

## THE BREAKDOWN OF THE OCCUPIERS' RULE IN KRAKÓW AND GALICIA IN 1918

At the beginning of 1918, a deep crisis emerged in Kraków and throughout Galicia due to the prolonged war. One of its manifestations was the so-called January strike, which initially regarded economic issues, but anti-government and anti-German speeches and demonstrations dominated later. It was suppressed relatively mildly by the army and police, which feared an outbreak of a revolution. Similar occurrences (especially in Kraków and the Kraków Basin) took place also in the following months (April–June). A great wave of major demonstrations was organized in Galicia (in Kraków, Lviv and many smaller towns) in February 1918, after the Brest Peace with the Ukrainian People's Republic. This treaty was widely considered anti-Polish. Its signing dashed Polish hopes for further cooperation with Austro-Hungary and resulted in a shift of political sympathies to the Entente camp.

Starting from June 1918, local rebellions broke out in Galician regiments recruited from the Poles. This led

to the collapse of discipline, marauding and mass desertions, accompanied by looting perpetrated by deserters. The military authorities were unable to react, and bringing in battalions of soldiers from other nationalities to Galicia further aggravated the conflicts, which threatened the outbreak of an internal war.

In October 1918, regiments of Galicians actively participated in the rebellions that engulfed the army, which contributed to the collapse of its military potential. The Austro-Hungarian military authorities in Kraków and other cities in Galicia lost faith in the possibility of maintaining their hold over this imperial province. Eventually, the administration broke down as a result of astute military operations by small units made up of rebel soldiers of Polish nationality.

Of greatest importance was the takeover of Kraków on October 31, 1918, because it in fact meant the end of Austrian rule in all of Galicia.