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**Adam Wątor, *Liga Narodowa w Galicji – Małopolsce i jej działacze*, Adam Marszałek Publishing House (Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek), Toruń 2020, pp. 333**

Adam Marszałek Publishing House specializes both in publishing books in the field of widely regarded political science and other fields of knowledge, such as history. The latter is represented, among others, by a very interesting work written by Adam Wątor, academic teacher of the University of Szczecin. He is a well-known in Poland contemporary researcher of the history of the widely understood National Democracy, including many of its branches occurring under the names of either parliamentary clubs or independent organizational structures. He has significant scientific achievements, including monographs and other interesting studies. Thus, he continues the research conducted by Prof. Roman Wapiński. He specializes not only in presenting the history of the mentioned political formation as a whole, but also its regional structures. This can also be referred to the reviewed book. It concerns the initial period of creation of organizational forms and structures of the political entity under question in one of the three Polish partitions – Austrian-Hungarian. It must be admitted that it had the best conditions for Poles and for operation of various groups seeking to free Poland. Among them were supporters of the Right, operating in a broadly understood national-democratic movement created in western European countries under

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changing names: the Polish League, its branch Polish Youth Union "Zet", and later the National League.

### **Presentation of the book**

The book consists of an introduction and two parts. The first one is entitled "National League in 1893–1927/1928. An overview of history" and the second "Dictionary of activists of the Polish League and the National League in Galicia and Little Poland". Such a division causes that the first part describes the activities of the national formation in the studied area, while the second part is a presentation of biographies of the most prominent field activists of this the analyzed political formation. This itself causes an asynchronousness of both parts in terms of volume. The first one has more than 160 pages of text, while the second less than 120 pages. The next part of this book is a list of the most important abbreviations and a fairly extensive bibliography. I have no critical comments to the book design. However, I would like to underline that the biographies of people who were particularly active in the functioning of this political entity in this publication are not traditional descriptions of the most important facts from their lives. It is an attempt to show these in detail through the prism of their organizational membership in the National League in Galicia, as well as in Cieszyn Silesia, Spisz and Orawa, therefore areas previously integrally connected with Silesia (which was a part of the Prussian partition and so the German Empire). Therefore, the book is a "mine" of knowledge for researchers of the subject, which significantly enriches the first part describing the history of this political movement.

The content of the book begins with the presentation of the initial period of the Polish League, that is, its activities in 1887–1893. The author convincingly demonstrates the role of factors coming from outside the Galician partition in the dissemination of this issue on the that territory, including the influence of the Warsaw "Voice", political disagreements conducted there (for example, Zygmunt Balicki's with Jan Ludwik Popławski), and Warsaw press associated with the national-democratic movement. However, the author also points out to the role of Lviv monthly "Social Review. Scientific and Literary Writing".

Is this just a book about the history of the national-democratic movement in the Austrian partition? For the most part, yes, but it also shows it against a broader background of other partitions, particularly the Russian one. This is a positive of this study. I pay attention to a lot of detailed information, such as listing the staff of national commissioners of the National League in Warsaw and in the territory of the Kingdom of Poland (p. 94). This also applies to Vilnius or Kiev, as well as the Prussian partition, where Marian Seyda was the head of the National Committee until 1906.

Prof. Wątor considers the creation of the Polish League in the summer of 1887 to be an important stage in the development of this political entity. Although it supposed to have the greatest influence in the Kingdom of Poland, quite quickly began to gain influence in Galicia. However, I agree with Prof. Wątor's assertion that in general the "Polish League was not able to develop a wider activity in the Austrian partition" (p. 46). After this event, its political background was "arranged" by "Zet" who began to play a leading role among other secret youth associations. The Polish League's name was replaced by the National League, this time fully led by Roman Dmowski. Openly active in this partition was the Democratic-National Party. In the reviewed book there is a detailed description of the activities of this grouping. To the greatest achievements of the Galician branch of the National League Prof. Wątor includes participation in the work of youth associations, as well as gymnastic-military activities, as well as legal, medical, clerical, journalistic, workers' and professional, cultural and educational and scientific ones; and also charitable, financial and insurance, economic and agricultural organizations (pp. 99–100).

I find especially interesting the third subchapter of chapter 1 named „Ideology and politics. National League before the Great War”. At the verge of the outbreak of world war the Galician nationalists faced the dilemma of complying with the directives of the camp management (stake for the Entente states) or maintaining loyalty to the monarchy with the support of the Austro-Polish orientation (legion camp). Some form of compromise was reached by setting up the Supreme National Committee in Kraków in August 1914.

I share the research findings of the author of this book that the National League during World War I changed the conditions and possibili-

ties of this political movement. It was considered that Dmowski's and the movement's goal was to induce the inhabitants of this district to oppose the activity of activist orientation (pro-Austrian). Instead, the focus was on cooperation with the Entente bloc, initially at stake on Russia and later, since 1916, on western powers.

Despite the great political influence of the National League in the beginning of the reborn Poland (signified by elections of January 7, 1919; 45% of the votes), they were significantly smaller in Galicia – Malopolska (only 10.5%), and it was not it but the Piłsudski camp that practically took power in the reborn country. The reasons for this state of affairs were not given by Prof. Wątor. In my opinion, this was decided by the much greater effectiveness of the latter camp and, above all, the individual roles of their leaders. Piłsudski proved to be much more effective than Dmowski in this field. The latter was a great theorist and ideologist but practically failed in the effectiveness of conducting direct political struggle.

Caesura of this book does not include only the presentation of the history of the Polish national-democratic movement to regain independence in 1918, but also further events until 1927–1928, (the date is difficult to determine precisely) which meant the dissolution of the National League and the acquisition of its achievements by the Camp of Great Poland created by Dmowski in 1926. Interesting are opinions, presented by the author, of the members of this formation and its management on the controversial evaluations of this step (pp. 180–182).

The author did a gigantic job in drawing up the “Dictionary of activists of the Polish League and the National League”. This is the titanic work of gathering so much information. As he demonstrated, he used a query of dozens of newspapers and periodicals for this purpose. The list contains 52 such titles.

It is necessary to show the abundant bibliography divided into archival sources (numerous archives and libraries), printed sources, (I do not know why “journalism” was included to this part, if it concerns the time caesura of the book, it is the source, so I would suggest including to this part also “newspapers and magazines”), journals, diaries, memoirs. Only after these I would suggest the placement of dictionary and encyclopedic publications. Then I propose to place studies but divided into compact ones and articles. There are a lot of these.

The book is complemented by an iconographic page – photographs of 46 people from the leadership of the national camp operating in the Galician territory. It is good that the „List of more important abbreviations” has been published.

I recommend to potential readers this interesting publication, which significantly expands the knowledge about the initial period of the history of the national democratic camp limited to one of the three partitions – especially the Galician one which so far has been treated superficially by the researchers of this political formation. Surely, it should interest professional historians, but only them? I say that it will be well received and by a “mass” recipient as well. I congratulate Adam Marszałek Publishing House the publication of such an interesting book which is simply good-looking judging from the editorial perspective.