Many scholars of human rights and international law view the minority protection system of the League of Nations as a significant precedent for the increased international protection of human rights. However, this frequently told story focuses on the evolution of international law and is therefore misleading. Rather than deriving from a concern for universal human rights, minority protection was driven by a mixture of humanitarian and political motivations. Its emergence was linked to several factors. First, the idea of an international guarantee for the protection of minorities was promoted by Jewish activists who, in doing so, partly reacted to massacres which had occurred in the Polish-Ukrainian-Byelorussian borderlands in the aftermath of World War I. Second, it was supposed to facilitate the political assimilation of minorities in the new and enlarged states in Central and Eastern Europe, especially groups that had belonged to the dominant ethnicity before the new borders were drawn. Third, the Allies sought to discourage minorities from further-reaching demands for territorial autonomy. Fourth, they wanted to curb irredentism by granting minority populations a degree of cultural autonomy. The humanitarian conviction expressed in the first point was soon sidelined. Recent research has pointed out that the character of minority protection under the League was not humanitarian but political.

However, political activists – in particular those with a pacifist, socialist or internationalist background – still believed that the League should help persecuted minor-

1 I wish to thank the Swiss Research Council for supporting my research in London, Paris, Warsaw and Geneva.
ties, especially in situations that were perceived as humanitarian emergencies. The fact that on such occasions, acts were committed by Christians against Christians provided a contrast to earlier causes that had sparked humanitarian outrage, notably the persecution of Bulgarians and Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

The international campaign for the Ukrainians in Poland between 1930 and 1931 is a good example of the minorities activism of the interwar years. Activists criticised the actions of the Polish army and police during the pacification of Poland's south-eastern provinces, the eastern part of the former Habsburg province Galicia. The Polish authorities' violent enforcement of public order was a reaction to acts of sabotage – including arson, destruction of local communication infrastructure as well as fire-bombings of Polish barns, haystacks and granaries – by members of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) between June and September 1930. These measures lasted from September to November 1930. The police and the army encircled about 450 villages, searched houses and beat some inhabitants as a punishment for allegedly supporting acts of sabotage. Some Ukrainians were killed during exchanges of fire, others were shot on the run or died as a result of their injuries. The estimated number of Ukrainian victims varies from seven to 35. There were also four Poles who died from injuries caused by Ukrainians. In some villages, «heavy quartering» took place, with residents being forced to put up Polish troops. Cooperative stores and property of private Ukrainian organisations were destroyed as the search for weapons included such drastic methods as slicing wooden floor and decomposing chimneys. Polish authorities found significant amounts of illegal weapons and explosives and arrested 1739 people.

Most of the existing literature focuses on the significance of these events for Polish-Ukrainian relations and on German and Soviet patronage of Ukrainian political action against Poland. There is also a range of academic publications on the political situation in Eastern Galicia from 1918 to 1923 and its international context as well as on the late Habsburg period when Eastern Galicia was trans-

9 R. Torzecki, Kwestia ukraińska w polityce III Rzeczy.
formed into a sacred ground for both the Polish and Ukrainian national movements.\textsuperscript{11} The downfall of the Habsburg Empire resulted in a Civil War in 1918/1919 whose conflicting memories deepened the cleavages between both sides.\textsuperscript{12} Nationalist Ukrainian leaders never accepted the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors to include Eastern Galicia in the Polish state (1923) and continuously tried to reverse it. They used Poland’s unfulfilled promise of territorial autonomy to Eastern Galicia and alleged violations of internationally guaranteed minority rights as propaganda tools in international politics.\textsuperscript{13} However, until 1930, they had limited success.\textsuperscript{14}

This article concentrates on the international dimension of Polish-Ukrainian relations and focuses on the activities, motivation and interaction of non-Ukrainian participants in the protests between 1930 and 1931.\textsuperscript{15} It will also consider connections between the campaign for the Ukrainians in Poland and expressions of solidarity with the persecuted political opposition before the Polish parliamentary elections in November 1930. At the time, several opposition leaders and MPs were imprisoned in a fortress in Brest-Litovsk to prevent them from participating in the election campaign. As a whole, this case study sheds light on the relationship between minority rights, human rights, humanitarianism and internationalism in the interwar period.

1. The Most Important Ukrainian Participants in the Campaign

Although the focus of this article is on Western activists, it is necessary to introduce the principal Ukrainian participants in the campaign as their publications and personal contacts inspired most persons involved. The main political party of the Ukrainians in Poland, the Ukrainian National Democratic Alliance (UNDO), with its leader Dmytro Levytsky and its secretary for foreign affairs Milena Rudnytska, intensified its international networking in French and English-speaking communities from the late 1920s onwards. UNDO extended its participation in associations such as the European Nationalities Congress and the Interparliamentary Union. In this context, Levytsky came into contact with the Berlin correspondent of the Manchester Guardian, Frederick Voigt. Vasyl Paneyko, a journalist for the Lemberg daily Dilo and a collaborator of UNDO, regularly went to London, Paris and Geneva to report

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} A. Zięba, \textit{Lobbing dla Ukrainy w Europie międzywojennej. Ukraińskie Biuro Prasowe w Londynie oraz jego konkurenci polityczni (do roku 1932)}, Kraków 2010.
\item \textsuperscript{15} For Polish reactions, see S. Łos, «The Ukrainian Question in Poland», in: \textit{Slavonic and East European Review} 10 (1931/32), 116–125.
\item \textsuperscript{16} The Ukrainian name of the town is L’viv, the Polish one Lwów. As most foreigners from Western Europe still used the Austrian name Lemberg in the interwar period, it is utilised here, too.
\end{itemize}
on foreign affairs and established contacts with journalists.\textsuperscript{17} Paneyko telegraphed the League in September 1930; he later wrote one of four petitions that the League classified as «receivable». In 1931, he published a pamphlet in French and an article in the journal of the London School of Slavonic Studies.\textsuperscript{18}

In the autumn of 1930, the American Ukrainian Jacob Makohin entered the scene. He travelled to Eastern Galicia with the Canadian doctor Frederick Dey. After his return, he opened the Ukrainian Press Bureau (UPB) in London, employing the Canadian Ukrainian Volodymyr Kysilevsky, whose mother was a member of the Polish Senate. The London-based activists published a monthly \textit{Ukrainian Bureau Bulletin} and gained a small group of supporters among British MPs and intellectuals. In comparison to other Ukrainian activists, they benefited from their knowledge of English and their sensitivity to British public opinion. Makohin was not the only exile or diaspora Ukrainian who participated in the campaign. Compatriots in Prague, Brussels, Geneva and North America published bulletins, pamphlets and booklets in English, French and German to gain international backing for their cause. Volodymyr Kushnir, a lecturer at the Ukrainian university in Prague, published a leaflet on \textit{Polish Atrocities in the West Ukraine} which was financed by Makohin in March 1931.\textsuperscript{19} Already in October 1930, the Prague diaspora had formed a contact committee to coordinate protests, publishing a book on the \textit{Extirpation of Ukrainians in Poland}, which was distributed in English, French, German and Czech.\textsuperscript{20} The committee was responsible for another petition that was officially received by the League.\textsuperscript{21} Meanwhile, the Ukrainians in Geneva and Brussels distributed news bulletins.\textsuperscript{22} Vasył Systun, president of the Ukrainian Self-Reliance League of Canada, published a booklet primarily composed of newspaper articles from the \textit{New York Herald Tribune}, the \textit{Manchester Guardian} and \textit{The Times}.\textsuperscript{23} Emil Revuk, a leader of the Ukrainian Americans, compiled articles from Ukrainian journals and the international press into a book. His preface and annexed «appeal to the world’s opinion» concentrated on minority protection, self-determination and international control over Western Ukraine, arguing that this was the only way to stop «Polish barbarities».\textsuperscript{24} Although he mentioned the political dimension of the problem, he stressed the humanitarian aspect.

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\textit{https://doi.org/10.17104/1611-8944_2014_2_216}
\end{flushright}
The Lemberg Uniate Archbishop Andrey Sheptytsky was the only Ukrainian of international renown. He had been to Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, England, Canada, the United States, Brazil and Argentina to lobby for an independent Western Ukrainian State in the years 1920–1923. He opened a sickroom in his house and invited beaten farmers to come there. Thus, every foreigner who visited him in Lemberg saw the wounded people and reported on them. His pastoral letter was banned by the Polish authorities and became part of Paneyko’s petition to the League.

2. British Groups and their International Federations

The Manchester Guardian journalist Voigt was the first and most important Western European voice to respond to the news from Eastern Galicia. On 14 October 1930, he wrote that «The Polish Terror in the Ukraine is now worse than anything that is happening anywhere else in Europe». His article accused the Poles of conducting «probably the most destructive onslaught yet made on any of the national minorities and the worst violation of a minorities treaty». Voigt’s coverage of the «Polish pacification» had the character of a crusade against Poland and decisively influenced the perception of the events in the international media. His personal contacts ensured that British groups such as the Union of Democratic Control (UDC) became interested in the Ukrainian case. Makohin, whose impressions of his recent visit to Eastern Galicia had been published in the Manchester Guardian, was invited to speak at a UDC meeting. In December 1930, the UDC sent a petition to Geneva which was signed by 65 MPs. Unlike hundreds of documents that it received on this issue, the League secretariat deemed it «receivable», similar to those by Paneyko and the Prague committee. As a result, these documents were distributed to the League Council in January 1931. Meanwhile, the UDC sent a statement on the Polish elections and the German and Ukrainian minorities in Poland to the Labour politician and then Foreign Secretary Arthur Henderson. It concluded with the remark «that the causes of Minorities and Democracy are of deep concern to the peace of the world». In February 1931, the UDC secretary Dorothy Woodman sent further information to Geneva, arguing that the League had «the right and [...] the duty to demand that Poland does not by methods contrary to her own obligations and to all humanitarian principles endanger international peace».


26 Zięba, Lobbing dla Ukrainy, 398. See e.g. Negley Farson’s report in the Chicago Daily News, reprinted in Revyuk, Polish Atrocities, 60–64.

27 Zięba, Lobbing dla Ukrainy, 394.

28 Konstanty Skirmunt (Polish Envoy in London) to August Zaleski, 4 December 1930, in: Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw (AAN), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MSZ), 2253.

29 LNA, R 2090, 4/23693/222.


31 Woodman to the Director of the Minorities Section, 11 February 1931, in: LNA, R 2092, 4/26097/222.
was Principal Private Secretary to Arthur Henderson, backed the UDC in its campaign for the Ukrainians by providing information and advice.\textsuperscript{32}

The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) was another protagonist of the campaign. It was a relative latecomer to minority questions, but well aware of Polish-Ukrainian antagonism. As it allowed minority sections to be members, Polish and Ukrainian delegates continued their domestic struggles at international meetings. In 1927, the Ukrainian and Polish sections asked the Executive Committee for an unofficial visit to Poland.\textsuperscript{33} This trip happened in 1928 but did not manage to settle the differences.\textsuperscript{34} In October 1930, the Ukrainian section told the International Secretariat that they were preparing a memorandum on the ongoing reprisals in their country.\textsuperscript{35} Four days later, the Polish WILPF delegate Jadwiga Lypacewicz claimed that some Ukrainian WILPF members were allied with terrorists.

The next month, the British WILPF activist Mary Sheepshanks followed a request by Ukrainian members and proposed an immediate fact-finding mission.\textsuperscript{36} The causes of her anxiety were reports of the \textit{Manchester Guardian} and photos the Canadian doctor Frederick Dey claimed to have taken on the spot.\textsuperscript{37} As in the Congo affair in the first decade of the twentieth century or the case of the anti-Jewish massacres in the Polish-Ukrainian-Byelorussian borderlands between 1918 and 1919, visual evidence played an important role in international protests.

Sheepshanks conducted the mission herself, accompanied by Helene Oppenheim from Vienna. In Poland, they met with archbishop Sheptytsky, doctors, lawyers, trade unionists, Polish WILPF members and the wife of President Ignacy Mościcki. At the end of the year, British newspapers published Sheepshanks’s findings.\textsuperscript{38} In January 1931, she addressed a public meeting in Geneva, coinciding with a session of the League of Nations Council. Her full report subsequently appeared in the WILPF journal \textit{Pax International}.\textsuperscript{39} Later that year, her report was reprinted by the UPB alongside.\textsuperscript{40}

Sheepshanks’s report circulated widely among participants of the campaign and became a focal point for discussions on the situation in Poland. Among others, it was read by the Dutch Bakker van Bosse, a member of the minorities committee
of the International Federation of League of Nations Societies (IFLNS). She denounced the Polish reaction to Ukrainian sabotage as «un-European» and became head of an IFLNS sub-committee. This body expressed confidence in the League and concluded that collaboration between the government and the political parties of the Ukrainian minorities was indispensable for a satisfactory solution. Its final resolution was accepted after minor debate in October 1931.\textsuperscript{41} As Bakker van Bosse learned about the existence of a Ukrainian terrorist organisation in Eastern Galicia from the Genevan \textit{Ukrainian Press Bulletin},\textsuperscript{42} she stepped back from her accusations against Poland. As a pacifist she had no interest in supporting violent solutions to the minority question. Nonetheless, she became a personal friend of Milena Rudnytska and travelled to Eastern Galicia in 1933.\textsuperscript{43}

The committee meetings were not the only platform for international debates. The Swiss Ernest Bovet and the French Secretary General of the IFLNS, Théodore Ruyssen, edited the journal \textit{Minorités Nationales} which featured short reports on the committee’s proceedings, provided information on recent petitions and gave room for contributions on specific minority problems. Ruyssen felt an urgent need to raise awareness of this issue, but did not want to do it himself as he deemed it inconsistent with his function.\textsuperscript{44} Finally, Bovet wrote an article but remained cautious in his remarks.\textsuperscript{45} Although IFLNS activists considered the Polish pacification to be «real barbarism»,\textsuperscript{46} they contributed relatively little to the international campaign. Rather, they concentrated on reconciliation between Poles and Ukrainians. Ruyssen travelled to Warsaw and Lemberg in April 1931\textsuperscript{47} but did not publish his impressions, nor did he take an active part in the discussions of the Minorities Committee. He evidently lost his passion for the Ukrainian cause after observing the situation on the ground. The British members were surprisingly uninterested in the Committee’s work, although Walter Napier was among the first foreigners on the spot in October 1930. Investigation was not the primary feature of his visit. He combined his attendance at the Danzig (Gdańsk) meeting of the IFLNS with a vacation trip through Poland. Nevertheless, he conducted interviews with Poles and Ukrainians, among them the Archbishop Sheptytsky.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{42} Zięba, \textit{Lobbing dla Ukrainy}, 469.
\textsuperscript{44} Théodore Ruyssen to Ernest Bovet, 09 December 1930, in: Private Archives of the Bovet Family, Lausanne (PABFL), Ruyssen II.
\textsuperscript{45} Bovet to Ruyssen, 15 December 1930, in: PABFL; «Ruyssen II. Ernest Bovet, La minorité ukrainienne en Pologne», in: \textit{Minorités Nationales} 3 (1930) 6, 23–25.
\textsuperscript{46} T. Ruyssen, «Commission permanente des Minorités», in: \textit{Minorités Nationales} 3 (1930) 6, 29.
The League of Nations Union (LNU) regularly sent communications to the British Foreign Office. In December 1930, it suggested that the Foreign Office «induce the Polish government to extend their Ukrainian minority that liberal treatment which alone can produce a contented people».

Another resolution followed in July 1931, expressing the hope that «no time will be lost in effecting a settlement between the Polish Government and the Ukrainian people». The LNU’s minority committee decided to consider the situation in Eastern Galicia only after the discussions within the IFLNS and after the League of Nations Assembly had adjourned its debate on the pacification petitions.

The LNU’s discussion on this issue took place in December 1931. New members such as Mary Sheepshanks and Thomas Conwell-Evans participated alongside the usual committee members, including Walter Napier, Hilda Clark, Robert William Seton-Watson and C.A. Macartney. All new members had a special interest in Ukraine and contacts with the UPB. However, the committee's conciliatory attitude did not change. Its resolution asked the British government to use the next League Council meeting to push for a just settlement of the grievances of the Ukrainian minority in order to strengthen the constitutional movement among the Ukrainians. This step would help eliminate a threat to peace in Europe. The LNU also tried to influence its Polish counterpart and Polish public opinion. Gilbert Murray, one of its key figures, gave interviews to the Polish press. He also signed a letter to the Polish president which had been prepared by Clark, Sheepshanks and Voigt.

In February 1932, Napier gave a paper on the Ukrainians in Poland at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA) which he had prepared with Macartney’s help. His talk met with criticism from John Hunter Harley, a British journalist who attended the meeting for the Polish Embassy, and John Walton Newbold, an ex-communist Labour sympathiser who had visited Eastern Galicia in August 1931. Newbold stated that «one only heard of certain minorities when somebody had a strategic or economic reason for taking an interest in them». Finally, Ariadna Tyrkova-Williams, a feminist and Russian émigré, mentioned the special interest of Adolf Hitler’s friend Alfred Rosenberg in Ukraine. Confronted with such severe criticism, Napier failed to win over his audience. Nonetheless, Sheepshanks, Woodman

49 LNU to Henderson, 5 December 1930, in: TNA, FO 371/14827, N 8518/274/55.
53 Minutes, Meeting of the Minorities Committee, 3 December 1931, in: Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum London (PISM), Ukrainian Press Bureau (UPB), 184.
54 Murray to Voigt, 31 December 1931, in: BLO, Gilbert Murray 211, 110.
55 Hilda Clark to Murray, 6 January 1932, in: BLO, Gilbert Murray 60, 91.
57 Napier, «The Ukrainians in Poland», 416.
and Macartney defended the Ukrainian case. Woodman argued that «the reason why the Ukrainian minority had come before the world was because the conscience of decent people had been shocked by the atrocious treatment of Ukrainians by the Polish authorities.»  

However, Napier’s report was not a complete failure. As its author was a distinguished lawyer who had served the Crown in the Colonies, Lord Noel-Buxton cited it in the House of Lords as evidence for the «Polish terror». His comments came in a debate on the protection of minorities, which also saw an intervention on Eastern Galicia by Lord Dickinson, a member of the LNU committee.

The IFLNS and the LNU were not interested in launching a campaign that placed all the blame at Poland’s door. They avoided publicity until the League of Nations Council turned down the petitions. They preferred to lobby the League as well as the British and Polish government without officially announcing their actions. Only when the LNU opened its ranks to sympathisers of the Ukrainians, including Mary Sheepshanks and Dorothy Woodman, did its intelligence work appear like pure propaganda. Nevertheless, the LNU continued to aim for reconciliation between Ukrainians and Poles and took care not to alienate the Polish members of the IFLNS. Exactly the opposite happened to WILPF. The organisation’s pacifist reputation gave the Ukrainian atrocity stories more credibility. Although WILPF sought reconciliation, it failed in this endeavour. Sheepshanks conducted her investigation journey against the will of the Polish section. She cooperated with Ukrainian lobbyists who were in close contact with individuals responsible for sabotage. She even participated in a reception that the leader of the Ukrainian terrorists, Yevhen Konovalets, gave in her honour in January 1931 in Geneva. The British Section and the International Secretariat relied on Milena Rudnytska as a source of information although she was no member of the Ukrainian section but a female deputy of the Polish Sejm without pacifist credentials. Her disinterest in reconciliation became obvious in June 1931. While the WILFP Secretary-General Camille Drevet visited Poland to settle the differences between the Polish and the Ukrainian section, Rudnytska went to London in order to lobby British opinion and the government. Sheepshanks and Woodman were her hosts and thereby undermined Drevet’s effort. At a time when Bakker van Bosse, Ruyssen and Bovet had recognised the non-pacifist aims of the Ukrainian lobbyists and distanced themselves, Sheepshanks and Woodman continued to help Rudnytska establish contact with British decision-makers. For instance, Sheepshanks read the English version of Rudnytska’s speech at a meeting at the RIIA.

59 HL Deb 15 June 1932, vol 84, c 887.
60 Ibid., c 891–899.
61 Zięba, Lobbing dla Ukrainy, 456.
64 Zięba, Lobbing dla Ukrainy, 520.
3. Leftist Intellectuals, Socialist Parties and the LSI

While liberal internationalist supporters of minority rights lost their enthusiasm for the campaign, leftist intellectuals and Labour MPs continued to support the Ukrainian claims. The most important among them was Colonel Cecil L’Estrange Malone, who worked for the UPB. He had a special interest in Eastern Europe and minority questions. In 1924, he was a member of a Labour inquiry mission on the Tzankov Terror in Bulgaria.65 One of his companions was Josiah Wedgwood, who was among the most frequent inquirers about national minorities in the House of Commons. Both had also been members of the «Hands off Russia Committee» which had campaigned against Polish interference in the Russian Civil War. In March 1929, Wedgwood asked in parliament whether the British government would take steps to initiate a more satisfactory system in Geneva, especially for minorities that had no national representation there.66 This was one of 22 questions concerning the League’s minority protection system that he asked in the 1920s – and not the first one with regard to Eastern Galicia. His interest dated back to 1921 when he asked for reports on the condition of the inhabitants under Polish rule.67

Labour’s minority champions were outsiders in the parliamentary faction in which Charles Roden Buxton, a member of the minorities’ commission of the Labour and Socialist International (LSI), took the lead. He formed part of the British delegation to the League Assembly of 1930 and represented his country in the Sixth Commission, which dealt with minority questions. He did not use the first-hand information about the pacification that the Ukrainians had handed over to him in September 1930. Instead of campaigning for the Ukrainians in Poland, he focused on indigenous rights in Africa. A similar reservation could be observed in the LSI executive. It received material on the pacifications from the Ukrainian Socialist Panas Fedenko and approved a resolution at its executive meeting of February 1931.68 But no further action occurred. The LSI was more concerned with imprisoned socialists in Brest-Litovsk. As the Belgian socialist and LSI president Emile Vandervelde put it, they were more interested in the rights of an entire people than in those of a minority.69

Similarly, the French League of the Rights of Man (Ligue des Droits de l’Homme, LDH) was more interested in the situation of the Polish opposition in spite of receiving several protest letters from Ukrainian associations in France.70 At a meeting in October 1930, Vasyl Paneyko and Ilya Borshak, a Ukrainian resident of Paris, pre-

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66 HC Deb 06 March 1929, vol 226, c358.
67 HC Deb 11 April 1921, vol 140, cc734–5W.
68 Application of the Ukrainian representative Fedenko for the meeting in Zurich, 21 February 1931, in: International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam, Archives of the Labour and Socialist International (LSI), 389, 1.
70 BDIC, LDH, F delta res 798/60.
sented an exaggerated version of the events, referring to thousands of victims.\(^{71}\) Victor Basch, the LDH president, promised his guests to support an enquiry mission. However, the only action he took was to publish an article in *La Volonté* in which he likened the Ukrainians’ oppression to the treatment of the political opposition in Poland.\(^{72}\) Similar attitudes could be observed in the Deutsche Liga für Menschenrechte, the German partner organisation of the LDH. At a meeting in early November 1930, its president Kurt Grossmann supported the idea of an international enquiry commission. One year later, he wrote an article on terror in Poland and exclusively referred to the oppression of the political opposition.\(^{73}\)

Between October and December 1930, *Le Populaire* – a party newspaper of French socialists – featured headlines on «Terror in Poland» and the «dictatorship in Poland». However, these articles did not express any concern for the Ukrainians and instead focused on state violence during and after the election campaign. Most leftist activists did not travel to Poland to support minorities but to help socialists and other leftist political groups. In 1930, the LSI sent the Belgian socialist Louis de Brouckère to observe the trial of the Polish socialist Herman Lieberman, who had spent some time in the Brest fortress.\(^{74}\) In November 1930, the French socialist Jean Locquin and the French trade union leader Léon Jouhaux were sent to Poland to support the Polish socialists during the election terror of Piłsudski.\(^{75}\)

With his focus on the Ukrainians, Cecil Malone was an exception to the rule: in October 1929 he had unsuccessfully offered his service for official or unofficial missions to the new Labour Foreign Minister, Arthur Henderson.\(^{76}\) In the spring of 1930, he attended the trial of the Upper Silesian minority leader Otto Ulitz as well as visiting Lemberg. However, this was a private trip, rather than an official mission of the Labour Party. Malone was accompanied by Nikolaus von Berg, a semi-official representative of the European Nationalities Congress who was paid by the German Foreign Office.\(^{77}\) After the pacification, Malone campaigned on behalf of the Ukrainians in Poland and helped Makohin’s UPB to liaise with British MPs. He became the main author of parliamentary enquiries but spread them to different persons, rarely raising his own voice. Nonetheless, he was unable to place the Ukrainian case on the agenda of the British Labour Party or of the LSI.

The campaign for the Ukrainians in Poland gave backbenchers an occasion to travel abroad and attract public attention. Curiosity drove more established Labour MPs such as James Barr and Rhys Davies on a private fact-finding mission to South

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\(^{72}\) *La Volonté*, 25 November 1930, 1.


\(^{74}\) LSI Executive to Wauters, in: IISH, LSI 2545, 24.

\(^{75}\) *Le Populaire*, 6 November 1930, 3.

\(^{76}\) Malone to Henderson, 31 October 1929, in: Labour History Archives Manchester (LHAM), LP/HEN/1, 57.

\(^{77}\) See the observation of the Polish authorities in PISM, PEL, A.12. 20/7, 33–39.
Eastern Poland in August 1931. However, their UPB-sponsored journey did more harm than good. The *Times* joined Polish newspapers’ attacks on them and undermined their credibility. The distribution of their report by the UPB indicated their cooperation with the Ukrainians and reduced the propaganda value of their observations. None of the Labour MPs who participated in the campaign made it a prime concern for the party or for fellow socialists and leftist intellectuals outside the United Kingdom. Socialist solidarity focused on the persecuted Polish opposition leaders rather than on the fate of ethnic minorities.

4. Humanitarian and Political Motivations

The international campaign for the Ukrainians in Poland started because of humanitarian concerns. The first reports suggested that Polish doctors refused to treat the injured and that Ukrainian doctors were arrested when they tried to help. Another factor was the combination of photographic images of suffering bodies with the allegation of atrocities. The strategy generated moral outrage among humanitarians. On this occasion, most campaigners were misled by the visual evidence which was probably forged and overestimated the scale of the human rights violations. This explains why leading minority and peace activists such as Bovet, Ruys- sen, Basch and Grossmann stepped back from their planned action and played no role in the campaign. As they reached the conclusion that the situation did not amount to a humanitarian scandal, they did not believe in the need for immediate action. Basch and Grossmann devoted their energy to what they perceived as the more severe violations of human rights in Poland, the case of political prisoners in Brest-Litovsk and elsewhere.

In the meantime, Bovet and Ruyssen waited for the results of the League of Nations mediation. They had learned that all public action could spoil the efforts of the reconciliation work of the League secretariat. British minority rights activists in the LNU adopted a similar strategy. Other members of the IFLNS committee, including Bakker van Bosse, tempered their engagement when they learned about the use of terror and political violence by the Ukrainians. All these minority rights activists sooner or later realised that the leaders of the Ukrainians in Poland did not fight for minority rights but autonomy and separation. As they did not share these aims,
they stopped lobbying for the pacification petitions. They only renewed their efforts on the Ukrainians’ behalf when news about the torturing of Ukrainian political prisoners in Polish gaols reached them via the *Manchester Guardian* in December 1931. Such cases made them resume their campaign for Ukrainian petitions and suggest that humanitarianism could be a factor.

However, even more important was the internationalist agenda of organisations such as the LNU and the IFLNS: their liberal internationalism prevented them from supporting petitions whose aims threatened the stability of Central and Eastern Europe and endangered the maintenance of peace. They also wanted to avoid their main concern – namely the transnational disarmament campaign – from being pushed aside by the minority question. On 22 November 1930, just a day after she had an unofficial talk with members of the League’s minority section on the situation of the Ukrainians in Poland, Hilda Clark asked the *Manchester Guardian’s* readers to support armaments limitations. In contrast, she never used the newspaper to support the Ukrainians in Poland. Lord Robert Cecil, the public face of the LNU, even feared that the discussion of minority problems within the League could create a controversial atmosphere and thereby impact adversely on the Disarmament Conference. He therefore advised against raising any minority questions during the League Assembly in September 1931.

Leftist intellectuals such as Cecil Malone, Mary Sheepshanks, Dorothy Woodman and Frederick Voigt did not consider the minority issue in its entirety. They got involved in what they perceived to be a just case. During the campaign, they lost the support of the political left and became marginalised among their peers. Most leftist intellectuals focused on political prisoners and the Polish election campaign; without a pressing humanitarian issue, they had little inclination to discuss the minorities question. For instance, in January 1931, the French trade unionist Léon Jouhaux declined the invitation to attend Mary Sheepshanks’s protest meeting in Geneva because he preferred to attend another gathering. British supporters of the Ukrainians failed to win the support of their comrades on the continent. Meanwhile, the UDC had no direct partners in mainland Europe. It had not joined forces with the LDH and the *Deutsche Liga für Menschenrechte*, although negotiations took

89 Drevet to Clara Ragaz and Gertrud Baer, 8 January 1931, in: BDIC, GD, F delta res 207, Vie Internationale 1931.
place. This isolation made the UDC more responsive to German and Ukrainian minority lobbying. Overstatements of the situation on the ground did not help broaden sympathy for the Ukrainians in Western Europe. Ukrainians and their British supporters soon discovered that they needed real humanitarian scandals to keep the question of Ukrainians in Poland on the international agenda. A minority question alone was not able to attract sufficient public attention. Without a humanitarian dimension, there was not the slightest chance for media coverage and a protest campaign. They therefore chose to raise the mistreatment of Ukrainians in Polish prison. For instance, Walter Napier referred to this question in his speech at the RIIA and mentioned one of Voigt’s articles in the Manchester Guardian. Likewise, Dickinson stressed in his speech at the House of Lords in June 1932 that this was more a critique of the question of humane treatment of prisoners than of minorities.

This shift from an advocacy for minority rights to calls for humane treatment of all citizens can be seen as a general trend that was accelerated by the parallel mistreatment of minorities and political prisoners in Poland between 1930 and 1931. Mark Mazower may be right that the «triumph of human rights» over minority rights resulted from the wartime experience and happened after 1945 under the impression of the abuse of minority rights by the Nazis and their Central and Eastern European allies. It is nonetheless important to realise that the desire to counter state violence against all citizens in Central and Eastern Europe was also a pivotal element of the story. Some activists were frustrated with the fact that Poland only had to defend the treatment of its minorities in the League of Nations while being able to imprison the Polish opposition without any legal possibilities to challenge such an abuse of state power. It seemed absurd that international law only protected the Ukrainians among the opposition members. Another paradox was that these Ukrainians were not really interested in minority rights and used political violence. Under such circumstances, it was more attractive to campaign for human rights than for minority rights.

91 Napier, «The Ukrainians in Poland», 411; referring to Manchester Guardian, 12 December 1931.
Minority Rights and Humanitarianism:  
The International Campaign for the Ukrainians in Poland,  
1930–1931  

In October 1930, violent actions of the Polish security forces against the Ukrainian population in Eastern Galicia resulted in an international campaign for the Ukrainians in Poland. Its central claim was the condemnation of these incidents as a violation of the Minorities Treaty of the League of Nations. The article focuses on the involved British extra-parliamentary groups and their international federations as well as leftist intellectuals, socialist parties and the Labour and Socialist International. In most cases, the commitment of the activists was motivated by the desire to expose a humanitarian scandal while the implementation of minority rights played a minor role. When it turned out that the first reports had presented an exaggerated version of the events, they shifted their focus to the Polish opposition, whose persecution started in November 1930.

Minderheitenrechte und Humanitarismus:  
Die internationale Kampagne für die Ukrainer in Polen,  
1930–1931  

Im Oktober 1930 begann eine internationale Protestkampagne gegen das gewaltsame Vorgehen der polnischen Sicherheitskräfte gegen die ukrainische Bevölkerung in Ostgalizien. Eine der zentralen Forderung der Beteiligten war die Verurteilung dieser Aktion als Verstoß gegen den Minderheitenschutzvertrag durch den Völkerbund. Der Artikel fokussiert auf die an der Kampagne beteiligten britischen Vereinigungen und ihre internationalen Zusammenschlüsse sowie linke Intellektuelle, sozialistische Parteien und die Sozialistische Arbeiterinternational. Diese sahen ihr Engagement nur vordergründig als Einsatz für Minderheitenrechte und reagierten vor allem auf die scheinbar eklanten Menschenrechtsverletzungen. Nachdem deutlich wurde, dass die Vorkommnisse keinen humanitären Skandal größeren Ausmaßes darstellten, verschob sich das Interesse der Beteiligten weg von den Ukrainen hin zur im November 1930 einsetzenden Repression der polnischen Opposition.

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