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SOCIAL GUIDELINES OF THE UKRAINIAN PARTIES IN WESTERN UKRAINE (1923 – 1939)

Abstract. *The article focuses on the analysis of the parties' program priorities that concerned the main social groups of the then Ukrainian society of Western Ukraine in the context of the socio-political situation in the region. The purpose of the study is to elucidate and analyze the programmatic goals and principles of the socio-economic guidelines of the Ukrainian legal parties, as well as to outline their main practical results: defending the rights of the Ukrainian peasants, mainly in the context of the agrarian reform, which was also associated with the policy of the Polish settlement and parcelization; promotion of the cooperative movement, the use of socialist programs in terms of social protection, normalization of labour relations between peasants and workers. The research methodology is based on general scientific (systematic and comprehensive coverage of the issue) and special scientific methods. In the research there have been used the methods of synthesis and analysis, systematization and generalization. Historical, comparative and system-structural methods have been also used. Comparative analysis methods have been used to compare and contrast party programs. A problem-chronological approach has been used to outline key changes in the political life*

of Western Ukraine. More specifically, studying the problems of peasantry and workers, synthesis and analysis methods, in particular socio-structural, have been used. **The scientific novelty** of the research consists in outlining the links between the social structure of Ukrainian society during the interwar period and the actual programs of various ideological orientations parties, which were mainly focused on the Ukrainian peasantry and the resolution of national issues. The issue of social orientations of political parties in their program documents and in the context of changes in the Polish policy towards the Ukrainians has been also outlined. **Conclusions.** The social orientations of the Ukrainian legal parties of the interwar period in Western Ukraine were mainly determined by the predominance of peasantry in the social structure, which were combined with broader political problems of the Ukrainian community, which required a comprehensive solution due to the discriminatory policy of the Polish government, especially after the change of political regime in 1926 and the establishment of the “sanation” regime. The Ukrainian parties of the left and ideological orientation, in particular the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party and “Selrob”, were mainly inclined to promote the socialist order of society, but in which not only the working class, but mainly peasants, played an important role. The forces of the centrist and national democratic orientation, in particular the Ukrainian National Democratic Union, which played a leading role in the Ukrainian movement, were defined by their social orientations as the protection of peasantry and its comprehensive support, mainly of economic initiatives, along with the support of intelligentsia and entrepreneurs, which was combined with the struggle for broader rights of the Ukrainian community.

Key words: social orientations, peasantry, workers, cooperation, agrarian reform, Ukrainian National Democratic Union, Ukrainian Radical Party, Ukrainian Social Democratic Party, Ukrainian Socialist Radical Party, “Selsoyuz”, “Selrob”.

СОЦІАЛЬНІ ОРІЄНТИРИ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ПАРТІЙ ЗАХІДНОЇ УКРАЇНИ (1923 – 1939)

Анотація У статті проведений аналіз програмних пріоритети партій, які стосувались головних соціальних груп тогочасного українського суспільства Західної України у контексті суспільно-політичної ситуації в краї. **Мета роботи** – окреслити і проаналізувати програмні цілі та засади соціально-економічних орієнтирів українських легальних партій, а також простежити їхні головні практичні наслідки. Зокрема, це відстоювання прав українських селян, головню у контексті проведення аграрної реформи, яка була пов'язана також із політикою польського осадництва і парцеляції; промоція кооперативного руху, використання соціалістичних програм у розрізі соціального захисту, унормування трудових відносин селян та робітників. **Методологія** базується загальнонаукових (системності та всебічності висвітлення проблеми) і спеціальних наукових методах. У роботі використано методи синтезу й аналізу, систематизації та узагальнення. Також застосовувалися історичний, порівняльний та системно-структурні методи. Методики порівняльного аналізу були використанні для зіставлення, порівняння програм партій. Для окреслення ключових змін у політичному житті Західної України послуговувалися проблемно-хронологічним підходом, а для більш конкретного вивчення проблем селянства, робітництва залучали методи синтезу та аналізу, зокрема, соціально-структурного. **Наукова новизна роботи** полягає в окресленні взаємозв'язків між соціальною структурою українського суспільства міжвоєнного періоду та фактичних програм партій різного ідеологічного спрямування, які головню орієнтувалися на українське селянство, розв'язання національних питань. Також окреслено проблематику соціальних орієнтирів політичних партій у їхніх програмних документах та в умовах змін польської політики щодо українців. **Висновки:** соціальні орієнтири українських легальних партій міжвоєнного періоду у Західній Україні головню визначалися через переважаючого селянства у соціальній структурі, які поєднувалися із ширшими політичними проблемами української громади, що потребували комплексного подолання через дискримінаційну політику польського уряду, особливо після зміни політичного режиму у 1926 р. та із встановленням режиму «санациї». Українські партії лівого та ідеологічного спрямування, зокрема, Українська соціал-демократична партія та Сельроб, схилились головню до промоції соціалістичного укладу суспільства, але у якому важливу роль відігравали не лише робітництво, а найперше селяни. Сили центристського та національно-

демократичного спрямування, зокрема, Українське національно-демократичне об'єднання, яке відіграло провідну роль в українському русі, своїми соціальними орієнтирами визначало захист селянства та його всебічну підтримку, насамперед господарських ініціатив, разом із підтримкою інтелігенції та підприємців, яка поєднувалася із боротьбою за ширші права української громади.

Ключові слова: соціальні орієнтири, селянство, робітники, кооперація, аграрна рформа, Українське національно-демократичне об'єднання, Українська радикальні партія, Українська соціал-демократична партія, Українська соціалістично-радикальнр партія, “Сельсоюз”, “Сельроб”.

Problem Statement. During the interwar period, the Western Ukrainian lands, which were part of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, became one of the main centres of the Ukrainian political life development. The peculiarities of the social structure of Ukrainian society, in which peasantry dominated, as well as the discriminatory policy of the Polish authorities influenced the programmatic principles formation of the Ukrainian political parties significantly. The Socio-economic issues, primarily the agrarian problem, protection of the rights of peasants and workers, development of the cooperative movement and social legislation, became important components of the Ukrainian political forces activities of various ideological orientations. At the same time, the parties' social orientations were combined with the struggle for the national rights of the Ukrainians and opposition to the assimilation policy of the Polish state. Despite the existence of separate studies on the activities of the Ukrainian parties of the interwar period, the problem of their social orientations and practical approaches to solving socio-economic issues remains insufficiently comprehensively covered in the Ukrainian historiography.

Review of Recent Research and Publications. The issue historiography includes the studies on the Ukrainian political movement, socio-economic processes, and the activities of political parties in Western Ukraine in the interwar period. A significant contribution to the study of Ukrainian political forces was made by Oleksandr Zaitsev and Mykola Kuhutiak. Thus, O. Zaitsev analyzed the participation of the Ukrainians in the parliamentary life of Poland, election campaigns and the peculiarities of functioning of the Ukrainian parties in the Sejm and Senate of the Second Polish Republic (Zaitsev, 1999; Zaitsev, 2022). M. Kuhutiak thoroughly researched the Ukrainian national democracy formation and the activities of the UNDO as the leading political force in Western Ukraine (Kuhutiak, 2002). Certain aspects of the organizational development of UNDO are highlighted in the studies by Iryna Krasnodemska (Krasnodemska, 2016), Lev Kalyniak (Kalyniak, 2017) and Ihor Soliar (Soliar, 2008), who drew attention to the party structure, parliamentary activities and the search of a compromise with the Polish authorities. An important place in modern historiography is occupied by studies of the left-radical and socialist movements. Ihor Raikivskyi analyzed the activities of the USDP, its pro-communist tendencies and the role in the national movement of Galicia (Raikivskyi, 2015; Raikivskyi, 2018). Mariana Pyrih did the research on the activities of “Selrob” and the Ukrainian left-wing radical movement in Poland, in particular its social slogans and electoral strategy (Pyrih, 2016; Pyrih, 2012 – 2013). A significant contribution to the study of the Peasant Union was made by Tetiana Bortnik, who traced the process of the party's formation, its parliamentary activities, and its role in the socio-political life of Western Ukraine (Bortnik, 2020; Bortnik, Artymyshyn, 2022; Bortnik, 2025).

The socio-economic context of the Ukrainian parties activities is highlighted in the studies by Vitaliy Vyzdryk, dedicated to the agrarian reform and processes in the Galician countryside (Vyzdryk, 2016), and also in the research of Liudmyla Drahomyretska on the

cooperative movement (Drahomyretska, 2015). Certain aspects of the socio-political moods of the Ukrainian society are reflected in the studies by Mykola Haliv, Vasyl Ilnytskyi, and Anna Ohar (Haliv, & Ilnytskyi, 2017; Haliv, & Ohar, 2018; Haliv, & Ilnytskyi, 2019), who, based on the Polish police documents, analyzed the socio-political views of the Ukrainian intelligentsia and clergy. The Polish historian Ryszard Torzecki did the research on the Ukrainian issue in the politics of interwar Poland (Torzecki, 1989), and Vasyl Futala researched the Polish discourse on the Ukrainian issues (Futala, 2013). At the same time, the issue of social orientations of the Ukrainian parties, their vision of agrarian, labour, and cooperative policies has not yet become the subject of a separate comprehensive study.

The purpose of the study is to elucidate and analyze the programmatic goals and principles of the socio-economic guidelines of the Ukrainian legal parties, as well as to outline their main practical results.

Research Results. The territories of Western Ukraine, which was part of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the interwar period, played a significant role in the development of the Ukrainian independence political movement. In contrast, Naddniprianshchyna region, which after the years of the Ukrainian Revolution and the restoration of Ukrainian statehood found itself de facto part of the USSR, which suppressed any manifestations of national movements with totalitarian and repressive practices. In the 1920s and 1930s, the structure of Ukrainian society was mainly based on peasants, workers made up a small percentage, and the intelligentsia played an important role, being the leading force in the cultural, political, and economic movement (cooperation), although it was numerically inferior to other strata of society (Zaitsev, 2022, pp. 8–9).

According to the Ukrainian historian Oleksandr Zaitsev, due to the incompletely formed social structure of Western Ukraine, “class characteristics were not decisive in the establishment of political parties, even if their supporters and opponents claimed the opposite”. Partially sharing the thesis of the researcher Yu. Zaitsev regarding the absence of class orientations in the establishment of Ukrainian parties, let us consider the social programs of Ukrainian parties, which can be divided with some conditionality by ideological directions, or by the form of activity – legal and illegal (Zaitsev, 2022, pp. 11–12; Voitovych, & Kasaraba, 2026, p. 88).

In 1922 the Ukrainian political class of Eastern Galicia boycotted the elections to the Polish Sejm and Senate in order to prevent the official affirmation of the Polish sovereignty over the region and to create the image of unconditional loyalty of the Ukrainian public to the new Polish state for the world community (Zaitsev, 1999, p. 99). In the Ukrainian political life, according to the definition of the Ukrainian historian Lev Kalyniak, until the mid-1920s, “for some time, representatives of the first Ukrainian political organization, founded back in 1890 – the Ukrainian Radical Party, dominated. In 1923, at its first Congress after the war, the Ukrainian Radical Party adopted a political program, where it declared itself as “the organization of the working masses, standing on socialist positions and striving to implement its program in an independent Ukrainian state with the republican system and the power of all working people”. Therefore, the main electoral base of the URP was peasantry, moreover, the party program also provided for land reform without redemption: the land was to be alienated in favour of peasants (Kalyniak, 2017, p. 423). According to police reports from Lviv district eldership, the URP activists were particularly active in organizing peasant veches. On July 7, 1924, the URP in the village of Hai near Lviv convened a large peasant veche with the participation of Ivan Prokopiv, a delegate of the party’s main board. A number of important

issues were discussed at the meeting, including the possibility of carrying out an agrarian reform, and the Polish policy of settlement was criticized (Kalyniak, 2017, pp. 423–424).

In the first half of the 1920s in Western Ukraine, a significant role in the political life was also played by the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party, which emerged in 1899 and promoted national and social rights, primarily of the Ukrainian workers. The USDP boycotted the Polish census of 1921 and the elections of 1922, while Sovietophile sympathizers who believed in the policy of “Ukrainization” joined the party ranks and actively professed pro-Bolshevik ideas (Raikivskyi, 2015, pp. 55–56). In May 1922, the party split and its leaders Lev Hankevych, P. Buniak and Ivan Kvasnytsia left the party, the communists openly seized the levers of influence in the party. On the eve of the meeting of the Entente Council of Ambassadors – on March 18, 1923, the VI Congress of the USDP was held in Lviv. The results of the party Congress were the adopted documents – “Declaration of the USDP Congress on Eastern Galicia”, in which the USDP politicians condemned the decision of the Entente Council of Ambassadors; “Resolution on the Current Political Situation”, in which the USDP activists emphasized that “the liberation of the proletariat from both social and national slavery is unthinkable within the framework of the capitalist system and ... the unification of all Ukrainian lands into one socialist Soviet republic in alliance with the already existing socialist Soviet republics can only occur after the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie”. The USDP activists also set as their goal the “elimination of the capitalist system” in Western Ukrainian territories, through the nationalization of industry and banks, the socialization of land, and the establishment of a tax for the wealthy. They also proposed “the reunification of Western Ukrainian lands with the Ukrainian SSR as part of the federal Union with all eastern Soviet republics” (Raikivskyi, 2015, p. 56).

It is also worth noting that the leadership of the USDP at the meeting on March 20, 1923, adopted the resolution “To the Ukrainian Working Masses of Eastern Galicia, Volhynia, Kholmshchyna, Pidliashshia and Polissia”. This address noted that the party Congress had approved the proletarian class nature of the policy (Raikivskyi, 2018, pp. 57). Therefore, after the 6th Party Congress, the USDP, according to the definition of a researcher I. Raikivskyi, turned into a legal superstructure of the Communist Party of Eastern Galicia-Communist Party of Western Ukraine. Due to the clear pro-communist orientations of the party, its leadership, and local organizations, the Polish authorities decided to liquidate the party and carried out this intention on January 30, 1924 (Raikivskyi, 2018, pp. 135).

In the domestic policy of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the national issue was one of the most acute, because more than 30% of the state’s inhabitants, according to the calculations of the Ukrainian historian Vasyl Futala, were of other ethnic groups (not the Poles), and almost half of them were the Ukrainians. Therefore, the study of the Ukrainian issue, and therefore political parties, took place in the 1920s and 1930s. It is also worth noting that during the period under study, Poland’s state policy combined a relatively democratic system with a state and political ethnic program of assimilation of the Ukrainian population of Eastern Galicia and Western Volhynia (Futala, 2013, p. 174; Medvid’, & Popp, 2025, pp. 118–119). During the period under study, the Nationalities Department of the Polish Ministry of the Interior supported research on national issues, including the Ukrainian issues. For example, in 1931 Raimund Rużycki, under the pseudonym M. Felinski, did the study on the cultural and socio-political activities of the Ukrainians. In it, he presented a historical and sociological typology of the Ukrainian legal parties: right-wing, centrist, and left-wing (Futala, 2013, p. 174). Among them, M. Felinsky singled out the Ukrainian National

Democratic Union (UNDO), whose activities were based on a nationwide character, but the main base of support was the intelligentsia, the bourgeoisie and the clergy of the UGCC (Futala, 2013, p. 174). In the collective study “National Minorities” of 1932, edited by Zygmunt Urbański, it was also noted that the leading role in the organizational unification of nationalists was played by the Ukrainian National Democratic Union, established on July 11, 1925 (Urbański, 1932, p. 30).

According to the definition of the Ukrainian historian, a researcher of the history of the formation of the UNDO, Ihor Soliar, in the second half of the 1920s, the UNDO “set itself the goal of developing a legal, Ukrainian socio-economic sector in Poland, on the other hand, it did not recognize the latter’s right to Western Ukraine. To support the program of negation in the Ukrainian society, the UNDO launched active propaganda activities” (Soliar, 2008, p. 177). Therefore, the main social guidelines of the UNDO became the protection of peasantry and comprehensive support for its economic initiatives, along with support for the intelligentsia and entrepreneurs, which was combined with the struggle for broader rights of the Ukrainian community. According to the definition of the Ukrainian historian Yuriy Cherchenko, “the UNDO was the liberal party that advocated constitutional democracy, opposed the assimilationist policy of the Polish state, the Polish colonization of the Ukrainian lands, and at the same time called for the “normalization” of Polish-Ukrainian relations” (Cherchenko, 2019). Similar theses were also expressed by the researcher Iryna Krasnodemska, also emphasizing that the UNDO activists managed to establish a broad organizational network based on grassroots, district, and county branches, so party members were in contact with leaders, in particular by regularly convening county conferences. In addition, a number of Ukrainian cultural, educational, and economic organizations were under the influence of the UNDO; the magazines were published, including “Dilo”, “Svoboda”, “Economic and Cooperative Magazine” and the others (Krasnodemska, 2016, p. 89).

The Ukrainian researcher of the cooperative movement Liudmyla Drahomyretska noted that the organizational and party work of the UNDO was closely linked to the development of the cooperative movement, in particular, party members promoted the establishment of cooperative organizations. For example, at the end of 1926, Lviv voivode claimed that in Stryi district of Stanislaviv province, the positions of the UNDO were strong, which had influence on the majority of cooperatives in the district. Also, the Ukrainian ambassadors and senators who were members of the UNDO (O. Lutsky, I. Blazhkevych, S. Kuzyk, M. Halushchynsky) actively promoted the idea of developing the Ukrainian cooperation among the general public (Drahomyretska, 2015, p. 116).

Another important direction of the UNDO’s activity was the protection of the Ukrainian cooperators from administrative pressure of the Polish authorities. In particular, in the second half of 1927, the discussion began on a government bill on the introduction of trade books by merchants, which stated that “joint-stock partnerships, limited partnership-stock partnerships must keep their books in Polish, all others who trade (merchants) if they do not keep them in Polish, may keep their books in any other European language” (Tselevych, 1927, p. 1). This bill outraged part of the Ukrainian public, in particular, the UNDO Secretary Volodymyr Tselevych noted that this bill violated the right of the Ukrainians to autonomy in private, economic and other matters. Therefore, the politician emphasized that the UNDO would wage the struggle and called on other political forces, economic institutions and cooperatives to join it (Tselevych, 1927, p. 1).

On September 3, 1927, at the insistence of the UNDO, the meeting of “Narodna torhivlia”, “Centrebank”, “Maslosoyuz”, the Revision Union of Ukrainian Cooperatives (RSUK),

“Centrosoyuz”, “Silskyi Hospodar” of the Chervona Kalyna publishing house, representatives of the Dnister Bank, “Zemelny Bank Hypotechny”, and the Zemlia Society was held in Lviv. At the meeting, the plan was adopted to counter the bill: to prepare an interpellation in the Sejm together with the Ukrainian Parliamentary Representation, to send a memorial to the Prime Minister Józef Piłsudski, and to hold mass protests (Drahomyretska, 2015, pp. 116–117).

The Ukrainian Ambassador to the Sejm Serhiy Khrutsky (a member of the UNDO) and ambassadors from the Ukrainian Club in the Sejm appealed to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Minister of Treasury (Finance) and the Minister of Justice (Justice) regarding the violation of the rights of the Ukrainian language in economic institutions, emphasizing that this bill threatened the existence of numerous economic institutions and cooperatives of national minorities, including the Ukrainians (*Za prava ukraïnskoi movy*, 1927, pp. 1–2). On March 22, 1928, the President of Poland adopted the law regulating the activities of joint-stock companies. This regulatory act unified the provisions on the establishment of joint-stock companies, outlined the procedure for establishing a company, mandatory statutory elements, documents on the division of authorized capital, management structure, etc. This document does not contain clear references to the language of office work (*Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej*, 1928a). However, on March 22, 1928, the law on “Agricultural (Agrarian) Chambers” (*in Polish – izby rolniczy*) was also adopted, which established the creation of a network of agricultural chambers, in accordance with administrative divisions, which were mainly intended to represent the interests of agriculture, promote its development, and communicate with the authorities. Agricultural (agrarian) chambers were established as organizations of a local public self-government and as a public entity, operating within the framework of laws and its own charter. After all, they united peasants and landowners into one self-government body. Polish was the language of official business. Participation in these chambers was mandatory, and an authorized representative of this agrarian chamber was also a member of the Cooperative Council established by the state (Visyn, 2018, p. 170; *Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej*, 1928b; Muzyka, Vuityk, Kushchak, Domanskyi, & Solomonko, 2018, pp. 34–35).

In the first half of the 1920s, as noted by the Ukrainian historian Vitaliy Vyzdryk, the Polish government gradually carried out agrarian transformations through the voluntary parceling of land ownership by large landowners and the formation of farms by the Polish settlers in the southeastern voivodeships of the Second Polish Republic. It is worth noting that the establishment of these farms took place simultaneously in the course of the Polish settler colonization (Vyzdryk, 2013, p. 150). The “Law on the Principles of General Voivodeship Self-Government, in Particular of Lviv, Ternopil and Stanislav Voivodeships” adopted by the Sejm on September 26, 1922, provided for self-government in these voivodeships in the areas of religion, education (except for higher education), charitable affairs, general construction (including the development of roads and local railways), agrarian issues (except for land reform), support for local industry, and the voivodeship budget (Yukhymyuk, 2002, pp. 181–182). However, the actual rights of the Ukrainian peasants to receive parceled-out land were significantly limited (Kadeniuk, 2018, pp. 98–99). According to V. Vyzdryk’s calculations, “in 1921 – 1925, only 690 thousand hectares (5% of the area of big landowners) were parceled out in Poland, of which less than a third fell on state parcelization, which covered only 10% of the area of state plots. At the same time, landowners sold 472 thousand hectares of poorer land through private parcelization with great profit for themselves”. Thus, the issue of land distribution in Western Ukraine and Western Belarus became acute (Vyzdryk, 2013, p. 152).

The Ukrainian Socialist Association “Peasant Union” (established in 1924 in Chelm on the initiative of the Ukrainian socialist ambassadors, after a wave of repression by the authorities and the closure of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party) also advocated the slogans of free land distribution (Bortnik, 2020, p. 11; Bortnik, & Artymyshyn, 2022, pp. 104–105). The new left-wing Ukrainian peasant party emerged on the initiative of the Ukrainian figures Pavlo Vasynchuk, Andriy Bratun, Mykola Chuchmai, Semen Makivka, and the others. During the spring and summer of 1924, local Ukrainians gathered in Volyn, Kholmshchyna, Pidliashshia, and Polissia to elect local delegates to the party’s founding congress. This founding Congress took place on August 17, 1924 in Chelm, bringing together 125 delegates and 17 guests (Bortnik, 2025, p. 108; Torzecki, 1989, p. 68; Kholmnyi povitovy Zizd, 1924, p. 2). As a result, the Congress approved a new party program and outlined its charter. According to these founding documents – “Program theses and organizational charter of the Ukrainian Socialist Association “Peasant Union” – the association positioned itself as a class organization that represents the interests of the Ukrainian peasants – “striving to abolish the exploitation of poor peasants and ensure that the peasantry has a role in political and social life” (Prohramovi tezy, n. d., p. 1). The “Peasant Union” also advocated replacing the capitalist relations prevailing at that time with the “socialist” system that would protect peasants, so the party suggested using all possible methods to achieve its goals so that the peasantry would become the most significant force in socio-political life (Prohramovi tezy, n. d., pp. 1–2).

In the region, the economic policy, according to the program of the “Peasant Union”, was mainly to be carried out on the following principles: free transfer of “non-labour” lands (landowners’, church, state) to landless peasants; land distribution through peasant committees, which were to be organized locally in villages; at the same time, it was proposed that part of the land remained in state ownership for the development of science; forests and subsoil were also to be transferred to state ownership in order to rebuild farms. Separately, the importance of state support for agriculture and the creation of peasant trade organizations for the sale of their goods, which would combat the exploitation of peasants, was emphasized (Prohramovi tezy, n. d., pp. 2–3). Labour relations and social protection were also on the program of the “Peasant Union”, in particular, the political association declared the introduction of an 8-hour working day, state security in the event of old age, disability and loss of job; labour protection for women and minors, and advocated the provision of free medical care to peasants and workers (Bortnik, 2025, p. 111).

Similar initiatives to resolve the land issue were declared by the Ukrainian Radical Party (URP) and the Ukrainian Party of Socialist Revolutionaries (UPSR), which united in 1926 into the Ukrainian Socialist Radical Party (USRP) at the party congress in Lviv (Vyzdryk, 2013, p. 152). As the Ukrainian historian Ihor Raikivskyi emphasized, after 1926 the social base of Ukrainian social democrats expanded significantly, which ultimately made it possible to form the Ukrainian socialist group “Vpered” (Forward)” on December 5, 1927. This group acted as the political organization and, together with the Ukrainian Socialist Radical Party, took part in the parliamentary elections of 1928, establishing the “Bloc of Ukrainian Socialist Peasant and Workers’ Parties”, which were united by the slogans and program “For Land and Freedom” (Raikivskyi, 2018, p. 135). In 1928 the USRP–USG party bloc “Vpered” (Forward)” took part in the elections to the Sejm and Senate and received representation – nine delegates to the Sejm and one to the Senate (Raikivskyi, 2018, p. 136).

On December 8–9, 1928, the party congress of the USDP was held in Lviv, which the organizers described as the “Ukrainian Socialist Congress”. It brought together 72 delegates

from Galicia. Lev Hankevych, speaking on behalf of the USDP, emphasized that their goal was “the Ukrainian socialism and the independence of the Ukrainian labour movement”, and therefore they strived for the united “Ukrainian Socialist Republic in the family of free socialist republics of other peoples”. In turn, another social democrat, Volodymyr Temnytsky, condemned the policies of the Bolsheviks in the USSR, because they came to power through violence, and it was not possible to build a new socialist system in this way. At the same time, V. Temnytsky emphasized the lack of joint work with the PPP (Raikivskiy, 2018, p. 137). In the context of the researched issues, it is also worth focusing on the speech of R. Skybinsky, who emphasized that it was necessary to establish the work of the USDP in workers’ unions, which would demonstrate the unity of the class professional movement. The activist also emphasized that the Ukrainian Social Democrats were focused only on the workers, and therefore had no opportunity to influence the peasantry. Therefore, he called on the Congress to agitate among the workers the idea of creating autonomous Ukrainian trade unions within the trade union organizations that had already operated in the Polish state (Raikivskiy, 2018, p. 138).

In 1925, the Second Polish Republic adopted a land reform, which was the result of many years of parliamentary discussions on key milestones in the country’s economic development. The Law on the Implementation of the Land Reform of December 28, 1925, contained the following main postulates: “1) the right to private property; 2) the creation of new self-sufficient farms; 3) the consolidation of unviable small farms; 4) the creation of farms in the countryside for the cultivation and sale of agricultural products; 5) the establishment of agricultural colonies near cities and industrial centers; 6) the allocation of suitable land for agricultural schools” (Lesyk, 2022, pp. 132–133). As the Ukrainian researcher and jurist Oksana Lesyk aptly noted, in 1925 the implementation of the land reform became one of the symbols of the restoration of Poland’s independence, while at the same time, “The Land Law of 1925 became a political compromise, and therefore protected the interests of only certain groups of the population, promoting settlement and parcelization” (Lesyk, 2022, pp. 146).

In his research the Ukrainian researcher Vitaliy Vyzdryk convincingly argued that the unsatisfactory results of parcelization led to the fact that the Polish government was forced to adopt a new law on the implementation of agrarian reform. V. Vyzdryk cited the data from the Lesser Poland Agricultural Society, in particular, that “by 1926, 10,037 farms of Polish civilian colonists had been created in 37 counties of Lviv, Ternopil and Stanislaw voivodeships”. And according to the historian’s calculations, “in 1919 – 1929, more than 77 thousand farms of the Polish peasants were established in the Western Ukrainian voivodeships, who owned more than 600 thousand hectares of land”. These materials demonstrate that the agrarian reform and the associated settler colonization in Galicia were mainly aimed at solving the problem of agrarian overpopulation in the Polish regions, and at the same time at strengthening the Polish economic influence in the Western Ukrainian territories (Vyzdryk, 2016, pp. 16–17).

The UNDO could not remain aloof from the agrarian issue, so in July 1925, at the party congress, the slogan of the struggle for the transfer of land plots of large owners to the private property of peasants without redemption was put forward, especially those who were landless (Vyzdryk, 2013, p. 152). The UNDO consistently defended the position of protecting the economic interests of the Ukrainian population, which suffered from the implementation of the agrarian reform. On September 24, 1925, the UNDO prepared a letter-call to the local party centres and the Ukrainian peasantry to organize mass *veches* on October 11–18, 1925 to protect “the Ukrainian land, the national and economic state of the estate, to begin creating county and village committees for the defense of the native land, and to collect

signatures against the land reform”. Also, a member of the Central Committee of the UNDO, Julian Pavlikovsky, even wrote a special brochure “In Defense of the Native Land” with the aim of spreading propaganda among the peasants. From October 1925, a series of protest veches took place, which took place in most counties of Lviv and Ternopil voivodeships (Kuhutiak, 2002, pp. 332–333).

The Ukrainian researcher Mykola Kuhutiak, characterizing the veche movement in defense of the economic rights of the Ukrainian peasants in 1925 – 1926, noted that this movement was “one of the largest demonstrations of the Ukrainian peasantry after World War I” (Kuhutiak, 2002, p. 334).

The UNDO report and program of November 16, 1926 outlined the program of the association’s activities, in which a separate place was given to “economic and social affairs”. The UNDO advocated the struggle for “the expropriation of large estate lands without redemption and for their transfer to the landless”, called for the expansion of the Ukrainian industry, while at the same time advocating the transfer of large factories and industrial enterprises to state ownership and ensuring workers “a proper share in the profits of labor, and for the legal protection of workers from exploitation; it promoted the development of trade, especially cooperation; and also advocated a change in the taxation system. It is worth noting that the last point of this part of the program emphasized that the UNDO was fighting for the legal right of workers (in agriculture and at industrial facilities) to an 8-hour working day, ensuring a day off on Sunday, providing workers with payments in case of illness, old age, as well as for widows and orphans, women during “maternity leave”, and separately advocated for the ban on the work of minors (Prohrama, 1926, p. 5).

After J. Piłsudski came to power in May 1926, the regime gradually transformed into an authoritarian system, essentially into a regime of the so-called “sanation” (rehabilitation). The previous government policy of “national assimilation” was transformed into the “policy of state assimilation of national minorities”, so the interests of the Ukrainian community were considered not through the prism of a comprehensive solution to the national issue, but as a set of problems in various spheres of life (economic, socio-cultural) (Krasivskyi, & Melishyn, 2008, pp. 167–168).

The Ukrainian researcher Mariana Pyrih noted that political life in interwar Galicia was distinguished by its ideological diversity, so a certain place among them was occupied by forces of the left-radical direction, in particular the Communist Party of Western Ukraine (CPWU). The CPWU emerged in 1923 as a result of changing the name of the Communist Party of Eastern Galicia, which was formed in Stanislaviv, in 1919. It is worth noting that although the CPSU represented a combination of communist ideas and the national issue, as a researcher M. Pyrih emphasized, “under the conditions of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, it did not have sufficient opportunities and support to realize itself in all spheres of the political life of the region. The conditions for the activity of left-wing radical forces were determined primarily by the fact that communist structures were banned by the Polish authorities, and therefore they operated underground” (Pyrih, 2012–2013, p. 407). Therefore, in order to legalize their activities, the Ukrainian left-wing radical groups, in particular “Narodna Volia” with the participation of the leadership of the “Peasant Union” and the CPSU, held the meeting on September 12, 1926, where they announced the importance of merging the parties. As a result, after lengthy negotiations between “Narodna Volia” and “Peasant Union”, a series of congresses, on October 10, 1926, the organizational design of the Ukrainian Peasant-Worker Socialist Association – “Selrob” was completed in Lviv

(Bortnik, 2025, pp. 161–167). At the end of this founding congress, a joint statement to peasants and workers was adopted, which emphasized that this united party set as its goal the fight for socialism and “a system of working people, where there would be social, political and national equality of all people. Only socialism will free humanity from spiritual and material slavery... Only socialism will break the chains of national slavery. Our party is the peasant-worker party, because both peasant and worker are equally exploited by the plunderers of human labour, because both peasant and worker are equally stifled by the factory-landlord yoke. In unity is our strength...” (Bortnik, 2025, p. 168).

In general, the party’s ideology tended towards a socialist radical direction, focused mainly on the interests of “Ukrainian peasants and workers”. Therefore, the main goal of the party’s activities was declared to be the construction of a new socialist society, and therefore it envisaged the complete elimination of large-scale private land ownership and the socialization of the main means of production. However, since the party was mainly focused on supporting the peasants, the main emphasis was placed on the need to transfer land plots without redemption to the peasants and workers, and to receive compensation for the land (Pyrih, 2016, p. 62).

The part of the “Selrob” program regarding the social sphere included the struggle for the introduction of an eight-hour working day and weekly uninterrupted rest (42 hours). Separate emphasis was placed on the ban on involving children under 16 years of age in work, and a paid leave for women in connection with pregnancy and childbirth was advocated, and even a paid leave for two months before and after childbirth. The right to social security in case of disability was also defended. Another important area of activity was outlined as work on the implementation of sanitary legislation, mainly in combating social diseases, venereal diseases and alcoholism (Pyrih, 2016, p. 63).

Having resolved key issues regarding the organization of the party, “Selrob” began preparations for the elections at the end of 1927. Therefore, on December 31, 1927, the “Selrob” district election committees received detailed instructions from the leadership regarding the holding of district conferences, where district election committees were to be elected. The main place in the election campaign was given to peasants, who were the key support for the party. As a researcher M. Pyrih noted, in order to study the mood of the peasants, the “Peasant Union” developed “special questionnaires, which were intended to determine not only how the party centre was organized and operated and its influence among the peasants, but also the positions of its competitors and the general state of affairs in the county” (Pyrih, 2012–2013, pp. 407–409).

Conclusions. Thus, the Western Ukrainian territories that were part of the Republic of Poland during the interwar period became an important centre for the development of the Ukrainian political movement. However, during the period under study in the sub-Soviet part of the Ukrainian lands, the repressive and totalitarian policy of the USSR made any development of other ideological parties impossible.

The social structure of the Ukrainian society during the period under study was dominated by peasantry, the working class was at a somewhat weaker level, and intelligentsia played a significant role, although it was significantly inferior in quantity to other strata of society. Such a social structure with little differentiation and the policy of the Polish state together influenced the direction of political programs and strategies of parties mainly towards national political interests, which were combined with the social demands of the Ukrainian public.

The left-wing parties, in particular the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party, Selrob and the Peasants’ Union, advocated more radical socio-economic transformations based on

socialist ideas – elimination of large landholdings, transfer of land plots to landless and landless peasants without redemption, and advocated broader rights and social protection for workers. In contrast, centrist forces chose the tactics of legal political activity, combining the protection of national rights with the development of economic institutions, in particular the cooperative movement. The most successful was the UNDO, which established an extensive organizational network, while trying to use parliamentary levers of influence effectively. At the same time, they held mass actions, promoted the cooperative movement. Thus, the social component of the political programs of Ukrainian parties, despite ideological differences, combined mainly the orientation to solving the economic needs of the Ukrainians through solving the agrarian issue; declarations on the expansion of civil rights, social protection of peasantry and workers were also common.

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