

Institute of National Remembrance

<https://eng.ipn.gov.pl/en/news/554,Lecture-by-Magdalena-Semczyszyn-quotElections-in-Lviv-in-1861-1914-as-a-pretext-.html>

30.03.2026, 05:00

16.12.2011

Lecture by Magdalena Semczyszyn "Elections in Lviv in 1861-1914 as a pretext for revealing the socio-political potential of the city" - Lviv, 16 December 2011

On 16 December 2011 at the Center for Urban History of East Central Europe in Lviv a seminar was held, during which Magdalena Semczyszyn (IPN's Branch in Szczecin), this year's scholarship holder of the Centre, presented her research: **"Elections in Lviv in 1861-1914 as a pretext for revealing the socio-political potential of the city"**.

As part of the project election campaigns to the Galician National Parliament, and, since 1873, to the Austrian Council of State in Lviv were treated as a pretext for the analysis of social relations prevailing in the city. Such an interdisciplinary perspective allowed for analysis of complex social relations in the era of formation of modern political movements and national categories. Apart from specifying the socio-demographic profile of voters and candidates, the project presents election campaigns as a phenomenon inscribed in urban space, shaping the attitudes of its people (not only those entitled to vote),

stimulating divisions and sometimes open conflict in society. Curial system, based on e.g. high property requirement, meant that elective representation was minuscule compared to the total number of inhabitants. However, election campaigns themselves - as wrote Jan Lam, a well-known columnist - introduced in Lviv a state of an "election fever" and for several weeks paralysed the urban everyday life.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, with the postulate of universal and equal election, campaigns adopted a more aggressive form. Politics, as the key to improving one's own destiny, started to interest wider society circles.

The presented project included the following issues:

- * Lviv as the center of formation of political camps and political ideas
- * Election rhetoric: the concept of national solidarity and the "national candidate", social engineering and election propaganda: leaflets, rallies, posters, satire, pre-election meetings, brochures, "fakelcuga", religious vetos, masses for the intention of the election conduct, paid agitators, election customs, local election symbols (references to the history of the city)
- * Forgery and election protests
- * Socio-demographic profile of the Lviv voters
- * Election ethnic conflicts: Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Jewish relations
- * The increase in political awareness of the city residents

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