants. The Austrian governor Franz Graf Stadion wanted to anticipate the imminent declaration of the Polish national movement calling for an abolition of the *corvée*, and issued such a statement himself before a final decision was reached in Vienna.<sup>11</sup>

But the political relevance of the peasants also made itself felt in other spheres of politics in 1848. During the revolution, the Galician Ruthenians asserted for the first time their rights as one of the nationalities of the monarchy, and demanded equality with other nationalities, especially with the Poles. The conservative Greek Catholic church hierarchy was the only representation of the Ruthenians that initially existed. On 19 April, 1848, Greek Catholic dignitaries issued an address to the emperor declaring the loyalty of the Ruthenians. The Greek-Catholic church hierarchy in L'viv also took the initiative to establish the Supreme Ruthenian Council (*Holovna Rus'ka Rada*, HRR) as a representative body of the Ruthenian nationality, and as a counterbalance to the revolutionary Central National Council (*Rada Narodowa Centralna*) created by the Poles. However, neither the Ruthenian address of 19 April nor a declaration that the HRR issued on 10 May after it had assembled for the first time on 2 May included specific peasant interests or referred to the abolition of the *corvée*.<sup>12</sup> In fact, the conservative, anti-revolutionary Greek-Catholic church hierarchy did not show much interest in

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<sup>10</sup> The village communities could present three candidates for village mayor (Polish: *wójt*; Ukrainian: *viit*) out of whom the landlord had to select one for the office. The communities also had to elect some "assessors" as members of the village administration "in agreement" with the mayor. However, the most important person in the village administration was the *mandatariusz*, who represented the landlord in his administrative rights and obligations towards the village, Rozdolski, *Stosunki poddańcze*, vol. 1, p. 168-173. The "plenipotentiaries", whom the village communities had to elect as their spokespersons when they wanted to bring complaints against their landlords to the state authorities or to the courts, were more accurate representatives of the villagers than the mayors or assessors, Kieniewicz, *Ruch chłopski*, p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> Kieniewicz, Stefan, *Pomiędzy Stadionem a Gosławem. Sprawa włościańska w Galicji w 1848 r.* (Wrocław 1980).

<sup>12</sup> Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 87-88.

the social and political concerns of the peasantry. This changed when the Ruthenian movement spread to the province.

In contrast to the HRR, which had no peasants among its initially 66 members, peasants participated in the work of many of the Ruthenian Councils that were founded since May 1848 in provincial towns.<sup>13</sup> Even more important, the Ruthenian peasants accepted the Ruthenian Councils as their representation and as an advocate of their interests. They flooded the Councils with requests for help in their conflicts with landlords or state authorities, and presented the Councils with the injustices they felt were injustices done to the Ruthenian people. They did this apparently in order to argue why the Ruthenian Council should intervene on their behalf.<sup>14</sup> For the conservative hierarchy of the church and the conservative clergy it became clear that they had to take peasant interests into account in order to maintain the strength of the Ruthenian movement. Nevertheless, the HRR strongly opposed any unrest among the peasantry, occupations of estate land, or illegal logging by peasants.<sup>15</sup>

Not all Greek Catholic priests shared the antirevolutionary attitude of the church hierarchy. There was a current among educated Ruthenians who sympathized with the revolution, and who wanted to move closer to the revolutionary Poles. But apparently those pro-revolutionary Ruthenians could not count on support from the peasants, who resented any cooperation with the Polish movement, which they saw as the movement of the landlords. Consequently, the revolutionary current among the Ruthenians remained weak.<sup>16</sup>

In contrast to the Ruthenian Councils, the Polish *Rady Narodowe* (National Councils) could not mobilize any significant support from the peasantry, either in predominantly Ruthenian eastern Galicia or in Roman Catholic and Polish speaking western Galicia. The deep divide between the peasants and everything "Polish" which had become strikingly obvious in 1846 could not be overcome in 1848, either.<sup>17</sup>

The elections to the Reichstag at the end of June 1848 allowed the Galician peasants the possibility, for the first time, of participation in political processes in a modern democratic form. The ballot rules were, for 19<sup>th</sup> century standards, quite democratic. Though women, landless cottagers, and to an extent also urban workers and other poor people remained excluded

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<sup>13</sup> Kozik, Jan, *Miedzy reakcja a rewolucja. Studia z dziejów ukraińskiego ruchu narodowego w Galicji w latach 1848–49* (Warszawa 1975). In English in Kozik, Jan, *The Ukrainian National Movement in Galicia, 1815–1849* (Edmonton 1986).

<sup>14</sup> Himka, *Galician Villagers*, p. 33–35.

<sup>15</sup> Kozik, *Miedzy reakcja*, p. 50–52, p. 100–104.

<sup>16</sup> Turii, Oleh: „Natsionalne i polityczne polonofilstvo sered hreko-katolytskoho dukhovenstva Halychyny pid chas revoliutsii 1848–1849 rokiv”, in: *Zapysky NTSh* 228 (1994), p. 183–206, here p. 198–200.

<sup>17</sup> Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 92–94; Kieniewicz, *Pomiędzy Stadionem a Goslarem*, p. 63–65.

from the elections, all others could participate with an equal vote. The election took place in two steps. In the first step, electoral delegates were elected who then, in the second step, assembled and elected the deputy to the Reichstag in a given district.<sup>18</sup> Galicia could send one hundred members to the Reichstag, among them eighty-nine from rural districts. This provided peasants, in principle, with substantial influence and great possibilities of political participation. In the end, thirty-five peasants were elected, among them fifteen Ruthenians, but also fifty landlords and Roman Catholic priests or other members of the Polish upper classes, as well as eight Greek Catholic priests and two other Ruthenians. Forty-one of the Polish candidates had won their mandate in rural districts.<sup>19</sup>

In many places the illiterate peasants did not really understand the procedure and the importance of the election, and refused to participate. Peasants feared a new intrigue on the part of the landlords and their officers who often staffed the electoral commissions. Roman Rosdolsky believes that only the peasants' lack of understanding of the elections, manipulations, or fraud had allowed for the election of Polish candidates in rural districts.<sup>20</sup> In any case, the peasants' lack of understanding of the election and their inability to use this new possibility of participation in political decision-making should not be overemphasized. In nearly forty percent of the 89 electoral districts where peasants had a decisive vote, peasants were elected; some of the Greek Catholic priests and educated Ruthenians would also not have been successful without peasant support. Compared to the obstacles peasants had to face, this was no small achievement. This represented successful peasant participation in a modern political process and, therefore, a realization of the citizenship rights that the revolution had brought to them.

However, it is a different question as to which extent peasant deputies were able to pursue peasant interests in the Reichstag. They clearly articulated the concerns of their electorate, but, apparently, during the short period the parliament existed they were not able to acquire a position and forge alliances that would have given them real political influence.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> On the electoral law, see Burian, Peter, *Die Nationalitäten in „Cisleithanien“ und das Wahlrecht der Märzrevolutionen 1848/49. Zur Problematik des Parlamentarismus im alten Österreich* (Graz 1962); see also Rosdolsky, Roman, *Die Bauernabgeordneten im konstituierenden österreichischen Reichstag 1848–1849* (Wien 1976), p. 42–44.

<sup>19</sup> In the literature there are slight differences in the numbers because it is not possible to clearly assign all deputies to one nationality. For a discussion of the different numbers see Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 95–96.

<sup>20</sup> See Rosdolsky's discussion of the election results, Rosdolsky, *Die Bauernabgeordneten*, p. 62–77.

<sup>21</sup> Peasant deputies were not popular either among the Polish or the Ruthenian "educated classes". Both the Polish national movement and the revolutionary left attacked them as being only the "Stimmvieh" of the government. This accusation was clearly too simplistic. It should also be added that the upper class members of the Reichstag were rather reluctant to introduce procedures that would have allowed the peasant deputies to participate more efficiently in the

## Peasant voting rights in the constitutional era

The defeat of the revolution in 1849 and the following phase of neo-absolutist rule in Austria ended all possibilities for peasants' political participation (as well as, for the most part, the rest of society). The political organizations that had developed in 1848 could not continue their work. The HRR dissolved in 1851.

After 1848 and the abolition of the *corvée*, tensions between the peasants and the manors still remained strong, due to conflicts about the "servitudes", the rights of peasant communes or households to use wood from forests and graze their cattle on pastures that the manors claimed as their property. In 1855, a state commission began its work in order to regulate this unresolved issue. Most of the contentious cases were finally decided in favour of the manors. As a result, the peasants lost most of their former servitudes or received only a small compensation in land or money. This resulted in anger and disappointment among the peasants, and led to a number of violent clashes and incidents when peasants tried to continue their former rights. Most of the cases had been finally decided by the commission or courts by the beginning of the 1880s, but some continued until 1895.<sup>22</sup>

Peasants received new possibilities of political participation only during the constitutional reforms of the 1860 that resulted in the constitution of 1867. In 1861 crownland diets were introduced. The electoral statute for the Galician diet that was adopted that year remained in force except for some minor changes until 1914, when a new electoral law was passed. The 150 (later 161) deputies were elected in four curia. The owners of estates voted in the first curia and could elect 44 deputies, and the peasants and other inhabitants of rural areas and small towns voted in the fourth curia that was represented by 74 deputies in the diet. The other two curias were that of the chambers of commerce and industry of Lemberg (Lviv), Cracow (Kraków) and Brody, and the third that of the cities. Only the elections in the fourth curia were indirect and public. Each block of five hundred eligible voters in this curia elected one electoral delegate, who then elected the deputy to the Galician diet. The right to vote was restricted to those persons who paid two-thirds of the tax sum in every community, beginning with the largest taxpayer.<sup>23</sup> Though the electoral law was clearly less democratic than that of 1848, the predominantly peasant fourth curia nevertheless had a substantial influence, sending nearly half of the deputies into the diet.

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work of the parliament, such as translations of debates and documents from German into other languages, Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 99-106.

<sup>22</sup> Himka, *Galician Villagers*, p. 36-56; Ślusarek, Krzysztof, *Uwłaszczenie chłopów w Galicji zachodniej* (Kraków 2002).

<sup>23</sup> On the electoral law, see Grodziski, Stanisław, *Sejm Krajowy galicyjski 1861-1914*, 2 vols. (Warszawa 1993), vol. 1, p. 45-82.



From 1873 onwards, the members of the Reichsrat were elected in a similar way. Here the fourth curia could elect 27 out of 63 deputies from Galicia. In 1882, a uniform census of five gulden was introduced in order to qualify as a voter in the fourth curia. In 1897, this was reduced to four gulden, and in the same year a fifth, “general” curia was created where no tax census applied and all male citizens above the age of 24 were eligible to vote. Fifteen additional deputies to the Reichsrat were elected in this curia; two of them in Cracow and Lemberg, the other thirteen in mostly rural electoral districts. Finally, in the elections to the Reichsrat in 1907 the curias were abolished, and all males above the age of 24 had an equal vote.<sup>24</sup>

The reforms of the 1860s also included village administration. Already in 1856 the administrative authority over the villages had been transferred from the landlords to the district commissioners (German: *Bezirkshauptmann*; Polish: *starosta*), the heads of the state district administration. The reform, which began in 1856, was finally codified in Galicia in 1866. This reform separated the villages from the territory of the manor itself (*obszar dworski*). The inhabitants of the latter remained under the authority of the landlord. In contrast, the villages received self-government. The village council, which that was elected every three and later every six years, elected the mayor (German: *Gemeinderichter*; Polish: *naczelnik gminy*, but usually referred to as *wójt*; in Ukrainian: *viit*) together with a number of assessors.<sup>25</sup>

Deficiencies of the village self-government were widely discussed in Galicia from its introduction until the First World War. The main problems were that the relatively small communes – many had less than 1,000 inhabitants – were unable to use the competencies they had for the benefit of their inhabitants due in part to a lack of education of the mayors, who at least in the first decades were often illiterate, and also in part because of neglect or fraud.<sup>26</sup> However, the abilities of the village self-government in many communities improved, and the political skills and knowledge of the procedures the peasants acquired as village mayors or through other functions in the village self-government then became an important precondition for peasant political organization and successful peasant candidacies in later years, both to the Galician diet and to the Reichsrat. Another area where peasants could learn political skills and procedures were the district councils that were

<sup>24</sup> On the electoral law to the Reichsrat, see Binder, Harald, *Galizien in Wien. Parteien, Wahlen, Fraktionen und Abgeordnete im Übergang zur Massenpolitik* (Wien 2005).

<sup>25</sup> On territorial self-government in Galicia, see Grzybowski, Konstanty: *Galicja 1848–1914. Historia ustroju politycznego na tle historii ustroju Austrii* (Kraków 1959), p. 227–289. See also Klabouch, Jiří, *Die Gemeindeselbstverwaltung in Österreich 1848–1918* (München 1968).

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Kleczyński, Józef, „Życie gminne w Galicyi”, in: *Wiadomości statystyczne o stosunkach krajowych* 4 (1878), p. 97–279.

introduced in 1866, though the ballot rules for these representative bodies guaranteed a dominance of the non-peasant strata.<sup>27</sup>

In principle, the political reforms of the 1860s gave peasants, compared to earlier times, a wide range of possibilities of political participation and representation of their concerns and interests within the representative bodies of the constitutional state, despite all limitations. However, not only did it take many years or even decades until peasants learned to use the instruments of village self-government successfully for the improvement of their villages' situation. It was also a long and intricate process for the peasants to be able to use their substantial political weight in the politics of the crownland and the empire effectively. This not only required seats in the parliaments, but also required a certain degree of inclusion in the structures of the civil society and the public sphere.

## The displacement of peasants from the parliaments

In the first elections for the Galician diet in 1861, both peasant and Ruthenian candidates did remarkably well. In contrast to 1848, the number of village communities that boycotted the elections seems to have been small.<sup>28</sup> In 1861, as in 1848, the voters of the fourth curia primarily elected peasants and priests. In mostly Polish speaking, Roman-Catholic western Galicia seventeen peasants, three Roman-Catholic priests, and seven landlords or members of the Polish intelligentsia had been elected. 47 of 48 deputies from eastern Galicia were Ruthenians, among them 18 peasants and 26 Greek-Catholic priests.<sup>29</sup> As in 1848, the Polish elites were not successful in having their traditional dominance legitimized by the new institution of public elections. In eastern Galicia, where they were separated from the majority of the population by religious rite as well, they were totally defeated.<sup>30</sup>

However, in the following years the Polish elites succeeded in removing the western Galician peasants from the Galician diet, and in strongly reduc-

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<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of the village self-government and its problems and achievements, see Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village*, p. 78-91; Himka, *Galician Villagers*, p. 175-189; Molenda, *Chłopi*, p. 112-133.

<sup>28</sup> Putek, Józef, *Pierwsze wstępy polityczne włościanstwa polskiego 1848–1861* (Kraków n. d. [1933]), p. 26-27.

<sup>29</sup> Putek, *Pierwszy wstęp*, p. 30; Sereda, Ostap: „'My tu ne pryishly na smikh': uchat skhidnohalytskykh selian u seimovykh vyborakh ta zasidanniakh u Lvovi (60-i roky XIX st.)”, in: Karolczak, Kazimierz (ed.): *Lviv. Misto – suspilstvo – kultura/Lwów. Miasto – społeczeństwo – kultura*, vol. 4 (Kraków 2002), p. 165–186, here p. 168.

<sup>30</sup> Though the eastern Galician Ukrainian dialects were clearly more distinct from the Polish standard language than western Galician dialects, spoken language did not seem to have been a strongly divisive factor. However, written language and the Cyrillic script became a symbolic marker of Ruthenian identity for the national movement, and seems to have had such a meaning for broad sections of the society despite its high illiteracy, because of the connection of the script with the religious sphere, Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 378-381.

ing the number of Ruthenian deputies. Between 1876 and 1889 there were no peasants from western Galicia in the Galician diet (and from 1883-1889, no peasants at all). The number of Ruthenian deputies to the Galician diet was to 14 in 1876. In the Reichsrat elections of 1879, only 3 Ruthenian candidates received a seat, while 15 had in 1873.<sup>31</sup>

One of the reasons behind the Polish success was a better preparation of the elections and a coordinated selection of Polish candidates. Before the elections of 1867, two Polish *Centralne Komitety Przedwyborcze* (Central Pre-election Committees) for western and eastern Galicia had been established.<sup>32</sup> They were dominated by the Polish conservatives, who primarily represented the landlords. But the mostly urban Polish democrats also participated in their work, because of a shared fear that the Polish predominance in Galicia could become endangered as a result of the strengthening of the Ruthenian national movement, and by peasants who had more trust in the emperor in Vienna than in the Polish "educated classes" in Galicia.

In contrast to later elections, in 1861 the district commissioners and other state officials maintained a relatively neutral position. In 1867, however, state officials already began influencing elections in favour of Polish candidates more strongly than before. Electoral fraud and corruption continuously increased during the following elections, and after the Polish elites had declared their loyalty to the Monarchy, Vienna then agreed to an informal autonomy of the Galician crownland in 1868. This informal autonomy placed the power in Galicia into the hands of the Polish conservatives, and provided them at the same time with an influential position in Vienna. However, the Polish conservatives needed supremacy in the Galician diet and among the deputies from Galicia in the Viennese Reichsrat, in order to maintain their influence as well as the delicate political construction of the informal Galician autonomy.<sup>33</sup> The conservatives could rely on most of the deputies from the first, the landlords' curia, but for a majority they needed additional seats that they could obtain in sufficient number only from the fourth curia.<sup>34</sup> In view of the peasants' widespread distrust and often openly hostile

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<sup>31</sup> Wendland, *Die Russophilen*, p. 368-370; Kleczyński, Józef, "Wybory do Sejmu w 1876 roku", in: *Wiadomości statystyczne o stosunkach krajowych* 5 (1878), p. 21-60, here p. 44-47; Levytskyi, Kost, *Istoriia politychnoi dumky halytskykh ukrainsiv 1848-1914. Na pidstavi spomyniv* (Lviv 1926), p. 135.

<sup>32</sup> On their work, see Zdrada, Jerzy, „Wybory do galicyjskiego Sejmu Krajowego w 1867 roku”, in: *Rocznik Biblioteki PAN w Krakowie* 9 (1963), p. 39-96; Zdrada, Jerzy, „Galicyjskie wybory sejmowe i parlamentarne w latach 1861-1889”, in: *Rocznik Biblioteki PAN w Krakowie* 19 (1973), p. 229-256.

<sup>33</sup> On Galician autonomy and the negotiations before it could be implemented, see Christoph Freiherr Marschall von Bieberstein, *Freiheit in der Unfreiheit. Die nationale Autonomie der Polen in Galizien nach dem österreichisch-ungarischen Ausgleich von 1867* (Wiesbaden 1993), p. 37-123.

<sup>34</sup> For a still comprehensive discussion of the Galician conservatives, their different factions and their politics, see Feldman, Wilhelm: *Stronnictwa i programy polityczne w Galicyi 1846-1906*, 2 vols. (Kraków 1907), vol. 1. Most of the newer studies focus on the intellectually

attitude towards the landlords as a result of the memory of serfdom as well as of the ongoing conflicts about the servitudes, apparently such a number of seats could be won only by corruption, pressure on voters, and fraud.

However, it seems that the decline of the number of peasant members in the parliaments during the 1860s and 1870s was also the result of a certain disappointment on the part of the peasant voters with the fact that the peasant deputies were unable to preserve the servitudes for them.<sup>35</sup> In fact, the peasant deputies did not seem to have been very effective in enforcing peasant political interests. This was, on the one hand clearly a result of the unwillingness of the parliamentary majority to seriously account for peasant interests, but was also a result of a lack of education that prevented most peasants from acting successfully in the institutional setting of a parliament. In addition, peasants could not enter into stable alliances with representatives of other social groups or political parties because of different political priorities and deep cultural cleavages. Peasants not only mistrusted members of other social groups, but above all, the members of the other groups regarded peasants within the parliaments as inappropriate and compromising. This is obvious for the Poles, but pertains, though to a lesser degree, also to the Ruthenians. The Ruthenian peasant deputies were only loosely integrated into the Ruthenian clubs in the parliaments during the 1860s and 1870s and, for example, in autumn 1873 established their own club in the Galician diet together with Polish peasants. The direct cause of the split among the Ruthenian deputies was that the Ruthenian deputies from the intelligentsia refused to support a motion of the peasant deputies demanding changes of procedure in the servitude conflicts.<sup>36</sup>

Apparently, peasant attempts to use their citizenship rights that they enthusiastically began in the 1860s had run into a crisis by the end of the 1870s. Nor could peasant deputies defend the servitudes or otherwise significantly contribute to improvements in the villages. They could not develop the necessary long-term political strategies or develop a sufficiently stable cooperation with representatives of other social groups and political movements in order to reach political decisions that would have benefited their voters.

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most productive Cracow conservatives and their political ideas, but neglect other currents and politics.

<sup>35</sup> Comprehensive statistical data about the Galician elections exists only from 1876. They show, with the exception of the elections to the Reichsrat in 1897, a steady decline in voter participation until the turn of the century. Struve, Kai, "Politische Mobilisierung und nationale Identifikation. Die Wahlbeteiligung der Landbevölkerung in Galizien 1861-1911", in: *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropaforschung* 54 (2005), p. 377-398.

<sup>36</sup> On the peasant club in the Galician diet see Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 243-244; see also Chornovol, Ihor, *Ukrainska fraktsiia halytskoho kraiovoho seimu 1861-1901 rr.* (Lviv 2002), p. 77. For a more general discussion on the distance between the Ruthenian intelligentsia and the peasants in the sphere of politics during the 1870s, see Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 236-248.

## Peasants and political parties

The first steps after 1848 towards a more active integration of peasants into both the Polish and the Ruthenian national movements and a reduction of the distance between peasants and intelligentsia began already in the end of the 1860s, when the constitutional reforms opened new possibilities for the development of a civil society. First, associations for the education of the “people” were established. However, most of the Polish initiatives failed after a short time, and began again only at the beginning of the 1880s. Since then they developed, especially after the turn of the century, into an increasingly dense network of associational structures that included growing numbers of the rural population within structures of organization and communication having a national profile.<sup>37</sup> Significantly, only the Ukrainophile *Prosvita* survived out of those associations that were established in the end of the 1860s. Later, it became the central organizational structure of the Ukrainian movement in Galicia. Only some years later, in 1874, did a Russophile counterpart follow, the *Obshchestvo im. Mykhaila Kachkovskoho* (The Mykhailo Kachkovsky Society, OMK).<sup>38</sup>

They constituted in the following years the central organizational structures of the Ruthenian movement.<sup>39</sup> The 1870s also saw the first more successful newspapers, usually bi-weeklies or monthlies, for the peasants, which significantly contributed to the inclusion of the villages in a transregional public sphere.<sup>40</sup> While the Ruthenian intelligentsia and the Ruthenian papers always tried to mobilize the peasants for these associational structures, and also were politically in support of Ruthenian candidates, the Polish papers, in contrast, usually tried to reduce social and political tensions and to make the peasants accept the existing relations. The Roman-Catholic priest Stanisław Stojałowski, however, who in 1875 started to publish two Polish-language papers for peasants, *Wieniec* (The Wreath) and *Pszczółka* (The Bee), encouraged his readers to become active citizens and to organize themselves through self-help initiatives in order to improve conditions in the

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<sup>37</sup> On Polish and Ruthenian associations in the countryside, see Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 139-190.

<sup>38</sup> On the OMK, see Wendland, *Die Russophilen*, p. 262-321; Magocsi, Paul Robert, “The Kachkovskyi Society and the National Revival in Nineteenth Century East Galicia”, in: *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 15 (1991), p. 48-87.

<sup>39</sup> On peasants and the associational structures, see also Struve, Kai: „Bäuerlicher Eigensinn und nationale Mobilisierung: Erfolg und Misserfolg galizischer Vereine von den 1860er Jahren bis 1914“, in: Haslinger, Peter/Judson, Pieter (eds.), *Nationale „Schutzvereine“ in Ostmitteleuropa 1870-1950* (Marburg (forthcoming)).

<sup>40</sup> As to the Ruthenians, the papers *Russkaia Rada* and *Nauka* should be mentioned, edited by the Russophile politician and Greek-Catholic priest Ivan Naumovych, see Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, pp. 134-139. The most important Ruthenian paper of the 1880s, the Ukrainophile *Batktivshchyna* is analyzed in depth in John-Paul Himka’s seminal study *Ukrainian Villagers*.

villages.<sup>41</sup> He wanted the peasants to learn to use their constitutional rights while at the same time becoming Polish patriots. Initially, he rejected the strong peasant tendency to vote only for other peasants, and asked them to vote for candidates from other strata, but only for those whom they could trust, especially for priests. But he became increasingly critical of corruption and manipulations during elections as a widely used means to secure the victory of Polish candidates. His critical attitude towards these practices and his attempts to activate peasants politically and through self-help initiatives as well as his critique of the Austrian loyalism of the conservatives, brought him into conflict with authorities of church and state in Galicia, resulting in the loss of his wealthy parish near Lviv. From the 1870s on, he called upon the Polish electoral committees to actively integrate peasants, and to take their wishes for candidates seriously into account. Already in 1883 he suggested in his papers that peasants should establish their own electoral committees in those districts where Polish committees did not bother integrating them. But only during the campaign for the elections to the Galician diet in 1889 did he call up the peasants already from the beginning of the campaign to establish separate peasant committees, in order to choose their own candidates and to prepare the elections.<sup>42</sup>

In the same year the co-editor of the democratic Lviv daily *Kurier Lwowski* (The Lwów Courier), Bolesław Wysłouch, also called upon the peasants to establish separate electoral committees, and offered his support for their work. He started to edit a new journal for the peasants, the *Przyjaciel Ludu* (The Friend of the People), in order to support the election of peasant candidates in that year's election to the Galician diet. In contrast to Stojałowski who during the 1870s had been one of the leading advocates of ultramontaniam in Galicia and who saw his political activities as part of the Christian-social movement, Wysłouch was a man of the political left. He and the group of activists who supported the activities among the peasants represented a new current in Polish politics that appeared in the middle of the 1880s and placed on the one hand the "people", the *lud*, in the centre of the concept of national identity and political activity, and on the other hand, criticised positivism, and demanded more active struggle for independence.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> He introduced, for example, the concept of Agrarian circles on the model of the Poznań region. See Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 148-152; Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village*, p. 115-127; on the Agrarian Circles movement in Galicia, see Gurnicz, Antoni, *Kółka rolnicze w Galicji. Studium społeczno-ekonomiczne* (Warszawa 1967); on Stojałowski also Kacki, Franciszek, *Ks. Stanisław Stojałowski i jego działalność społeczno-polityczna*, tom I (1845-1890) (Lwów 1937).

<sup>42</sup> On Stojałowski's political activities among the peasants, see Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 192-201. Stojałowski was an ambivalent figure; on his anti-Semitism see *Bauern und Nation*, p. 388-395.

<sup>43</sup> Except for the Warsaw journal *Głos*, the journal *Przegląd Społeczny*, edited in 1886-7 by Bolesław Wysłouch in Lviv, was the most important organ of that new current. The milieu of *Głos* was the ideological cradle of the Polish national democratic movement, which in later decades became radical nationalist. Wysłouch's activities, however, were decisive in the

Because for Wysłouch the peasants were the true Polish nation and the hope for a future resurrection of the Polish state could rest only on them, all national politics had to take peasant interests and the positive development of the peasantry as a starting point.<sup>44</sup>

In 1889, the success of peasant candidates in the elections to the Galician diet was still limited, but compared to earlier elections this nevertheless marked a significant change. Four peasants and one teacher were elected as candidates of peasant committees.<sup>45</sup> The number of peasant committees and peasant candidates had been larger. Also, in the following Reichsrat election in 1891, there was only one successful peasant candidate, but the number of peasant committees and the number of votes that peasant candidates could attract rose further. The breakthrough came with the elections to the Galician diet in 1895. In 11 of 26 western Galician districts candidates of peasant committees were elected, among them nine peasants and two members of the intelligentsia. In view of the strong effort of the conservatives and the Galician administration under governor Kazimierz Badeni to prevent the election of peasant candidates, this was an enormous success. The success was repeated during the Reichsrat elections in 1897, when nine peasant candidates were elected.<sup>46</sup>

The success of peasant candidates after 1889 was to a high degree the result of a joint movement of intelligentsia activists and peasants. Since the middle of the 1880s, circles of gymnasium and university students had been formed in many places as part of the new political mobilization among the youth. They went into the villages in order to educate the peasants and to win them for the Polish nation. In 1889 and later, they also helped to initiate and organize peasant electoral committees, and distributed the *Przyjaciel Ludu* and Stojałowski's papers. They were critical of the ruling elite's loyalism and social conservatism. Many of them came from peasant families. Here the improvements in education and the extension of the network of

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formation of the Polish peasant movement, the *ruch ludowy*. While the national democratic movement finally imagined a disciplined, hierarchical nation that primarily should be fit for the struggle with other nations, the peasant movement took a much more democratic approach, and articulated the peasants' social interests. On Wysłouch, see Brock, Peter, "Bolesław Wysłouch, Pioneer of Polish Populism", in: idem, *Nationalism and Populism in Partitioned Poland. Selected Essays* (London 1973), p. 181–211; Kudłaszyk, Andrzej, *Myśl społeczno-polityczna Bolesława Wysloucha 1855–1937* (Warszawa 1978). On the Polish national democratic movement, see Porter, Brian, *When Nationalism Began to Hate. Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (New York 2000).

<sup>44</sup> See the famous *Szkice programowe* that Wysłouch published in 1886 in *Przegląd Społeczny*, later published by Lato, Stanisław and Stankiewicz Witold (eds.), *Programy stronnictw ludowych. Zbiór dokumentów* (Warszawa 1969), p. 27–48.

<sup>45</sup> One of the peasants soon resigned from his mandate, apparently under pressure, in favour of a conservative landlord.

<sup>46</sup> While in the earlier elections Stojałowski and the *Przyjaciel Ludu* had cooperated, in 1897 they competed with each other and most of the elected candidates were followers of Stojałowski.

elementary schools and secondary schools became felt. At the end of the century in certain regions, the number of peasant sons who attended secondary schools was already significant.<sup>47</sup>

But the peasant movement also reflected the increasing ability of peasants to understand and use the mechanisms of modern politics. Peasants were increasingly unhappy about the appropriation of possibilities of political participation by people whom they did not trust. Networks of active peasants had developed which wanted to use the possibilities that the Austrian state offered them to represent their interests.<sup>48</sup>

In 1895, Wyslouch and his followers created *Stronnictwo Ludowe* (The People's Party) as a central organization of the peasant electoral committees. *Stronnictwo Ludowe* saw itself as part of and in a way as the avant-garde of the Polish national movement. In fact, by presenting the peasants as the true "core" of the nation they attacked the conservatives as being the representatives of landlords and *szlachta*, and as being unpatriotic because of a neglect of peasant interests. Peasant interests became national interests and, thus, the peasant movement's concept of national identity challenged the political and social dominance of conservatives and landlords. The vision that a future independent Poland will be a "People's Poland" (*Polska ludowa*) instead of the former "Gentry's Poland" (*Polska szlachecka*) was able to overcome the fear and mistrust that many peasants still felt towards a re-establishment of the Polish state.<sup>49</sup>

Around the turn of the century there was certain stagnation within the development of the peasant movement, and a certain decline in the number of seats in the parliaments. But after the *Stronnictwo Ludowe* became more radical under the leadership of the peasant son Jan Stapiński, and also due to a strong increase in political mobilization during the decade before World War I in Galicia in general, the *Stronnictwo Ludowe* (since 1903 *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*, The Polish People's Party, PSL) also grew in strength. However, only the introduction of the new voting system for the Reichsrat in 1907, giving all males above the age of 24 an equal vote, brought the conservative rule into crisis. In western Galicia, the PSL now won more mandates than the conservatives. As a result of a complicated reshuffle of political relationships a political alliance between the western Galician Cracow

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<sup>47</sup> Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 217-236.

<sup>48</sup> The side of peasant activities is most clearly visible in the region of Nowy Sącz, where peasants after electoral successes in 1889 and 1891 established their own party in 1892, the *Związek Stronnictwa Chłopskiego*. At the beginning they closely cooperated with Stojałowski, but soon separated from him when the church hierarchy threatened the pious wealthy peasants who had formed the party, but also because of tensions with Stojałowski to whom they did not want to subordinate. See Gurnicz, Antoni, *O "równą miarkę" dla chłopów. Poglądy i działalność pierwszej chłopskiej organizacji politycznej w Polsce Związku Stronnictwa Chłopskiego 1893-1908* (Warszawa 1963); Szaflik, Józef Ryszard, *O rząd chłopskich dusz* (Warszawa 1976), p. 132-154; Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 205-217.

<sup>49</sup> Molenda, *Chłopi*, p. 216-240.



conservatives and the PSL emerged, that continued until 1913. The Cracow conservatives shared power with the PSL, while the eastern Galician conservatives allied themselves with the National Democrats, because they opposed any compromises with the Ukrainians.<sup>50</sup>

As a result, the PSL became, together with the Cracow conservatives and the democrats, a part of the “Governor’s bloc”, a kind of governing coalition. This alliance secured the PSL’s substantial influence in Galicia, but also in Vienna. Stapiński received the influential position of a vice-president of the Polish club in the Reichsrat. In 1911, a representative of the PSL, Władysław Długosz, became Minister for Galicia in the Austrian government.<sup>51</sup>

After a long struggle against obstacles of different kinds in order to actually perform the rights of citizenship, peasants had acquired a share in political power. Apparently, this was only possible on the basis of a joint movement with the segments of the intelligentsia which created and maintained transregional structures of organization and communication.

While separate peasant parties emerged on the Polish side, in the Ruthenian case peasants acquired a larger role within the Ruthenian political structures. Since the 1880s, peasant interests had been increasingly prominent in political programmes, and peasants also participated more actively in political meetings and in the work of regional political associations.<sup>52</sup>

After a steady decline of the number of Ruthenian deputies in the Galician diet, the elections of 1889 also marked a turning point for the Ruthenians. The number of deputies rose from eleven to sixteen. Among these were also two peasants, while there had been no peasants in the previous diet.<sup>53</sup> Though in respect to the peasants sharing a rather humble beginning, the increasing role of peasants is more clearly reflected in the elections to the Galician diet in 1895, though not in its result. Only fourteen Ruthenian candidates were elected, among them two peasants.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, the increasing peasant

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<sup>50</sup> The attempts to reach a compromise with the Ukrainians had their background in the rising tensions with Russia and the expectations of an imminent war. See Wendland, *Die Russophilen*, p. 514-540; Bachmann, Klaus, *Ein Herd der Feindschaft gegen Rußland. Galizien als Krisenherd in den Beziehungen der Donaumonarchie mit Rußland (1907–1914)* (Wien 2001).

<sup>51</sup> However, the alliance with the conservatives was also a difficult and controversial reversal for the party, because it entered now into an alliance with the same political grouping that once had been its most important adversary. The tensions that arose from this move were aggravated by Stapiński’s increasingly high-handed leadership, as well as the charges of corruption against him, particularly in connection with Długosz’s nomination as Minister for Galicia. Among other things, the adversaries of the “Governor’s bloc” also used these problems in their campaign against Governor Michał Bobrzyński and his political alliance. They finally achieved his resignation in 1913 when the PSL also split into two parties. See Garlicki, Andrzej, *Powstanie Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego Piast 1913–1914* (Warszawa 1966).

<sup>52</sup> Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 248-256, p. 272-274.

<sup>53</sup> On the elections of 1889, see Arkusha, Olena, *Halytskyi seim. Vybory kampanii 1889 i 1895 rr.* (Lviv 1996), p. 61-83; Levytskyi, *Istoriia*, p. 229-233.

<sup>54</sup> A third Ruthenian peasant, Lazar Vynnychuk, was elected as a “government candidate”, but he later participated in the work of the Ukrainian faction. In fact, the size of his property resembled more a small manor than that of a peasant farm.

mobilization and participation became obvious in the large number of peasant candidates for the diet approved by Ruthenian electoral committees. While in 1889 peasants had appeared as candidates supported by Ruthenian committees in only four districts, in 1895 peasants were candidates in nineteen out of forty-two districts where Ruthenian candidates stood for election.<sup>55</sup>

During the following elections to the Galician diet in 1901, thirteen Ruthenian deputies were elected, among them four peasants. There was a slight increase in the share of peasants among the Ruthenian members of the Galician diet after the next election in 1908. Ruthenian candidates won twenty-one seats, and eight of these candidates were peasants. Nine of the candidates were Russophiles who enjoyed some support during the elections from the administration and Polish conservatives. There were eight peasants among the deputies, but only two of them can be counted among the Russophiles, while the other six joined the Ukrainophile club. Consequently, half of the members of that club were peasants. During the next elections to the Galician diet in 1913, the number of Ruthenian deputies rose sharply, but the share of peasants diminished. There were only six peasants elected out of 32 deputies. This clearly was not the result of a decline in peasant political activity. On the contrary, their political mobilization rose, and the density of the network of civil society institutions increased. Therefore, a diminishing share of peasants could be rather a sign of the peasants' growing trust in other social groups.<sup>56</sup>

While peasants had an important share in Ruthenian deputies in the Galician diet, their share in the Ruthenian members of the Reichsrat was much lower. Only two of 49 Ruthenians who were elected to the Reichsrat between 1897 and 1911 were peasants.<sup>57</sup> This may also indicate a diminishing distance between peasants and intelligentsia, because most of the peasants did not know enough German to be able to be efficient in the Reichsrat. If such criteria became more decisive than social identity, then this would also be a sign of peasants' growing trust of other social strata within the Ruthenian community.

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<sup>55</sup> Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 258-259. Actually, the elections in 1895 and 1897 proved to be especially difficult for the Ruthenians because of an unparalleled level of corruption and fraud, and because of a divide among the Ruthenians about the so-called "New era" politics, a cooperation with the government that had been started in the beginning of the 1890s, but had lost much of its initial support among the Ruthenians because of a disappointment with its results. See Chornovol, Ihor, *Polsko-ukrainska uhoda 1890-1894 rr.* (Lviv 2000); Levytskyi, *Istoriia*, p. 235-272.

<sup>56</sup> Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, p. 279-281; see also Binder, Harald, „Parteiwesen und Parteibegriff bei den Ruthenen der Habsburgermonarchie“, in: *Österreichische Osthefte* 42 (2000), no. 3-4, p. 211-240, here p. 239.

<sup>57</sup> See Binder, *Galizien in Wien*.

## Conclusion

The structures of a civil society and a public sphere in the rural areas that for the most part only developed after the constitutional reforms of the 1860s were national – either Polish or Ruthenian. They breached the isolation of the villages, and were included in networks of communication across regions and across classes. Though peasants participated actively in these structures, they were created and maintained by segments of the Polish and Ruthenian intelligentsia who had national aims, and who wanted to win the peasants over to the national movements. The language and fora they provided for articulating peasant interests were national ones. This can be understood not only as the intelligentsia spreading national messages among the peasants and raising or creating national self-identification, but also as a process where peasants who wanted to participate in these new structures, or who wanted to articulate peasant interests in the newly developing public spheres, had to do this within a national framework. This was encouraged and, in fact, peasants accepted such a framework sometimes enthusiastically (mostly the Ruthenians) and sometimes reluctantly, because reference to a national identity provided powerful symbolic resources in order to demand the recognition of peasant social and political concerns. In the Polish case, separate peasant political parties were organized that stressed their Polish identity and presented the peasants as the “core” of the nation. They challenged on this base the continuing political dominance of the *szlachta* and landlords in Galician politics. In the Ruthenian case, however, the dominance of the traditional gentry elite in Galician politics and society was challenged by demanding equality and a respect of the rights of the Ruthenians as a nation separate from the Poles.

As a result of the fact that there were no other languages or structures of organization and communication that allowed peasant to articulate and represent their interests in a modern political system than the national one, this increase in political participation was accompanied by an increase in national separation. The era of mass politics became the era of nationalism. The nation acted as a mediating institution in the empire to realize political participation for larger strata of the population, but at the same time it contained a more or less strong tendency which aimed at the dissolution of the empire. It helped to implement peaceful forms of conflict resolution within the constitutional democratic state, but at the same time the threat of the new violent clashes of the national era was already appearing on the horizon.