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Seeker after the Promised Land: Apolinary Hartglas, 1883-1953

MIYAZAKI Haruka

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, people have tried to restore their identity in the former Eastern Europe. History is one of the largest and richest sources of materials for the reconstruction of identity. This is why a considerable number of studies have been conducted on national history during the past twenty years. A biography of Iwan Franco, written by Jarosław Hrycak, is a recent example.

Hrycak's work explored identity from a micro-historical point of view. But at the same time, Hrycak tried to show the history of Ukraine as a history of a multi-cultural region (Galicja) through the eyes of Iwan Franko. Maybe this is why his monograph is so popular and at the same time so controversial. From the life of only one person, we can make hundreds of identity models: from a stereotypical view, to a fresh interpretation.

However, in most cases, biographies of "national heroes" are easily connected to so-called national history narratives. In the "national history" narratives, generally, identity has been recognized as something constant. On the other hand, relatively little attention has been given to the processes of creating national identity. Adam Michnik pointed out this problem in the preface of Hrycak's monograph. According to Michnik, we normally believe that Iwan Franco was an Ukrainian nationalist. However, this was only a small part of his life. Actually, Franco was active as an Ukrainian nationalist only in the second part of his life, so people could call him a socialist, a feminist, or even an atheist. Of course, it depends on the period. However, in most cases, his whole life has been described as the life of a nationalist.

We find a similar situation in Polish historiography. Especially in the nineteenth century, political activists frequently changed their ideology or membership – we know a lot about such things. Even so, when we talk about them, we tend to describe the person in question as a socialist or a nationalist or a Zionist from Poland, and so on. By simplifying a person's identity, we may overlook some important details of their life and thoughts.

This paper adopts a micro-historical approach. This biographical research tries to examine one of the processes of creating identities. The purpose of this paper is to show how national identity is unstable and changeable. Here I focus on one person, Apolinary Hartglas, who was known as

a Zionist from Poland at the beginning of the twentieth century. You will find not only his Polish identity, but also other possibilities in his life.

Hartglas was active in Poland from the end of the nineteenth century up to the Second World War (1904-39). He was known as a lawyer, as an assemblyman, and also as a Zionist in the interwar period. However, Hartglas's Zionism was different from the so-called mainstream Zionism. During the ten years before the First World War, mainstream Polish Zionists emigrated from Poland to Palestine. David Ben-Gurion, the future prime minister of Israel, was among them. This migration wave is called the "Second Aliyah." It is said that about thirty to forty thousand people emigrated during the "Second Aliyah." However, Hartglas decided to remain in Poland.

According to his Zionism, the final cause was to build a Jewish state in Palestine. On the other hand, he put a premium on life in the diaspora. At least for Hartglas, diaspora was a synonym for life in Poland. In this respect, his Zionism was no ordinary Zionism. In 1906, he published a brochure entitled *Terytorium a naród* (Territory and Nation). Here we can find the basic structure of the future vision for Poland, for his "Promised Land." By doing so, we may find examples of anti-stereotypical national identity and counter-examples to the "national history" narratives.