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## *What We Should Get from the Partition of Czechoslovakia* (*Co powinniśmy dostać z parcelacji Czech<sup>1</sup>*), or “Głos Lubelski” about the International Situation in Central Europe after the Munich Conference

*Co powinniśmy dostać z parcelacji Czech<sup>2</sup>, czyli „Głos Lubelski” o sytuacji  
międzynarodowej w Europie Środkowej po konferencji w Monachium*









### ABSTRACT

In October 1938, when Europe was enveloped in political tensions, “Głos Lubelski” played the role of witness to the turbulent times. The newspaper not only reported on the ongoing events but also actively shaped public opinion, particularly in the context of the situation in Czechoslovakia. It warned against German territorial ambitions and called for retaining the balance of power in Central Europe. “Głos Lubelski” critically analyzed the policy of appeasement, treating the concessions to Germany as a potential threat to the region. The paper scrupulously followed international diplomatic maneuvers, especially the Munich Conference, and pointed out the necessity for Poland’s active foreign policy in the face of changing alliances. The editors presented Poland as an important participant in the policy of the region, striving to maintain independence and safeguard its national interests. “Głos Lubelski” predicted long-lasting effects of the Czech crisis, stressing that Central Europe was on the brink of vital changes. In the face of social uncertainty, the paper sketched the picture of Europe, whose fate is closely connected with the events in Czechoslovakia, and this crisis was becoming a tinderbox of growing political and diplomatic tensions. Finally, “Głos Lubelski” not only provided its readers with information but also with a political vision by presenting the then international situation as a catalyst for changes that shaped the future of Europe.

**Key words:** “Głos Lubelski”, conference, Munich, 1938, Central Europe

<sup>1</sup> *Gdy rozbiór jest nieunikniony... Co powinniśmy dostać z parcelacji Czech?*, “Głos Lubelski” [hereinafter: “GL”] 20 September 1938, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*.

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STRESZCZENIE

W październiku 1938 r., kiedy Europa tonęła w napięciach politycznych, „Głos Lubelski” pełnił rolę świadka burzliwych czasów. Gazeta nie tylko relacjonowała bieżące wydarzenia, ale również aktywnie kształtowała opinię publiczną, szczególnie w kontekście sytuacji w Czechosłowacji. Ostrzegała przed niemieckimi ambicjami terytorialnymi i apelowała o zachowanie równowagi sił w Europie Środkowej. „Głos Lubelski” krytycznie analizował politykę appeasementu, widząc w ustępstwach dla Niemiec potencjalne zagrożenie dla regionu. Gazeta skrupulatnie śledziła międzynarodowe manewry dyplomatyczne, szczególnie konferencję monachijską, i zwracała uwagę na konieczność aktywnej polityki zagranicznej Polski wobec zmieniających się sojuszków. Redakcja przedstawiała Polskę jako ważnego uczestnika w polityce regionu, dążącego do utrzymania niezależności i zabezpieczenia swoich interesów narodowych. „Głos Lubelski” prognozował długofalowe skutki kryzysu czeskiego, podkreślając, że Europa Środkowa stoi na progu istotnych zmian. W obliczu niepewności społecznej, gazeta rysowała obraz Europy, której losy są ściśle związane z wydarzeniami w Czechosłowacji, a kryzys ten stawał się punktem zapalnym rosnących napięć politycznych i dyplomatycznych. Ostatecznie, „Głos Lubelski” dostarczał swoim czytelnikom nie tylko informacji, lecz także wizji politycznej, przedstawiając ówczesną sytuację międzynarodową jako katalizatora zmian, które kształtowały przyszłość Europy.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Głos Lubelski, konferencja, Monachium, 1938 r., Europa Środkowa

“Głos Lubelski” [hereinafter alternatively referred to as “Głos”] was the longest-published daily in Lublin in the interwar period, available to the readers from 1913 to 1939. It played a significant role in forming the political thought – especially of the National Camp – in the Second Polish Republic. It was founded in 1913 by a group of National League activists under Feliks Moskałewski, politically connected from 1922 with the Popular-National Union and later with the National Democracy in the Lublin

region<sup>3</sup>. Its influences and impact covered first of all Lublin, although, as I. Walaszek claims, about 20 percent of its circulation was distributed in the districts in which the National Democratic Party had considerable political influence<sup>4</sup>. Its addressees, because of the quite diverse subjects meant to arouse the interest of specific readers, were mainly the intelligentsia, wealthy bourgeoisie, and clergy. From the very beginning the daily functioned as the ideological organ of one of the most influential political movements in the Reborn Poland<sup>5</sup>.

In the nineteen-thirties "Głos Lubelski" focused first of all on the analysis of Poland's relations with its largest neighbors, i.e. Germany and Russia. The editors of the daily attentively followed and analyzed the political situation not only in those two countries but also in other regions of the world. Hitler's takeover of power and the reintroduction of the conscription army in Germany caused a certain anxiety among the editorial staff, at the same time however, the Nazi anti-Semitic policy was positively assessed<sup>6</sup>.

Noticing the threat from Germany, "Głos Lubelski" also pointed out the potential danger from the Soviet Union. The editors closely monitored the internal situation in the Soviet Union, especially Stalin's crackdown on the opposition inside the Bolshevik party. In addition, the newspaper also closely followed the events in the Far East, particularly the Chinese-Japanese conflict and the growing dispute between Japan and the United States.

In its reports about the domestic events, "Głos Lubelski" focused mainly on criticizing the ruling party, exposing scandals involving people connected with the government, and on the financial analysis of Poland. It analyzed the condition of the country's debt, also describing relations between the 'Sanacja' (Sanation) camp and the Center-Left/the Left, and

<sup>3</sup> The outline of the history of the newspaper vide: I. Walaszek, *Głos Lubelski" i jego redakcja w latach 1913–1939*, "Rocznik Lubelski" 2009, 35; E. Maj, "Głos Lubelski" 1918–1939, "Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska, sectio K" 2010, 17, 2; T. Kot, *Prasa codzienna w Lublinie w latach 1918–1939*, "Wschodni Rocznik Humanistyczny" 2013, 9; H. Wolska, *Od 1830 do 1939 roku*, in: *Dzieje prasy lubelskiej*, ed. A.L. Gzella, Lublin 1972; H. Dejner, *Spacer po Lublinie. Reportaż z wagarów wiosennych 1938*, "Mały Przegląd" 13 May 1938.

<sup>4</sup> I. Walaszek writes that "Głos Lubelski" was available in Biała Podlaska, Siedlce, Włodawa, Łuków, Radzyń, and Konstantynów. He also adds that it was also occasionally distributed beyond the borders of the Lublin province, for example at the Poznań (later International) Fair as well as in the territory of Polesie (Polesye) and Volhynia, its readers, apart from landed gentry, being the intelligentsia, wealthy bourgeoisie and clergy vide: I. Walaszek, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

<sup>5</sup> <https://teatrnn.pl/leksykon/artykuly/glos-lubelski-19131939/> [access: 23.09.2023].

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

between the National Camp and the 'Sanacja' camp. It also provided room for the opinions of university students, reporting on the demonstrations connected with the Jewish question and the actions of boycotting Jewish goods and shops<sup>7</sup>.

The editors watched with apprehension the process of the 'Bolshevization' of the popular movement, especially peasant parties, which were highly influential in the Lublin province. Considerable room was also devoted to reinforcing Catholic principles in public life, to building the national state with the hierarchical organization of society, and to transforming the political system, having in mind the enhancement of the role of the national elite in the state. Until the end of its existence, "Głos Lubelski" consistently followed the assumptions and principle of National Democratic policy<sup>8</sup>.

Ewa Maj emphasized that "Głos Lubelski" played the role of a popular and important press organ of the National Democracy in the Lublin region. The editors of the paper were strictly supervised by the local party authorities, at first by those of the Popular-National Union, then the National Party, and also the All-Polish Youth and the Great Poland Camp. The articles in the daily focused mainly on local themes but these were presented in the context of the then current domestic and international events. The authors of articles, features/commentaries, paragraphs, or notes were first of members and supporters of the National Democracy from Lublin. However, the texts reprinted from the central National Democratic press were created by the leaders of the National Democratic Party, headed by Roman Dmowski<sup>9</sup>.

E. Maj also observes that throughout the period of publication of the newspaper the editorial team made sure that the form of the layout of the newspaper contents 'remained in harmony'. On the front page of the paper, political materials were published, containing introductory and general texts. After those articles, there appeared notes and paragraphs concerning the latest domestic and foreign events. On the next pages, apart from the news bulletin about local issues, the readers could find short analytical texts, reports on current political, economic, and cultural matters, theatrical reviews, and opinions about new books. E. Maj thinks that the headlines, sometimes characterizing the content of the text, grabbed the readers' attention. The paper maintained permanent sections, which covered general purpose news intended for the audience from outside the communities of National Democracy. Domestic News appeared

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>9</sup> E. Maj, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

on page 1–2, Foreign News on page 2, and Current Affairs on pages 2–3. Similar information “for all” was offered by the columns: From the Province, Communiqués, Everyday News, and From the Societies Movement. With the progress of city infrastructure, the content of the section containing the repertoire of Lublin’s cultural (cinemas, theaters) and sports facilities offered more information. In addition, the radio program guide was run regularly, and there was also a permanent classified-ads section. “Głos Lubelski” provided current information about the passenger traffic of the regional and national train and bus services, informing about departures from and arrivals at the stations in Lublin. In E. Maj’s opinion: ‘The daily was published with a certain flourish, it had relatively considerable influence among the readers, and its editors and columnists knew how to attract its readers’ attention, demonstrating their ability to combine informative and persuasion functions. The paper was marketable and highly regarded in the city and in the region, its average daily circulation was 2600–3000 copies, and the modified distribution channels showed the substantial ingenuity of its management. It was delivered to the readers not only through purchase at sale points but also reached poorer audience, who could read the copies of the paper put up in display cases or on notice boards in the city center. This manner of distribution enabled increasing the number of press readers, thereby influencing the less affluent population. Correspondence contacts were maintained with readers, who sent comments and opinions to the editorial office, and also informed about local events’<sup>10</sup>.

The description of the newspaper, with a distinctive information scope and mass reach, and the presence of supplements, allows the inclusion of this daily among popular periodicals of the time. The literature on the subject ranks it among the newspapers with a high professional level. The paper was edited dynamically, and the editors actively responded to technical and organizational changes. They used modern news bulletins and introduced innovations such as a phone link with Warsaw. All this contributed to the paper keeping pace with current events and ensured its modern character in the press of that period<sup>11</sup>.

Until the outbreak of World War Two “Głos Lubelski” played the role of the press organ of the National Democracy, functioning at the same time as a daily paper with the characteristics of a general information daily, which additionally had the political and party dimension. According to E. May, from the political angle the paper fulfilled the role of the exponent of national ideology and promoted political values, with the

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 58.

nation occupying the central position. In the party context the editorial team implemented the organizational function by integrating the local National-Democratic circles embraced by the Popular-National Union and later the National Party, All-Polish Youth and the Great Poland Camp. The general information pattern of the newspaper was complemented with a party section containing ideological articles, reports about the party life and presentation of the profiles of the members of its leadership. Some texts served as communication tools with the National Democracy. The newspaper provided information on the date and places of the National Democratic Party meetings, conventions, or political rallies, which made "Głos Lubelski" play the role of a special internal bulletin<sup>12</sup>. The paper published analytical articles by such authors as Roman Dmowski, Joachim Bartoszewicz, Stanisław Grabski, Józef Hłasko, Medard Kozłowski, Stanisław Rymar, Roman Rybarski, Stanisław Stroński, Jan Zamorski, and Jerzy Zdziechowski. The texts were reprints from the Polish national press, distinguished not only by ideological overtones but – E. Maj claims – it would be also difficult to accuse the authors of not having knowledge of economic, cultural or social issues<sup>13</sup>. The leaders of the National Democratic Party observed the rule according to which the editorial team of the National Democratic periodical included the regional Chairman of the Popular-National Union (ZLN), and later the National Party (SN), and other local figures. Owing to this arrangement, "Głos Lubelski" was always available to the leaders of Lublin's structures of National Democracy such as Adam Majewski, Edward Rettinger and Roman Ślaski (until 1929)<sup>14</sup>.

As the newspaper evolved, one could discern the development of thematic specialization in its current commentaries: 'The tone and direction were set by Wojdaliński, who dealt with the problems of the state's legal-political and economic system. Later, Borowski acted in a similar way, focusing on presenting the then current political and socio-economic matters. Sasorski showed interest in the issues of the external threat to Poland. The other columnists oriented themselves to the local affairs'<sup>15</sup>.

"Głos Lubelski" functioned as an information press organ for the whole community of readers in the Lublin region, but with a clear ideological emphasis. The editors seldom confined themselves to mere information, often treating the newspaper as a medium for reporting on political events, for the assessment of their ideological-political aspects and for

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 59.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 60.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p.62.



forming opinions on the situation of the Polish nation, on the condition of the state and on the domestic and international context. In their communicative actions they drew on specialist knowledge concerning social, economic, cultural, ethnic and religious problems, yet with the reservation that the results of their journalistic and columnist work were addressed to the readers who did not need to have indispensable high knowledge to understand the press message.

[...] The paper fairly adequately characterized the common interests of the sender and the recipient of the political communication placed in the content of the daily. It shaped the image of the surrounding social, economic and political reality. The paper also shaped the consciousness of the community of the supporters of national values, those having a sense of threat to the national identity and expressing their readiness to constantly cultivate it. "Głos Lubelski" fulfilled many functions: informative, ideological, agitation-propagandistic, integrative, and educational. The closing act of the history of the paper was the outbreak of World War Two. The last issue of the daily (no. 258, volume 26) was published on 27 October 1939, thus ending the period of its existence<sup>16</sup>.

According to T. Kot, the period of the splendor of "Głos" fell on the years 1921–1926. In his view this should be associated with the softening of censorship in Poland and the reinforcement of the position of National Democracy in the parliament. After the May Coup d'état of 1926 the situation was reversed – the National Democratic Party was relegated to the margin of state power, and their social support considerably decreased. The 'Sanacja' authorities directed repressions against the opposition press, which resulted in frequent confiscations of newspapers and sizeable financial losses to the publishers. "Głos Lubelski" also suffered from this repressive policy. To minimize the risk of confiscations, the editors adjusted the tone of published political articles, moderating commentaries on current political events. During the economic crisis, "Głos Lubelski" again had to contend with financial difficulties. The editors had to give up the subscription to news bulletins of the Polish Telegraphic Agency. This limitation caused a significant decrease in the paper's circulation, and consequently, the reduction of revenues necessary to cover financial obligations.

'Different ways were used to remedy the adverse situation, inter alia: in order to pay overdue salaries to employees the funds were used which were to be previously allotted to charity. In the next years, in order to increase the number of readers, the price of the paper was lowered and more photographs were run, etc.'<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 68.

<sup>17</sup> T. Kot, *op. cit.*, pp. 222–223.

Kot's studies show that in 1937 the daily circulation of "Głos Lubelski" varied from 900 to 1000 copies. During that period the paper was the only fully edited and published daily in Lublin<sup>18</sup>.

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The political situation in Europe and in Poland in 1938 (there is obviously no room here for its overall picture) was an essential element of the narrative of "Głos Lubelski" at that time. The editors noticed the dangers of the expansion of the Third Reich and the weakness of the European powers. They (editors) emphasized the negative effects of the policy of appeasement and the reluctance of Great Britain and France to take decisive steps/measures against Germany's political and territorial expansion. Pointing out the tensions between powers that compounded their internal problems and uncertainty about Hitler's intentions, the paper discerned the lack of a uniform strategy towards German territorial claims and the question of responding to their growing importance. "Głos" showed that at the time of the growing threat, the majority of the European powers were not ready for a military conflict. At the same time the paper suggested that Great Britain and France avoided direct confrontation, which was supposedly the result of their decreasing political, economic and military importance<sup>19</sup>.

The policy of appeasement, pursued in the hope that the satisfaction of German demands would prevent the outbreak of war, soon turned out to be ineffective, although Europe's political elite believed for a long time that concessions to Germany could lead to the reorganization of Europe and maintenance of peace on the continent. The response of the powers to the Anschluss of Austria, blatantly contravening the provisions of the Versailles Treaty, the Sudeten Crisis, and finally the Munich Conference quickly showed that the policy of appeasement turned out to be ineffective and not only did it not contribute to stabilizing the situation in Europe but also caused growing international tensions especially in Central and Eastern Europe balancing on the brink of a military conflict. This was also noticed by "Głos Lubelski". The editors, although they recognized the positive effects of the 'new order', explicitly assessing especially the question of Zaolzie (TransOlza), suggested that as a result of the decisions taken by the Munich Conference<sup>20</sup> Hitler felt strengthened and convinced

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 223.

<sup>19</sup> *Czy Francja pogodzi się z Niemcami? Do pertraktacji moment jest nieodpowiedni, bo Francja jest słaba*, "GL" 26 October 1938, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> At this point it is worth pointing out that the narrative of "Głos Lubelski" regarding the Munich Conference, although ambiguous in assessing the role of the powers in the



that the Western powers would not be a serious obstacle to his expansion. Showing the tense international situation, the editors pointed out Poland's difficulties in maintaining stable relationships with its neighbors. Difficult relations with Czechoslovakia (TransOlza), Germany (inter alia claims related to Gdansk), but also with Lithuania were the subject of interest of the paper, and, to some extent, they expressed the position of the then Polish government. Without attempting a comprehensive analysis of the issues raised in this Lublin newspaper, especially those connected with the international situation and the role of the Polish state in the situation arisen as a result of the Munich decisions, we will examine the themes that appear to be the most essential from the standpoint of formed alliances and relations with the neighbors, which had a significant impact on the fates of the Polish state in the context of the future armed confrontation with Germany.

Already before the Munich Conference, "Głos Lubelski" expressed hopes towards the decisions of the powers, suggesting positive aspects stemming from the partition of Czechoslovakia, which would offset the growing role and importance of Germany. In the context of planned talks of the powers about the future of Czechoslovakia "Głos Lubelski" – in the text *What we should get from the partition of Czechoslovakia* – expressed its territorial expectations towards Czechoslovakia, suggesting that 'the March of last year cannot be repeated and we should maximally benefit from the situation [...] if only to fully offset the growth of Germany by acquisitions on our side'<sup>21</sup>.

Although comments on the Munich decisions were favorable, yet, with time, special attention focused on threats resulting from Czechoslovakia's diplomatic action in Germany. The paper also systematically

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then decisions, largely coincided, at least on the question of respecting the rights of national minorities by the Czechoslovak government, with German arguments. Consequently, the Czechoslovak-German conflict was presented as a threat to peace in Europe, and accusations towards the Prague government of the persecution of Poles and disobeying the regulations in force concerning the policy towards minorities became part of the German narrative. As a result of this description we can see the classic mechanism of the scapegoat, which was used to interpret the situation at that time. Crisis – the German-Czechoslovak conflict, the risk of the outbreak of war – accusations: crimes against national minorities, and finally violence, and finally - an antidote to the ongoing crisis: the Munich Conference, which regulated the actual although initially partial partition of Czechoslovakia. Thus, there are here all elements of the classic mechanism of the scapegoat present in the formula proposed by the French anthropologist Rene Girard (vide: R. Girard, *Kozioł ofiarny*, Łódź 1991).

<sup>21</sup> *Gdy rozbiór jest nieunikniony... Co powinniśmy dostać z parcelacji Czech?*, "GL" 20 September 1938, p. 1.

commented on Czechoslovakia's difficult internal and international situation, including inter alia the policy based on 'bad alliances'<sup>22</sup>. While informing about the situation in Czechoslovakia, "Głos" emphasized the conciliatory policy of its authorities towards Germany<sup>23</sup>. At the same time, attention was drawn to the international policy pursued by Poland<sup>24</sup>.

The commentaries on Czechoslovakia's policy, its relations with Germany, France and Poland, expressed concern at the Czech policy and fears that 'the Czechs will return to traditions before the date of regaining of and fighting for independence and will become dependent on Germany.'<sup>25</sup> The paper also pointed out the Czech connections with Germany and suggested a possible invalidation of the Munich Conference, at the same time expressing concern that 'Czechoslovakia will become a German colony.'<sup>26</sup> The subject of interest was also Czechoslovakia's relations with France. "Głos" noticed inter alia the departure from its close cooperation with France at the expense of a rapprochement with Germany<sup>27</sup>. At the same time, the paper emphasized the 'favorable' comments of the German press on 'the aspirations of Prague's policy to normalize relations between Germany and Czechoslovakia.'<sup>28</sup> Favorable comments of the Czechoslovak press were also cited in the context of the need to change the international policy and those drawing attention to the disappointing attitude of the former allies<sup>29</sup>. On the next days the paper informed about a difficult situation in Czechoslovakia related inter alia to 'refugees' from the territory taken over by Germany<sup>30</sup>, and about the uncertain situation in the Czech army<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> See for example: *Trudności wewnętrzne Czechosłowacji*, "GL" 11 October 1938, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> *Czechy na nowych drogach. Pogodzone się tam już z protektoratem niemieckim*, "GL" 26 October 1938, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Min. Beck o polskiej polityce zagranicznej Litwa, Czechosłowacja, Ruś Zakarpacka i Gdańsk. Pokój w Europie jest możliwy tylko przy pełnym porozumieniu z Niemcami*, "GL" 31 October 1938, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Inter alia *Czechy w orbicie Niemiec*, "GL" 9 October 1938, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Umowa Monachijska przekreślona. Wojska Niemiecki zajmują wszystko co chcą*, "GL" 8 October 1938, p. 1; *Niemcy gospodarują w Czechach jak u siebie w domu*, "GL" 24 November 1938, p. 4; *W jakim stopniu uzależni się Czechosłowacja od Niemiec*, "GL" 13 December 1938, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Czechoslovakia breaks off the alliance with France and gets closer to Germany, "GL" 7 October 1938, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Czechy w orbicie Niemiec. Nic im innego zresztą nie pozostało*, "GL" 19 October 1938, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Czech w orbicie niemieckiej opinia czeska patrzy, bez złudzeń na nową sytuację*, "GL" 22 October 1938, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> *Uciekinierzy z Sudetów stanowią wielki kłopot Czech*, "GL" 23 October 1938, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Ferment wśród żołnierzy czeskich*, "GL" 23 October 1938, p. 3.

Another vital theme of the then comments and analyses in "Głos Lubelski" was the issues concerning Slovakia and Hungary. In the articles of early October 1938, the paper, pointing out 'a total incapacitation of Czechoslovakia ('Germany's enclave'), suggests that the only reasonable solution for Slovakia to do is "enter into federation with Hungary or Poland', whereas Transcarpathian Rus (Ruthenia) is 'the object of demands by Hungarians, who should indeed get it'<sup>32</sup>. On the next days the paper pointed out the risks connected with the diplomatic action of Czechoslovakia in Germany in connection with Hungarian-Czech negotiations in Komarno<sup>33</sup>. At the same "Głos" expressed fears about the affiliation of – as it put it – the lands of 'former Czechoslovakia'. Stressing that 'Bohemia and Moravia became an almost German enclave', the paper added that although this fact should not be assessed as 'good and positive', yet 'it is a fact which we will not be able to prevent'. Consequently, having Poland's interests in mind and fearing that Slovakia and Transcarpathian Rus might meet the same fate, as a result of which Germany would not only gain access to the Romanian border but would also become 'an active partner of the Ukrainian question', the paper suggested, as the only solution, 'Slovakia's break-away from Czechoslovakia, its association with Poland on federative terms, and the occupation of Transcarpathian Rus by Hungary, thus creating the Polish-Hungarian border'. It was implied that Poland would thereby gain the possibility of pursuing an active policy in Central Europe. At the same time, it was pointed out that Germany had an entirely different conception, contrary to the Polish interests, 'and its intentions go much further to the east', which causes that this may involve a change – to Poland's disadvantage – in Poland's situation than it was before the Sudeten conflict. Poland, according to the author of this analysis, 'has to summon up its strength in order to implement its point of view. Poland's whole future depends on this'<sup>34</sup>. Several days later the paper informed about Poland's support for Slovakia's aspirations to gain independence<sup>35</sup> and about Prime Minister Tiso's action towards persons 'suspected of maintaining contacts with

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<sup>32</sup> Czy Czechy zdołają zachować niepodległość? Polska powinna wziąć co swoje, by się nie dostało... Niemcom, "GL" 13 October 1938, p. 2; Ruś zakarpacka musi wrócić do Węgier, "GL" 14 October 1938, p. 3a.

<sup>33</sup> Węgry i Czechy zabiegają u Hitlera; Konferencja w Komarnie zerwana. Węgrzy apelują do czterech mocarstw, "GL" 15 October 1938, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Niemcy ujawniają prawdziwe swe zamiary, "GL" 13 October 1938, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Po wizycie posła Sidora Polska poprze Słowację w jej dążeniach do pełnej niezależności, "GL" 23 October 1938, p. 2.

the neighboring powers to the disadvantage of the Slovak state.<sup>36</sup> At the same time it informed about the aversion of some portion of inhabitants of Transcarpathian Rus – especially those of Ukrainian descent – to the solutions proposed by Poland<sup>37</sup>.

On the next days, the paper expressed approval for the uprising against the Czechs in Transcarpathian Rus, anti-Czech demonstrations in Budapest and for the appeals of Hungarians to Poland to support the implementation of their policy in the region. When informing about the Hungarian uprising in Transcarpathia (Zakarpattia)<sup>38</sup> and about the Czech threats against Hungary<sup>39</sup>, the paper announced at the same time that the talks between the Hungarians and the Czechs were broken off because 'instead of being reasonable the Czechs threaten with their >power<.'<sup>40</sup> The articles of that period emphasized historical and socio-political arguments speaking in favor of the Hungarians claims towards Czechoslovakia<sup>41</sup> and blamed the latter – by informing about the notes sent by the Hungarian government to Berlin, Warsaw, London, Rome and to Paris – for breaking off the talks in Komarna. At the same time, referring to the appeal of the chairman of the United Hungarian Party in Slovakia, the proclamation was cited in which 'the Hungarians demand a quick and just resolution of the matter, and such a solution could be only their liberation from the current Czech oppression.'<sup>42</sup> On the next days of October 1938, "Głos" informed about the territorial conditions put forward by Hungary, Poland's diplomatic action and Czechoslovakia's resistance as to the quick resolution of the conflict, but also about the development of the uprising against the Czechs in Transcarpathian Rus<sup>43</sup>, subsequent anti-Czech demonstrations in Budapest<sup>44</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Premier Tiso aresztował niepowołanych „dyplomatów”, "GL" 25 October 1938, p. 2; *Słowacy myślą o wyprowadzce ze wspólnej państwowości z Czechami*, "GL" 29 October 1938, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> „Ukraińcy” zakarpaccy stawiają na Czechosłowację i Niemcy, "GL" 27 October 1938, p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Powstanie węgierskie na Zakarpaciu, "GL" 16 October 1939, p. 1; *Powstanie na Rusi Zakarpackiej płonie. Czesi z nieprawdopodobną brutalnością prześladują miejscową ludność*, "GL" 19 October 1938, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> Czesi prowokują zajścia i doczekają się ich w końcu, "GL" 17 October 1938, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Postawa Czech uniemożliwiła rokowania, "GL" 16 October 1938 p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> M.in. Słuszne żądania Węgier, "GL" 17 October 1938, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> Rozpaczliwy apel Węgrów. Nie chcemy żyć Czechach, "GL" 18 October 1938, 286, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> Powstanie na Rusi Zakarpackiej. Czesi chcą krwi i żelazem rządzić obcymi narodowościami, "GL" 18 October 1938, 286, p. 3. *Czesi zamykają kościoły i maltretują ludność w węgierskich częściach Słowacji i na Rusi Zakarpackiej*, "GL" 20 October 1938, p. 3; *Powstanie na Rusi Zakarpackiej rozszerza się coraz bardziej*, "GL" 21 October 1938, p. 1; *Terror czeski*, *Ibidem*, p. 2; *Niesłyszany terror czeski na całym obszarze pogranicza*, *Ibidem*, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> Manifestacje w Budapeszcie pod hasłem „wszystko z powrotem”, "GL" 19 October 1938, p. 3.

as well as about the appeal of the Hungarians to Poland concerning their citizens kept prisoner by the Czechs<sup>45</sup>.

The next numbers of the paper contained articles describing the international response to the Hungarian-Czech conflict. In late October a text appeared in "Głos", which highlighted a suggestion that Czechoslovakia would not agree to a plebiscite on the contentious territories, and would decide to accept international arbitration<sup>46</sup>. On the next days the paper reported about Czechoslovakia giving up power to the Ukrainians in Transcarpathian Rus<sup>47</sup>, and in this context about the 'Ukrainians', as it was expressed, moving to Transcarpathian Rus<sup>48</sup>, about the fights of Hungarian insurgents in the contentious regions<sup>49</sup>, and about the attempts made by the Prague government to involve Romania in the arbitration committee, thereby weakening the position of Poland<sup>50</sup>. On 30 October 1938 the paper reported that the quarrelling states approached Germany and Italy for arbitration<sup>51</sup>, at the same time suggesting that it was in Rome that the decision was taken about the Hungarian-Polish border<sup>52</sup>. On the next days, referring to 'Italian political circles' and the German press,

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<sup>45</sup> *Węgry proszą Polskę o pomoc. Czesi chcą rozstrzelać ponad 300 Węgrów*, "GL" 18 October 1938, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> *Zamiast plebiscytu Praga wybiera arbitraż mocarstw Włoch, Niemcy i Polska rozstrzygną spór czesko-węgierski*, "GL" 27 October 1938, p. 3; *Pełny tekst noty czechosłowackiej Same kręctwa, jak zwykle*, "GL" 29 October 1938, p. 1; *Węgrzy nie godzą się na zwłokę Czesi boją się widocznie plebiscytu*, *Ibidem*, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> *Premier rządu Karpatoruskiego aresztowany. Czesi oddają władzę na Rusi Zakarpackiej Ukraińcom z ks. Wołoszynem na czele*, "GL" 28 October 1938, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> *Masowe wędrówki „Ukraińców”*, "GL" 28 October 1938, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> *Walki powstańców węgierskich ludność ruska opowiada się po ich stronie*, "GL" 28 October 1938, p. 1; *Bohaterski legion młodzieży węgierskiej. Krwawe walki na Zakarpaciu*, "GL" 29 October 1938, p. 1; *Praga siłą usiłuje stłumić naturalny pęd Zakarpacia ku Węgier*, "GL" 2 November 1938, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> *Czesi odwołują się do... Rumunii i chcą ją przeciwstawić Polsce w Komitecie arbitrażowym*, "GL" 28 October 1938, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> *Węgry i Czechy zwróciły się dziś o arbitraż do Niemiec i Włoch*, "GL" 30 October 1938, p. 1; *Niemcy i Włochy podjęły się arbitrażu Konferencja arbitrażowa odbędzie się w Wiedniu*, "GL" 31 October 1938, p. 1; *Dziś obradował w Wiedniu komitet arbitrażowy Do godziny 22-giej nie ogłoszono żadnego komunikatu*, "GL" 3 November 1938, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> *Wspólna granica węgiersko-polska uzgodniona już została w Rzymie?*, "GL" 30 October 1938, p. 1.

the paper informed about the alleged results of 'Roman decisions'<sup>53</sup>, and Germany's reluctance to accept Poland's border with Hungary<sup>54</sup>.

Many commentaries in "Głos" of that period – their sources were dispatches inter alia from Berlin, Prague, Budapest, and Vienna – analyzed the attitude of the European powers and states towards Poland's border with Hungary<sup>55</sup>. Noticing Italy's favorable stance on that question<sup>56</sup>, the paper stressed at the same time that with regard to the issues of Central Europe 'a deep fissure appeared. It is caused by a strong difference of opinions between Berlin and Rome about the Hungarian revindications, especially about the joint Polish-Hungarian border.' "Głos" suggested at the same time that 'Germany wants to extend its protectorate over the whole of Central Europe', which, according to the newspaper, was contrary to the stance of Italy fearing 'a unilateral growth of German power and Germany's hegemony over the Danube.'<sup>57</sup> On 16 October 1939 the paper informed about the failure of the planned 'conference of the four' to take place in Venice, which was connected with Germany's stance unwilling to accept Hungary's plans towards Czechoslovakia and the joint Polish-Hungarian border, and with France and England expecting a compromise over Transcarpathia<sup>58</sup>. However, "Głos" observed at the same time that the issue of the Hungarian-Czech conflict would not, according to the Italian press, cause tensions in Rome's relations with Berlin<sup>59</sup>. In later days there were also calls to compel Czechoslovakia to accept the Hungarian conditions concerning territorial claims<sup>60</sup>. At the same time the paper cited Germany's support for this matter<sup>61</sup>. However, the editorial

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<sup>53</sup> *Rzym a granica polsko-węgierska. Co właściwie postanowiono w Rzymie?*, "GL" 31 October 1938, p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Co Polska na to? Granicy polsko-węgierskiej nie będzie? Berlin nie chce zrezygnować z zorganizowania na Rusi centrali ruchu ukraińskiego*, "GL" 2 November 1938, p. 1; The results of arbitration were presented in the editorial commentary: *Prowizorium*, "GL" 3 November 1938, p. 3; *Komentarz polskiej agencji rządowej o wyniku arbitrażu wiedeńskiego*, "GL" 4 November 1938, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> See for example: *Zawikłany problem Rusi Zakarpackiej. Nie wszyscy mile patrzą na wspólną granicę polsko-węgierską*, "GL" 11 October 1938, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> *Konferencja Czterech w Wenecji. Mussolini poprze rewindykację węgierskie*, "GL" 16 October 1938, p. 1.

<sup>57</sup> *Tarcia między Rzymem a Berlinem w sprawie Europy Środkowej*, *ibidem*.

<sup>58</sup> *Konferencji czterech nie będzie*, *ibidem*.

<sup>59</sup> *Rzym w zgodzie z Berlinem doprowadzi do rozwiązania sprawy czesko-węgierskiej*, "GL" 20 October 1938, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> *Ultimatum Węgier pod adresem Pragi. Dość kręcenia, oddać co nie czeskie*, "GL" 23 October 1938, p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> *W Berlinie optymizm Sprawa Węgierska zbliża się do szybkiego załatwienia*, *Ibidem*, p. 2.



said inter alia: 'It would be interesting to know who devised the plebiscite in Transcarpathian Rus, which should fall to Hungary without any plebiscite, and who came up with the idea of persuading the Slovaks to enter the union with Hungary. The Slavic remains of the Czechoslovak state should find support in Poland only.'<sup>62</sup> In addition, the paper pointed out that Germany was averse to 'Czechoslovakia and former Transcarpathian Rus being bound together with some of its neighbors, and rather strove to create independent small states from these territories', suggesting at the same time that they would remain under German influence<sup>63</sup>.

At the same time, favorable opinions were cited concerning the formation of the 'Polish-Hungarian' bloc as a protection against German penetration. Attention was also drawn to Hungary's support for the joint Polish-Hungarian border, and inter alia the texts/opinions of the Hungarian press were cited: 'For Hungary the issue [...] is a matter of life and death, a guarantee of its independence. The Hungarian government and society should summon up their strength to attain this goal as soon as possible. Nevertheless, this border is in the best interest of whole Europe because it ensures political balance. If the European states had better knowledge of the history and geographical conditions of Central Europe, no objection would be voiced [...].'<sup>64</sup> The texts about the positive attitude of Hungary's public opinion on this matter also appeared in the successive days<sup>65</sup>.

A bit on the margin of the events in the region at that time, "Głos" also informs and comments on France's alliances and changes in England's policy towards Poland and the Polish-Hungarian bloc as a protection against German penetration. Criticizing the alliances entered into by France and its stance on the decisions made in Munich, the paper asked rhetorically inter alia about 'Whether common sense will finally overcome the deposits of thinking that have led France to the edge of disaster.'<sup>66</sup> Attention was drawn at that point to the role of the Polish-French alliance in the context of European policies, and first of all to the growing role of Germany<sup>67</sup>. On 12 October 1938, the commentary based on the French

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<sup>62</sup> *Czechy i Słowacja a Polska*, "GL" 7 October 38, p. 2; *Morawska Ostrawa zamiera tylko wcielenie do Polski mogłoby ją uzdrowić*, "GL" 2 November 1938, p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> *Drobne państewka pod hegemonią Niemiec. Tak ma wyglądać organizacja Europy Środkowej*, "GL" 7 October 1938, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> *Węgry chcą wspólnej granicy z Polską*, "GL" 9 October 1938, p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> *Prasa węgierska z najwyższym uznaniem wyraża się o Polsce*, "GL" 23 October 1938, p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> *Monachijska lekcja*, "GL" 9 October 1938, p. 6.

<sup>67</sup> *Nie wszyscy Francuzi mają rozum. W interesie Francji leży pozyskanie Polski, a nie judzenie*, "GL" 8 October 1938, p. 3.

press, concerning the French stance on Transcarpathian Rus being taken over by Hungary, stressed that along with negative commentaries by the 'communist or philo-Soviet press' there appeared – in "Le Figaro" or "Paris Soir" – positive opinions on the formation of the 'Polish-Hungarian bloc', which could be 'a very effective barrier against German penetration into the south-east'. At the same time, the words of the dispatch were cited about the necessity of establishing the Polish-Hungarian border, thanks to which 'Poland would be ready to enter into friendly relations with Czechoslovakia, at last realizing this Third Europe from the Baltic to the Black Sea, in which Poland would be the primary center in order to pursue a pacificatory and neutral policy away from blocs and the Axis.'<sup>68</sup> On 16 October 1938, the articles suggested, referring to the proclamation in "Le Temps", inter alia that 'in the face of the present international situation France is lonely and the alliance with Poland is essential for it. By jeopardizing this alliance with hasty judgments and polemics, the French would commit real suicide'<sup>69</sup>. There was also criticism of attempts to achieve new diplomatic settlements in the French-German relations<sup>70</sup>. Emphasis was also laid on changes in England's policy towards the Polish conceptions of the order in Central Europe<sup>71</sup>.

In 1938, the political climate in Europe was marked by growing tensions and uncertainty, and "Głos Lubelski" was a witness to those turbulent times. As a daily paper with significant influence, it not only informed its readers about the current events but also shaped public opinion through its commentaries and analyses. In that period, one of the most burning problems was the situation of Czechoslovakia, in particular the question of the Sudetenland and the growing tensions over Germany's territorial ambitions. The articles published by "Głos Lubelski" showed great interest in the future of the region, which directly influenced Poland's security and policy. The editors meticulously followed the development of the situation, emphasizing at the same time how important for Poland was the maintenance of the balance of power in Central Europe. Commentaries on Poland's territorial expectations from Czechoslovakia reflected nationwide aspirations and perception of threats resulting from

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<sup>68</sup> *Francja siedzi na ruinach swojej konstelacji europejskiej*, "GL" 9 October 38, p. 2; *We Francji zaczynają myśleć... Lepiej późno, niż nigdy*, "GL" 12 October 1938, p. 2.

<sup>69</sup> *Sojusz z Polską jest niezbędny dla utrzymania silnej pozycji Francji*, "GL" 16 October 1938, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Czy Francja pogodzi się z Niemcami? Do pertraktacji moment jest nieodpowiedni, bo Francja jest słaba*, "GL" 26 October 1938, p. 3; *Hitler chce zgody z Francją*, "GL" 2 November 1938, p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> *Anglia zaczyna rozumieć potrzebę systemu polskiego w Europie Środkowej*, "GL" 9 October 1938, p. 1.

the potential growth of German influence in the region. In particular, "Głos Lubelski" focused on analyzing Czechoslovakia's foreign policy, pointing out the changing alliances of that country and its attitude towards Germany. The critical tone regarding Czechoslovakia's conciliatory policy towards Germany was clear and the paper often presented this situation as a warning to other countries, including Poland. The articles stressed that Czechoslovakia's concern about its future could result in overdependence on Germany, which was a potential threat to the whole region.

In this context, international relations and the attitude of individual powers to the situation in Czechoslovakia were vividly commented upon. "Głos Lubelski" analyzed differences in approaches between Germany and Italy, especially with regard to the issue of Hungarian revindications. The paper clearly emphasized that Germany strove to broaden its influence in Central Europe, which was alarming for the balance of power in the region. The 1938's "Głos Lubelski" draws a picture of the complicated and dynamic political situation in the region, whose fates were closely connected with Poland's security and policy. The paper followed in detail the development of Czechoslovakia's internal policy, stressing the Czech concern at the growing influence of Germany. The article reflected fears that this country might become a peculiar 'German colony', which aroused anxiety both among its citizens and in the region. At the same time, "Głos Lubelski" analyzed the situation of national minorities, especially Hungarians, in Czechoslovakia, which was crucial to understanding the regional territorial conflicts. The paper presented those issues in the context of broader diplomatic actions of Poland and Hungary, pointing to difficulties and challenges connected with attaining an agreement.

Poland's foreign policy was the next important subject covered by "Głos Lubelski". Its publications stressed that in the face of the changing alliances and balance of power in Central Europe, it was crucial for Poland to maintain independence and secure its national interests. The paper commented on these issues, presenting Poland as an active participant in the region's policy, striving to strengthen its position and influence. Another vital aspect analyzed by "Głos Lubelski" concerned the international perception of and comments on the situation in Czechoslovakia. The daily often cited opinions of the French, German and Italian press, showing the perspectives and interpretations of events from the standpoint of National Democracy. These commentaries were meant to/could allow readers to understand how complex and multifaceted the Czech crisis was as seen by different countries and how differently it was interpreted in the international arena. In this context, "Głos Lubelski" did not confine itself to describing ongoing events but also tried to forecast future scenarios. The theme of the future of Central Europe and Poland ran through the articles with emphasis on the

necessity of an active and well-thought-out foreign policy in the face of the changing geopolitical conditions. Through their publications, the editors tried to shape public opinion, stressing the need to understand and respond properly to these dynamic changes.

The then "Głos Lubelski", watching closely the dynamic international situation, suggests that Czechoslovakia is becoming a trouble spot of the growing political and diplomatic tensions in Europe. The paper described and commented in a fairly detailed way on the developing events, pointing to different aspects and consequences of the Czech crisis both for Czechoslovakia itself and for Poland and other European countries. "Głos Lubelski" closely followed international diplomatic maneuvers, especially those that took place as part of the Munich Conference. Its articles emphasized that the decisions made during the conference, particularly those concerning the concessions to Germany on the Sudeten issue, had a profound influence on the balance of power in Europe. The paper often criticized the policy of appeasement pursued by France and Great Britain, suggesting that the concessions could lead to Hitler's further aggression. In the context of Poland, "Głos Lubelski" presented the diplomatic landscape as full of challenges and uncertainty. The editors stressed the significance of active foreign policy, whose aim was to protect Poland's national interests, particularly in the context of the growing German pressure. The paper presented Poland as a state that has to maintain vigilance and determination in the face of the changing alliances and distributions of power in Europe. The consequences of the Czech crisis were widely discussed in the "Głos Lubelski" articles. The paper pointed out how concessions to Germany could further destabilize the region. In particular, it was stressed that the concessions could be perceived as an incentive for Hitler to undertake further expansion actions, which was a threat to the whole of Europe, including Poland. The paper emphasized the need for strong and resolute foreign policy pursued both by Poland and other European states in order to prevent further conflicts and guarantee stability in the region.

"Głos Lubelski" in the second half of 1938 draws the picture of Europe on the verge of significant political and social changes, in which Czechoslovakia and its crisis became a catalyst for broader movements. These publications reflected not only the current events but also tried to predict their long-term effects on Poland and Europe. The articles in "Głos Lubelski" expressed social the anxiety and uncertainty that prevailed in Poland and in other European countries. Commentaries and analyses concerning the situation in Czechoslovakia, especially the Sudeten issue and the concessions to Germany were presented to public opinion in the context of the broad spectrum. Those texts often stressed that the concessions

could lead to further conflicts and encourage Hitler to continue his expansionary policies. "Głos Lubelski" clearly emphasized that these events would have a long-term impact on stability and security in Europe. The paper presented the Czech crisis not only as a local problem but also as an issue that had an impact on the whole continent. On the one hand, it expressed fears that concessions to Germany could lead to further aggression, while on the other hand the paper emphasized that this situation was an important lesson for Poland in the context of its foreign policy. To sum up, in October 1938 "Głos Lubelski" provided its readers not only with information about the then current events, but also with analyses and commentaries largely based on the broader vision contained in the program of National Democracy. The paper became a medium via which Lublin inhabitants could, in accordance with the perspective suggested by the Publisher, interpret international events and also find Poland's position in the changing European landscape. These articles were a testimony to the times of tensions and uncertainty and at the same time an attempt to predict the future in the face of growing threats.

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