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ARTICLES

A Historian of Czech-Polish Relations Zdeněk Hájek (1894–1958)

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The historian Zdeněk Hájek was interested, first and foremost, in the Polish revolutionary movement of the nineteenth century. Hájek published a number of studies relating to the period following the November Revolution of 1830 and later studied the response to the Polish January Uprising of 1863 in the Czech Lands. Hájek's studies introduced remarkable material and interesting information to the history of the National Revival in the Czech Lands and Moravia and the history of Czech-Polish relations.

Key words: *Czech Historian; Zdeněk Hájek; Czech-Polish Relations*

He was born on March 13, 1894, in Suchdol near Kutná Hora. After graduating from grammar school in Čáslav (1913) he began studying History and Geography at the Faculty of Arts at Charles University in Prague. His studies were, however, interrupted by the First World War and he had to enlist as a sergeant in the 21st Infantry Regiment of the Austro-Hungarian Army. He was captured by the Russian Army in Sieniawa, Poland on May 27, 1915, and was sent to a prison camp in Charkiv. After the fall of the Tsarist regime, he joined the Czechoslovak Legion on August 24, 1917, and was assigned to the 8th Rifle Regiment as a private. He served in the Legion until October 28, 1921, reaching the rank of lieutenant.

He was only able to continue his university studies, which he completed in May 1923, after demobilisation. After enrolment, he worked under Jaroslav Bidlo at the Institute for Slavic History, and in December 1924 defended his doctorate and was awarded the title Doctor of Philosophy (PhDr.).

He decided not to continue his promising university career, but went into secondary teaching on September 1, 1925, joining the Josef Kudela

State Grammar School in Brno, where he worked until 1941 when he was pensioned off prematurely for political reasons as a former legionnaire. In order to support his family (his wife Marie, daughter Milena and son Zdeněk), he accepted a position in 1943 as archiver and librarian at the newspaper *Lidové noviny*, where he was allowed to publish small articles.

He returned to the State Grammar School following liberation in 1945, and also taught at the State Music and Drama Conservatoire in Brno. He switched to the newly established Faculty of Education at Masaryk University on November 1, 1946. He took his higher doctorate in Polish history at the Faculty of Arts at Masaryk University on October 24, 1947, and was appointed Associate Professor in Slavic History at the Faculty of Education on July 29, 1948.

He had to devote much of his time to organisational work, in addition to teaching. He was administrative director of the Institute of History at the Faculty of Education in the years 1946–1950 and held the post of Vice-dean for Science in the years 1952–1955. After the transformation of the faculty into the University of Education in 1953, he worked as Head of the Department of History and Civics in the years 1954–1958. He also lectured at the Faculty of Social Studies at the University of Political and Social Studies after the war.

An assistantship with Jaroslav Bidlo gave Zdeněk Hájek a more profound interest in Slavic and, in particular, Polish history. A thorough knowledge of Slavic languages enabled him to achieve remarkable results in his chosen research work. He published a number of specialist works in book form and in the form of journal papers on the basis of his study of sources in the Moravian Archive in Brno and the State Archive in Lemberg. He also performed academic work as a secondary school professor in the years 1925–1941 without requesting holidays or any reduction to his workload. He undertook four trips to Lvov in the school holidays in the years 1928–1931. His thorough knowledge of sources and literature on the Polish revolutionary movement made him a recognised authority on this issue.

His first large study came out in 1930 in *Pekařův sborník* under the title *Špilberk in the Memoirs of Polish Prisoners*.¹ The author compared the memoirs of Poles imprisoned at Špilberk Castle with Moravian sources to demonstrate their veracity. Hájek wrote about the way in which the Moravian population behaved towards the Poles on their way to prison

¹ Hájek, Z. (1930). *Špilberk v memoárech polských vězňů. Pekařův sborník II*. Praha, Historický klub, pp. 332–371.

and after their release in his forty-page study *The Moravians and the Polish Prisoners at Špilberk in 1932*.² The author demonstrated that the Moravians sympathised strongly with the Polish prisoners as they themselves also longed for liberation from the shackles of Metternich's absolutism. His description of the liberation of Polish prisoners in March 1848 was also a valuable contribution to the history of the City of Brno.

Zdeněk Hájek found the large handwritten work *Pamiętnik Henryka Bogdańskiego* (*The Diary of Henryk Bogdański*), which described both the revolutionary situation in Galicia in 1830–1841 and the imprisonment of this revolutionary at Špilberk Castle, in the Ossolineum in Lemberg. Hájek translated parts of these memoirs relating to Bogdański's time at Špilberk Castle into Czech and published them in book form under the title *A Polish Revolutionary at Špilberk* (Brno, 1932).³

In 1935, Hájek published his study *Špilberk's Prisoner Jindřich Hubicki, His Imprisonment and Death at Špilberk*. In addition to these specialist studies, he also wrote a series of popular articles in the newspapers *Moravské noviny*, *Lidové noviny* and *Lidová Obroda*. He published the study *Polish Prisoners at Špilberk Castle* in the journal *Wiedza i Życie* (*Knowledge and Life*) in Poland in 1930⁴ and an overview of research into prisoners of Polish nationality at Špilberk in the journal *Trybuna Dolnosląska* (*The Lower Silesian Tribune*) in 1948.

He published a series of articles on the life of František Cyril Kampelík in *Zemědělské listy* (*Agricultural News*) in 1936 based on an investigation protocol of 1840 found in Lemberg. He also published the study *The Revolutionary Movement in Galicia* in the anthology *Jdeme Dál*.

His academic work was able to develop fully following his arrival at the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University. He continued, first and foremost, with his Polonistic studies. He examined the Polish January Uprising of 1863 and wrote a number of detailed studies about it which had a fundamental innovative importance for Czech and Polish historiography. The most important of these studies were about the time spent by the Uprising's Dictator Marian Langiewicz and his adjutant Henryka Pustowojtowna in the Czech Lands. His works *The Internment of Marian Langiewicz in Tišnov* (1952)⁵ and *The Internment of Marian Langiewicz in Josefov* (1955)⁶ are based on materials from Czech and

² Ibidem, (1932). *Moravané a polští vězni na Špilberku*. *Časopis Matice moravské*.

³ Ibidem, (1932). *Polský revolucionář na Špilberku*. Brno: Matice moravská.

⁴ Ibidem, (1930). *Polscy więźniowie w Szpilbergu*. *Wiedza i życie*.

⁵ Ibidem, (1952). *Internace Mariana Langiewicze v Tišnově*. *Časopis Matice moravské*.

⁶ Ibidem, (1955). *Internace Mariana Langiewicze v Josefově*. *Česko-polský sborník*.

Austrian archives. In these works, the author gave a vivid account of both the fate of the interned dictator and the diplomatic background to his internment, and these studies are a valuable contribution to the history of the European diplomacy of the times.

The author's studies on the time spent by Henryka Pustowojtowna in the Czech Lands are innovative in that they are based on original archive material. The given works are *The Double Stay of Henryka Pustowojtowna in Prague (1953)*,⁷ *The Journey of the Prague Falcon to Karlštejn in 1863 and Henryka Pustowojtowna (1952)*⁸ and *The Escape of Henryka Pustowojtowna from Prague in 1863 (1953)*.⁹ The results of this research were summarised in popular form in the journal *New Poland (1953)*.¹⁰

Alongside these studies, the essay *Josef Menšík – Colleague of the Polish Revolutionary Party (1955)*¹¹ also threw light on the attitude of the Czech nation to the Polish uprising. In this essay, the author explained the work of the previously unknown Czech Polonophile who helped Polish fugitives and emissaries escape to Dresden. This was followed by Hájek's extensive work *The Trial of Engineer Jan Gerink and His Partners and Silesian Assistance to the Polish January Uprising (1956)*.¹² He described secret supplies of weapons and gunpowder made with the help of Czech railway workers. He described the investigation of Dr. Otto, a young Czech lawyer in Vienna, on the basis of investigation protocols found in Lemberg (1948). In the years 1954–1955, he described the reasons for the imprisonment of Poles at Špilberk Castle.

Illness in the second half of the 1950s prevented Professor Hájek from continuing his systematic academic work. This distinguished academic from Brno died in January 1958 at the age of sixty-four. A commemorative plaque to this legionnaire and historian was unveiled in December 2013 at the house in Minská Street where he spent forty years of his productive life. He considered his academic work, to which he devoted all of his time, to be his mission in life.

⁷ Ibidem, (1953). Dwókratny pobyt Henryky Pustowojtowny w Pradze. *Sobótka*.

⁸ Ibidem, (1952). Výlet pražského Sokola na Karlštejn roku 1863 a Henryka Pustowojtowna. *Časopis Společnosti starožitností českých*.

⁹ Ibidem, (1953). K útěku Henryky Pustowojtownové z Prahy v roce 1863. *Slezský sborník*.

¹⁰ Ibidem, (1953). Henryka Pustowojtowna. *Nové Polsko*.

¹¹ Ibidem, (1955). Josef Menšík – spolupracovník polské revoluční strany. *Sborník slovan-ských studií*.

¹² Ibidem, (1956). Proces ing. Jana Gerinka. *Slezský sborník*.

The Educational Role of the Journals of Social and Educational Associations in the Second Republic of Poland as Exemplified by “Citizen Work” of the Women’s Citizen Work Association

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The organisational press, as exemplified by “Praca Obywatelska”, published by ZPOK, served a vital role from the point of view of the reborn state, its administration, and local government, as well as the expectations of broader social circles (particularly women) and political parties; it fulfilled the awakened demand and expectations of engaged women citizens in the areas of information on the political, social, economic, and cultural life of the country, its regions, and local communities.

The press of women’s organisations defended the interests of women and facilitated the forming of their political, social, and economic beliefs. It was a tool of propaganda and political agitation in various local and central events; it popularised the ideologies and programmes of political parties and expressed the convictions of particular sections of public opinion, while bringing together clearly defined political and creative circles. This press also served to develop various social initiatives and fulfil the cultural needs of intellectuals, and it participated actively in the popularisation of interest in the country, regions, and local communities.

Key words: Women’s Citizen Work Association, journals of social and educational organisations, “Praca Obywatelska”, Second Republic of Poland (1918–1939).

The Women’s Citizen Work Association (Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet, hereinafter: ZPOK) was one of the most influential women’s organisations in the Sanation movement in interwar Poland. At the peak of its development the association had over 31 thousand members. It was established on March 25, 1928 and continued without interruption until the outbreak of World War II.

The association took a clear social and political stance. Its political agenda was expressed in the pursuit to increase the political awareness and independence of women in the spirit of the Sanation movement. The idea of “sanation” (i.e. healing) of political life was particularly important for the activists of the Association as it was related to the image of a woman that was developed at the beginning of the Second Republic of Poland – the image of an active woman, a healer of the relationships in public life, which was meant to contribute to the forming of a state founded on “a truly democratic system, calling all the citizens, equal in their rights without exceptions, to work creatively toward its good”.¹ In this address the activists of the Association saw the chance for women to achieve legitimate citizenship consisting in full participation in public life, on which they had had no influence previously.

For this reason the main aim in the work of ZPOK was to encourage women to be active and to educate them as citizens, to create a “new type of Polish woman citizen” who was aware of her rights and duties as a citizen, interested in the affairs of the state, independent, and who felt responsible for the state and participated in the work to “raise the ethical, cultural, economic, and social levels”.²

Thus the Association undertook the task of realising a new model of the education of female citizens, which was compatible with the main aims of the state. Hanna Pohoska,³ who developed the assumptions and the ideological stance of the citizen education for ZPOK, wrote that: “it is to be our ideal to create a citizen aware of their duties to the state, able to fulfil them and possessed of an inherent need to fulfil their duties”.⁴

An important element of the promoted image of a “new woman citizen” was the obligation to be politically active. This was understood as the

¹ Moraczewska, Z. (1928). Nasz program. In *Praca Obywatelska*, Issue 1, p. 4.

² Z Kongresu Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet (1938). In *Kobiety w Pracy*, Issue 9; *Statut Związku Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet* (1931). Warszawa.

³ Leader of ZPOK, its president throughout 1936–1938. Between 1931 and 1933 she was the chair of the Commission of Citizen Education in the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, which was responsible for the reform of the school curriculum.

⁴ Pohoska, H. (1932). Wychowanie obywatelskie. In *Almanach. Kalendarz ZPOK. Rok 1932*. Warszawa, pp. 20–22. According to Pohoska “the realm of citizen educational ought to be the family, the school, and all the organisations in the state of Poland who focus in their work on the idea of the good of society and the state”. That is why she assigned proper aims and methods of citizen education to each of the mentioned environments. The highest emphasis was placed upon the tasks and the methods of citizen education in social and political organisations.

necessity to know about the current political situation and to participate in elections. The leaders of the Association would frequently emphasise that participation in elections was one of the crucial citizen duties that women ought to fulfil.⁵ However, what was stressed first and foremost was the social activity of women in the women's citizenship model realised by the Association. One of the leaders of the Association, Leokadia Śliwińska, underlined that social work, which encouraged the members of ZPOK to be active "in the interest of the common good of the society and the state", was to constitute a vital element of the process of citizen education as a way of shaping the moral stance of the members and forming their sense of self-worth.⁶

In the image of an active woman citizen created by ZPOK, high importance was attached to "woman's nature" and women's competences arising from their traditional social roles as mothers and wives which provided women's citizenship with a special value in the life of the nation and the state.⁷

Thus, tasks connected with educating society were among the duties of modern, active women citizens. Women citizens were to take care "that Polish society be raised to a high level, that ethics in the broadest of their understanding, unconditional integrity in public and private life, a deep sense of honour, civil courage, honesty in the selection of methods and righteousness in action be a habit of the contemporary generations and all the citizens of Poland".⁸ They were also supposed to make certain that they "bring forth the values of order, harmony, and selflessness in politics, the ability of creative effort, and a healthy social instinct".⁹

The domination of social activity in the work of the members of ZPOK was a necessity and the result of their leaders' perception of a connection between the low interest that the general population of women had in public affairs and their life situation: poverty, too many domestic and family duties, the lack of leisure time and proper education.¹⁰ That is why the care for the development of the education of women, raising their professional qualifications, combating discrimination on the labour market and the establishment of care institutions were to be an

⁵ Dufurat, J. (2013). *W służbie obozu marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego. ZPOK (1928–1939)*, Kraków–Wrocław, p. 172.

⁶ Śliwińska, L. (1933). Obowiązki członkiń ZPOK. In *Praca Obywatelska*, Issue 24, p. 4.

⁷ Ibidem, pp.172–173.

⁸ Moraczewska, Z. (1932). *Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet*. Warszawa, p. 11.

⁹ *Odezwa*. In *Prosta Droga* 1930, Issue 36, p. 1.

¹⁰ Dufurat, J. (2013). op. cit., p. 173.

indispensable element of the process of the development of women's citizenship.¹¹

The views of the leaders were reflected in the structure as well as the programme of the Association, which combined activities for the good of the society and the state with everyday efforts to strengthen the social and economic position of women.

In practice ZPOK was a social organisation with the mission of "pulling up" typically uneducated women through encouraging them to become engaged in public affairs (mainly through social and educational work, which in practice dominated over political efforts). One of the main forms of the activity of the Association was therefore the organisation of public readings and lectures on matters of society and the state, establishing educational centres and dayrooms, as well as conducting courses¹² and publishing journals in which the model of an active woman citizen that was accepted and promoted by the Association was propagated along with the model of education necessary to achieve it.

The Association achieved its aims through eight specialised Departments/Referee Committees.¹³ The highest importance from the perspective of the aims of the Association – that is, the realisation (education towards) the new ideal (model) of a woman citizen and forming correct citizen attitudes according to the ideology of the Association – lay with the Department/Referee Committee of Citizen Education, and in the realm of propaganda and education – the Press Department/Referee Committee which, as Zofia Moraczewska wrote in 1932 – "stood out in educational and ideological work, in the spreading

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Chojnowski, A. (1996). Moralność i polityka. Kobiecte lobby w Bezpartyjnym Bloku współpracy z Rządem. In *Kobieta i świat polityki w niepodległej Polsce 1918–1939*. Ed. A. Szwarz, A. Żarnowska. Warszawa, p. 167. Specialist and legal counselling centres were established for girls and women seeking employment or with problems in private and family life. Care and help centres were set up as well.

¹³ To realise its ideas the Association was properly structured: the basic territorial and organisational unit was the urban and rural Branches which were combined into Poviats Associations at the poviats level. Poviats Associations made up the Voivodeship Associations and the level of the voivodeship. These were in direct communication with the Main Board in Warsaw where the work was divided between the particular departments: Citizen Education, Women's Affairs, Care for the Mother and the Child, Economic Production, Rural Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Press, Financial. The equivalent of the Departments with the Main Board was the Referee Committees organised with the Boards of the Voivodeship Associations. According to the data of the Main Board in 1930 ZPOK had approximately 31 thousand Members in 360 Branches and in 1933 – 37,703 Members in 827 Branches.

of our ideas". Hanna Żóttowska, in turn, in 1936 wrote: "the Press Referee Committees ought to develop the propaganda of our journals, to have the ambition that all the members in their reach do read them, and to understand that the regular reading of our journals forms the members in a proper way", she claimed that the press has an enormous educational influence.¹⁴

In 1932 Press Referee Committees functioned in 150 Branches in the whole of Poland, and in 1938 there were 251 of them. In the Referee Committees the work was organised and led by press clerks who, as part of their job, apart from preparing and publishing press materials were to:

- develop and form aware and intelligent readers through reading the association journals on every occasion and conducting discussions about the articles;
- be excellent organisers of the distribution of "Praca Obywatelska" (Citizen Work) and "Prosta Droga" (A Straight Path) and the publications of the Association;
- be passionate in acquiring new subscribers;
- send the subscription fees to the Main Board in Warsaw regularly and meticulously;
- write reports on the work and independent articles to both the Association journals;
- publish articles on the work of the Association in the local press;
- send the press clerks on conferences and press staff training courses organised by the Association.¹⁵

The basic task of a Press Department/Referee Committee was publishing, through which the basic aims of the Association were realised, according to par. 4 point e of the statute of ZPOK in which it was written that the aims set by the organisation were all to be met by the publication of journals.

The Press Department published two journals: "Praca Obywatelska" (which was the main organ of the Association) and "Prosta Droga" (a weekly popular with the general population of women – "for a less developed reader" – in which articles were published on politics and social affairs, education, culture, ethics, history, literature, problems of women and households, as well as novels in parts)¹⁶ as well as the

¹⁴ Żóttowska, H. (1936). Wychowanie obywatelskie a prasa ZPOK. In *Praca Obywatelska*, Issue 8, pp. 9–10.

¹⁵ Ceysingerówna, H. (1936). Problem prasy w ZPOK. In *Praca Obywatelska*, Issue 8, pp. 8–9.

¹⁶ The weekly had two supplements: *Życie wsi*, and *Nasza świetlica*.

Instructor's Library of the Association, as part of which until 1938 eighteen volumes/titles were printed. The subject matter of the titles published as part of the Library was diverse and encompassed problems of social, cultural, and educational work¹⁷. Brochures were printed as well as detailed instructions on various forms of work (e.g. "Instructions on establishing kindergartens", "Instructions on establishing day nurseries", "Postcard with the logo of the Association").

The work in the Press Departments/Referee Committees consisted in writing articles to the local press, distributing journals and other publications of the Association, writing reports and correspondence between the Branches of the Association and with organisations and institutions that the Association cooperated with (apart from publishing two journals of their own the activists of the Association would also publish their own articles on the work of the Branches which provided the opportunity to have a broader impact, not only on the members of the Association or readers sympathising with it, but also on local communities).¹⁸

To increase the quality of the journalist staff in the Department/Referee Committees the Main Board of ZPOK organised specialist courses and training meetings "that were to theoretically and practically train these young writing forces for the benefit of the Association".¹⁹

¹⁷ As part of the Instructor's Library of ZPOK the following works were published: (1) Hanna Pohoska *Wychowanie państwowo-obywatelskie*; (2) Zofia Moraczewska *Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet*; (3) *Almanach spraw kobiecych* edited by Hermina Naglerowa, Helena Ceysingerówna, Maria Rychterówna, Maria Kuźmińska; (4) Helena Witkiewicz Mokrzycka *Dziecka a służba społeczna*; (5) *Praca świetlicowa* by multiple authors; (6) Anna Szelągowska *Międzynarodowe organizacje kobiece*; (7) Maria Jaworska *Kultura życia zbiorowego*; (8) Helena Krahelska *Praca młodocianych a opieka społeczna*; (9) Maria Dąbrowska *Codzienna praca*; (10) Nela Samotyhowa *Potrzeba kultury i piękna w dzisiejszym życiu Polski*; (11) Janina Strzelecka *Cele i zadania wychowawcze teatru dla dzieci i młodzieży*; (12) Marian Gromski *Stacja Opieki nad matką i dzieckiem*; (13) Helena Ceysingerówna *Jak Monika hodowała jedwabniki*; (14) Michalina Mościcka by multiple authors; (15) Zofia Ostromecka *Rozmowy Jagny z Marysieńką*; (16) Sabina Marcinkowska *Książka pracy świetlicy*; (17) Janina Miedzińska *Przymusowy rok bezczynności młodzieży*; (18) Teodora Męczkowska *Z dziejów szkolnictwa żeńskiego w Warszawie*.

¹⁸ Siemieńska, H. (1938). *Wydział Spraw Kobiecych*. In *Praca Obywatelska*, nr 5–6, p. 35. Articles were published in the journals of other organisations such as – Soldier's Family and the Association of Women Government Administration Employees and in specialist journals in Warsaw, such as: *Opieka Społeczna*, *Warszawskie Czasopismo Lekarskie*, *Zdrowie*, *Przegląd Policyjny*.

¹⁹ Moraczewska, Z. (1933). *Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet*, Ed. II, Warszawa, p. 64.

The necessity of their own press organ, a tool/means which could be used to carry out their aims and tasks, seemed obvious to the leaders of the association. Hermina Naglerowa justified the need to publish the organisation's own journal as follows: "The Organisational press is indispensable. It explains the aim and the necessity of organisational tasks, summarises the results of the current work, explains events that take place in the country and abroad, defends women's rights and fights for the realisation of those rights, provides supplementary materials in citizen and political education, and makes one acquainted with the problems of writing and artistic culture. And furthermore, it attempts to (...) not only be a reflection of the life of the organisation, but to anticipate and initiate the future tasks".²⁰

The role that the organisational press played in the dissemination of ideas, and its popularity among women, came as a great surprise even to the leaders of the Association. In 1933 Moraczewska wrote: "a great role in the life of our Association, a role that we had not in any way anticipated, is that of our press. She who wants to know about the Association, its lively present, aims and ways, struggles and difficulties, reaches first for both the journals: "Praca Obywatelska" and "Prosta Droga", and when she finds what she was looking for... she joins the Association!".²¹

The publishing of their own journal soon appeared to be a necessity for the developing young organisation. "Praca Obywatelska" was to be, on the one hand, "a faithful reflection of all that is happening within the Association, and on the other, cement holding together all the parts of the organisation in a single entity",²² a type of a printed newsletter. And that was the form which the journal assumed in the first period of publication. However, with time the programme and propaganda articles came to the foreground; these paved the way for the Association in its political and social work, and the frames of a simple newsletter became too small, and the original form of the monthly became inappropriate due to the "impatient life pulsing within the Association".²³

The necessity to propagate and popularise the ideas of the Association among the general population of women resulted in the

²⁰ Naglerowa, H. (1938). Dziesięć lat prasy ZPOK. In *Praca Obywatelska*, Issue 5–6, pp. 64–65.

²¹ Moraczewska, Z. (1933). *Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet*, Ed. II, Warszawa, pp. 62–63.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 63.

²³ *Ibidem*.

establishment of "Prosta Droga" which "easily made its way to the minds of even very little intellectual and ideal preparation, giving great service to the Association"²⁴. The articles published in this journal were frequently read in even the remotest villages and towns, in so-called "work circles" and they constituted a subject for discussion in the meetings in numerous branches.

The popularity that the organisational press enjoyed among female readers in the initial stages of their publication emboldened the leaders of the Association to undertake efforts to initiate and publish their own journal. The Head of the Press Department and simultaneously the chief editor of the journal "Prosta Droga" Helena Ceysingerówna wrote: "having developed female pens on one side, and aware and willing readers on the other – we are going to consider publishing a journal that could fulfil our dearest common wishes. We want to create an everyday women's press which:

- is independent, unrestrained, self-sufficient, expressing the convictions, desires, and aims of a thinking modern woman;
- reflects all the directions of the work of the contemporary woman citizen;
- defines new worlds of thought and action;
- paves the way for a brave, independent, creative initiative in all areas;
- shapes the new type of a woman reborn;
- shapes the general population of female readers and writers".²⁵

Unfortunately this brave plan/idea was never realised. The enthusiasm of the leaders of the Association as to the increase of the number of their readers was too high. The sales figures and the number of subscriptions fell substantially in the times of the economic crisis; in the second half of the 1930s the Association was unable to raise the print run.

"Praca Obywatelska" was first published in 1928. The first issue is dated November 10, 1928, the second – December 28, 1928. The journal was not published regularly, first as a monthly (until December 1929), and from 1930 as a biweekly. The final issue was published on August 15, 1939. Altogether 239 issues were printed. The first editor-in-chief was Maria Rychterówna and from the issue 5/1935 the periodical was edited by Dr. Hermina Naglerowa. Two years later (from the issue 4/1939) Zofia Popławska was made the editor-in-chief, and from the issue 4/1939 it was Maria Matuszewska.

²⁴ Ibidem.

²⁵ Moraczewska, Z. (1933). *Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet*, Ed. II, Warszawa, pp. 64–65.

"Praca Obywatelska", just like many other organisational journals, was to serve, according to the programme, "the role of disseminating opinions and information, allowing everyone to clearly understand all the affairs" (...), it was to "spread the ideology of the organisation, attracting followers";²⁶ it was to be an expression of the ideology of the organisation, a connection and an informer.²⁷ That is how it fulfilled an educational role. "The educational aim would lie in the development in the broad masses of women of moral and intellectual values, while at the same time forming a conscious and active citizen stance. Among the moral values it was mainly about awakening altruism, selflessness, a sense of honour and dignity in team work";²⁸ the intention was also to teach women to persevere in their work towards the chosen goals.

Through its journal the Association intended to realise "political and citizen education, that is, to deepen and broaden the knowledge of citizens, to shape civil and social attitudes, to lead activities in the realm of the legal and moral duties of the citizen".²⁹

Unlike "Prosta Droga" the journal did not immediately become popular among the ZPOK members. Throughout the first years of its publication the importance of the organisational press of this kind for initiating, cementing, and leading the activities of the Association was not noticed. Particularly in the times of the economic crisis, when the Association would mostly focus on charity in their work, when emphasis was placed on providing direct help, the importance of the organisational press in the shaping of attitudes compatible with the ideology expressed and propagated by the Association went unnoticed – "charity work would completely dominate over ideological, economic, educational, and cultural efforts".³⁰ The sales dropped noticeably. This led to enormous financial difficulties for the editorial board. The members of ZPOK cancelled their subscriptions (the sales of the journal prevalently relied on member subscriptions). The Branches' payments were overdue. Debt grew. In an attempt to offset the situation it was made obligatory for Branches to subscribe to at least 2 copies of "Praca Obywatelska" and 3 copies of "Prosta Droga".³¹ The situation was turned round after 1936. The sales increased and all the debts were paid.

²⁶ Naglerowa, H. (1938). Dziesięć lat prasy ZPOK. In *Praca Obywatelska*, Issue 5–6, pp. 61–65.

²⁷ Ibidem.

²⁸ Jaroszewiczowa, H. (1938). 1928–1938 r. In *Praca Obywatelska*, Issue 5–6, p. 6.

²⁹ Wolska, L. (1938). ZPOK jako organizacja polityczna. In *Praca Obywatelska*, Issue 5–6, p. 8.

³⁰ Ceysingerówna, H. (1936). Problem prasy w ZPOK. In *Praca Obywatelska*, Issue 8, p. 8.

³¹ Ibidem.

The journal was established and run in the Press Department of the Main Board of ZPOK; its initiators as well as the first members of the Department were: Helena Ceysingerówna (head of the Department, sole editor of "Prosta Droga"), Maria Rychterówna (deputy to head of Department, the first editor of "Praca Obywatelska"), Maria d'Andree (secretary), Natalia Greniewska (treasurer), and members of the Department: Sylwina Bogucka, Łucja Kipowa, Jadwiga Krawczyńska, Anna Minkowska, Hermina Naglerowa, and Janina Strzelecka. The journal was addressed to those members of the organisation of higher intellectual development and political and citizen awareness ("Prosta Droga" – first as a monthly, then as a weekly – was addressed to "the broadest masses of women – the villages, the towns, the cities – to popularise the ideology of ZPOK").³² The Department developed guidelines for the journals – they aimed to: (1) be concerned with all the branches of the work of the organisation, (2) publish articles presenting the times of the national struggle for independence with the particular issues dedicated to the corresponding anniversaries and national holidays, (3) foster close relations with the field.³³ "Praca Obywatelska" was to "serve as a connection between women, keeping up their spirits, educating and informing, and inspiring the broad masses of women to unite".³⁴

In the journal the problems of the state were addressed, and current social, political, economic, and cultural affairs were discussed "factually and meticulously". Articles on political and social subjects, announcements, and all the instructions pertaining to the functioning of the Association were printed. The aim and the necessity of organisational tasks were explained, the results of completed work were presented, and the events taking place in Poland and abroad were interpreted. The organisational press defended women's rights and fought for the upholding of those rights, provided supplementary material for political and civil education, presented the problems of readership and artistic culture, and initiated organisational activity. Throughout the time of the functioning of the journal efforts were made to stick to the ideological line, regardless of the circumstances. A modern graphic layout was designed, and the published materials were illustrated with graphics, photographs, and drawings. The texts were written in clear, simple language.

³² Ibidem.

³³ Naglerowa, H. (1938). Dziesięć lat prasy ZPOK. In *Praca Obywatelska*, Issue 5–6, p. 64.

³⁴ Matuszewska, M. (1938). Dzisiaj i jutro naszej organizacji. In *Praca Obywatelska*, Issue 5–6, pp. 11–12.

The journal was divided into different columns and specialist sections in which the proper subject matter was discussed. The biggest section was the one pertaining to ideology, politics, history and memories, and the columns discussing the affairs of the Association. In these columns articles were published explaining, broadening, and inspiring reflection on ideological subjects; the internal affairs of the country were discussed, the difficulties that the state had to face; comments were printed on the most important moments of the life of the state and the society; journalists presented reports on the work of the Branches and the centres of the Association; and internal problems of the organisation were discussed. The section of women's affairs was of equal importance from the point of view of the journal. What was discussed there were all the problems pertaining to the lives of women, in particular issues connected with the employment of women, their wages, reductions, emancipation, their role in social and economic life, and in the family. Biographies of outstanding female activists were also published.

An important and greatly developed section was that of education and readership, where problems pertaining to the life of schools, their aims and tasks, the educational work of the organisation and upbringing in the family were discussed; the problem of readership was also tackled – advice was provided on what to read, and lists of valuable books were provided. The cultural section was of crucial educational importance. Polish culture and art were promoted in it, with particular emphasis placed on the works and the achievements of women; the readers were introduced to the world of music, poetry, visual arts, which was to elevate them.

In the economic section, in turn, economic achievements of the country were presented and a rational model of economic activity in Polish society and families was promoted. A series of articles was published in the journal discussing the current international political, economic, and social situation (with a focus placed on the problems of women in these areas).³⁵ What was printed were also (starting in 1936) the selected thoughts, quotes, discussions, and guidelines of a political and educational character made by Marshal Józef Piłsudski;³⁶ novels of instructive value were printed in parts.

The organisational press, as exemplified by “Praca Obywatelska” published by ZPOK served a vital role from the point of view of the reborn

³⁵ E.g. Emilia Brunerowa (1935). *Sprawa kobieca we Francji* (Issue 15, pp. 11–13).

³⁶ E.g. Zofia Poptawska (1936). *Wychowawca młodzieży. O wpływie Marszałka* (Issue 9, pp. 8–9); *Marszałek Piłsudski o wychowaniu fizycznym* (1935). (Issue 10, pp. 4–6).

state, its administration, and local government, as well as the expectations of broad social circles (particularly women) and political parties; it fulfilled the awakened demand and expectations of engaged women citizens in the areas of information on the political, social, economic, and cultural life of the country, its regions, and local communities.

The press of women's organisations defended the interests of women, and facilitated the forming of their political, social, and economic beliefs; it was a tool of propaganda and political agitation in different local and central activities; it popularised the ideologies and programmes of political parties and expressed the convictions of particular sections of public opinion, while bringing together clearly defined political and creative circles. It also served to develop various social initiatives and fulfil the cultural needs of the intellectuals, and it participated actively in the popularisation of interest in the country, regions, and local communities.

In "Praca Obywatelska" a number of political, social, economic, and cultural events were initiated; people were called to participate in activities and events. The journal was educational, formed state and national identity, and influenced the attitudes and activity of women in interwar Poland.

The Essence of State Social Policy in Czechoslovakia in the Years of the First Republic (1918–1938)

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This study gives an account of the basic principles of social policy in interwar Czechoslovakia and introduces the leading Czech theorists in this area of domestic politics. Of the extensive activities in the area of social politics, particular attention is paid to those based on co-operation between state welfare and voluntary care for citizens who found themselves in critical social situations resulting from lost employment, illness or old age. The democratic climate of the young state created a dignified environment comparable with standards seen in Europe as a whole.

Key words: social policy; working hours; unemployment; social security; leave; Ghent system; economic crisis

The ambiguity of the term *social policy* makes it considerably difficult to determine its essence and definition. Its understanding in theory and practice is characterised by a certain arbitrariness, and this was also the case in determining the content of the social policy of the new Czechoslovak state, in which a conflict arose between the “broader” and “narrower” interpretations of the term. Advocates of the narrower interpretation of social policy saw its basis lying, first and foremost, in the resolution of the issue of labour or in an endeavour to improve the most oppressive social conditions facing labourers, i.e. they understood the social question as “a set of measures aimed at protecting the kind of social and economic groups that are, as a result of their unfavourable economic situation, particularly strongly exposed to harm, disadvantage and poverty”.¹ The state should strive to ensure that legal and

¹ Šmýd, B. (1966). *Sociální služby*. Praha, Tiskové a propagační oddělení Státního úřadu sociálního zabezpečení, p. 16.

administrative measures are applied to combat the shortcomings in the division of material goods which had only been accentuated still further during World War One. In contrast, advocates of a broader interpretation of the social issue proposed that, in addition to measures aimed at redistributing the national income in favour of disadvantaged persons, social policy should also include other undertakings such as resolving the fundamental problems of employment relationships, environmental issues, housing, and so on. This developed into an endeavour to formulate social policy as a political orientation and, not infrequently, as a “path to an ideal society”. Advocates of both interpretations can be found in the Czech context after 1918, with the two orientations merging together in terms of practical implementation.²

After the war, the area of social policy as a whole went through a complex period of searching for methods and means to counter the revolutionary mood among a section of the working classes, while trying to weaken the causes of the existing social tension in society at the same time. The Ministry of Social Welfare, as a continuation of the similar Austrian ministry established in October 1917 (Act 499/1917) and led largely by the social democratic party, had to resolve many matters that had been neglected during the preceding monarchic period.³ These were extremely complicated in the first months of the new state, characterised by a general economic upheaval caused by the transition from war industry to peacetime production, the continuing collapse in supplies, growing prices and a growing cost of living, the demobilisation crisis, high unemployment, the poverty of war invalids, the decline of social security of all kinds, a housing shortage and a general moral decline throughout society.

A number of Czech theorists and economists considered the theory of social politics. The first we should mention from the period before 1918 is Albin Bráf (1851–1912), Dean of the Faculty of Law at Charles-Ferdinand University and the first Czech economist at this university, of whom Karel Engliš, another leading economic theorist and Minister of Finance in the

² Deyl, Z. (1972). K buržoaznímu pojetí sociální politiky v letech 1918–1938. In *Sborník k dějinám 19. a 20. století*. Vol. 1. Praha, pp. 49–50.

³ Deyl, Z. (1990). Z novějšího výzkumu státní činnosti v sociální oblasti 1918–1924. In *Politický systém a státní politika v prvních letech existence Československé republiky*. Praha, Historický ústav ČSAV, pp. 122–137. The First Minister in Kramář's government and subsequently in the two governments of Vlastimil Tusar (1918–1920) was the social democrat Lev Winter. He was followed in the cabinet of Jan Černý by Josef Gruber (1920–1921), followed in the government of Beneš and the first government of Antonín Švehla by Gustav Habrman (1921–1925) and then again by Lev Winter (1925–1926).

First Republic, declared that, “he was long the only Czech economist, and remained the eminent Czech economist till the day he died”. According to Bráf, the aim of social policy should be to pursue the successful development of society and protect it against social upheaval.⁴ The interpretation of social policy advocated by Bráf’s pupils Josef Gruber (1865–1925) and Cyril Horáček (1862–1943) remained faithful to this pragmatic focus. During the First Republic, the issue of social policy was studied by two authors in particular – the aforementioned Engliš and Josef Macek.

Karel Engliš (1880–1961), the greatest Czech economist of the First Republic, considered social policy a practical endeavour whose most effective means are state power and law directed towards the ideal social structure.⁵ He saw the essence of economic activity as lying in care for the preservation and improvement of life. He considered an ideal society one that “preserving and economically multiplying its energy, meets its task of improving and heightening as rapidly as possible, though on a continual basis, the lives of, if possible, all its members leading towards the ideal of a healthy, educated and moral man”. He saw the core of social policy in the modification of the existing social order which would contribute towards the cultivation of the paragon of man. He emphasised, meanwhile, that “the driving force of social policy is not charity, but justice and social purpose”. Engliš saw the means for achieving the final goals as lying in the endeavour to “divide the fruits of our material and spiritual culture among the various layers of society as a whole as justly, and therefore as equally, as possible, as demanded and allowed by the permanency of social progress on one hand and the ideal construction of the social body on the other”. In its narrower sense, social policy should act to balance the inequalities in society and focus on the weak, the

⁴ Bráf’s works were published in five volumes by Gruber, J. – Horáček, J. (1913–1924). *Spisy, I–V*. Praha.

⁵ After studying law in Munich and Prague, Karel Engliš became a professor at the Czech Technical College in Brno. Following the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic, he played a part in the foundation of Masaryk University in Brno. Along with A. Jirásek, he submitted a motion for its establishment to the Provisional National Assembly on November 15, 1918. Masaryk University was established by Act 50 on January 28, 1919, and Engliš became head of the new university as its first rector (1919–1920). He also wore the rector’s chain of office at Charles University in Prague in the years 1947–1948. His important works include *Základy hospodářského myšlení* (1922). Brno, Barvič & Novotný; *Finanční věda: nástin teorie hospodářství veřejných svazků* (1929). Praha, Fr. Borový; *Ekonomie a filozofie* (1931). Praha, Fr. Borový; *Soustava národního hospodářství* (1938). Praha, Melantrich.

oppressed and the less wealthy layers of society. Although he recognised the necessity for social reforms directed towards alleviating social tension, Engliš's teaching was dominated by an ethical and political ideal.⁶

Engliš was an opponent of the deflationary monetary policy advocated by another leading Czech economist and financier Alois Rašín (1867–1923), for whom the key problem in determining social policy was the relationship between the state and society. The question of the extent of state ownership and private ownership determined, according to him, the level of state intervention in the economic life of the state. Josef Macek (1887–1972), another highly regarded theorist and an advocate of co-operative socialism and economic democracy, criticised the financial policy of the First Republic and advocated a “Czechoslovak” form of Keynesian economic theory.⁷ He defined social policy as an attempt to change the social order by social means. Macek viewed social policy not as a policy area, but as an orientation, a technique or a point of view which should penetrate into all policy, defining it as an effort to satisfy the practical interests of people in society. He emphasised the mission of social policy common to all mankind and the social purpose of this activity. Macek had in common with Engliš an evolutionary interpretation of social change and the gradual attainment of a “social ideal”. He saw the proper orientation of social policy not in changes to the division of the prior proceeds of labour, but largely in changes to production itself: “Production must be multiplied, improved and entirely changed in both technical and moral terms (respect for work, an enjoyment of work, the elimination of trends, etc.). Only then will there be any point in changing the division of the profits of labour”. According to him, social policy should not “socialise poverty, but on the contrary only wealth.”⁸

⁶ Engliš, K. (1921). *Sociální politika*. Praha, F. Topič, pp. 14–20.

⁷ The English economist John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946), considered one of the most important economists of the twentieth century, was a leading advocate of an economy regulated by the state. His theory of monopolist capitalism swept away arguments about the damaging effects of social reforms restricting the freedom of economic forces. At a time of unemployment, he advocated an economic solution in the form of the “visible hand of the state”. He put forward the theory that if pensions (income) fall, then savings fall as well. Saving would ultimately turn against the very people saving.

⁸ Josef Macek, the social democrat founder of Czech economic sociology, whose research focus was social problems such as the causes of poverty, inequality in the division of wealth, the failure of politicians and monopolies, and other specific issues. Idem. (1925). *Základy sociální politiky*. I, *Úkoly a zásady*. Praha. Idem (1946). *Sociální ekonomika. Kurs národního hospodářství*. Praha.

The substance of social policy, to summarise it in the most general way, is care for public welfare, though this naturally differs in form depending on specific economic and social conditions, cultural maturity and traditions at individual stages of development. These facts are reflected most markedly in the goals and aims of social policy. The goal of social policy is met both by the general principles of state social policy and the specific measures of individual social activities with the use of tools of social policy, including the law, economic tools, social programmes, lobby programmes, the mass media, organisational structures and public addresses (speeches).

The Masaryk Encyclopaedia published in the nineteen thirties defines social policy as “an effort to arrange the social order in such a way that the interests of individuals in human society are satisfied with lasting common benefit”. No small credit to this view undoubtedly goes to the *Social Institute of the Czechoslovak Republic* founded in 1920 at the Ministry of Social Welfare in Prague which co-operated with the *Masaryk Sociological Society* and published the specialist journal *Social Revue*.

A typical manifestation of the initial social political activities in the First Republic was the synergy between state welfare and the voluntary (today we would say humanitarian or charity) sector. The state deliberately counted on this interconnection in its ideas and plans, and delegated some of the tasks of the public administration directly to some of these voluntary organisations. This was made possible by the fact that these voluntary organisations and associations had extensive organisational networks, and many of them either had charity activities (financial, subsistence, collections, etc.) explicitly laid down in their statutes or established and maintained various institutions performing social and advisory work to the benefit of the needy (The Czechoslovak Red Cross, the Masaryk League Against Tuberculosis, religious organisations providing care for the blind, deaf, physically handicapped, etc.). Many of these social activities were performed by volunteers, meaning that the state did not have to employ its own apparatus for this purpose. Financial means for this work were obtained from state subsidies (the Ministry of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice), from donations from various institutions (banks, building societies, etc.), and from numerous cultural education and collection activities.

Immediately after the Czechoslovak Republic was established, all the leading Czech politicians, economists and businessmen stated full economic independence as the priority in terms of the economy. The social climate, which became the domain of the political parties that acted primarily in the name of the workers, was closely associated with this. At the

same time, the social reform consensus pursuing the need to calm the popular radicalism germinating in the war years characterised by the deprivation of the population and inspired by the Russian Bolshevik Revolution also gained strength. The demands of the radical socialists to nationalise large enterprises were even acknowledged.⁹ Not even President T. G. Masaryk, representing patronage of social reform, could avoid this eventuality.¹⁰

The first tasks facing the new state in the area of social protection of the population included the demobilisation of the war industry and army. This involved the discharging of large numbers of people and a growth in unemployment. For this reason, Act 63/1918 introduced unemployment benefit paid from the state budget on December, 10, 1918. By the end of 1918, an eight-hour working day (Act 91/1918 of 19 December) and a forty-eight-hour working week had also been introduced, accompanied by a prohibition on employing children younger than fourteen, while only men over the age of sixteen were allowed to perform night work. In this respect, Czechoslovakia preceded a number of developed countries in which an eight-hour working day did not begin to be introduced until after the Washington Conference of 1919.¹¹ Act 20/1918 Sb. also managed to establish the Office for Supplying the Populace by the end of 1918 (later the Ministry for Nutrition), and the General Pension Office was created in Prague (Act 92/1918 Sb.) as a central office administering social security for private employees in "higher services". The individual components of state power – legislative, executive and judicial – began to contribute to the formation and realisation of state policy. A particularly important role was played by the National Assembly, which adopted decisive legislative measures and approved the state budget. As had become traditional, union organisations defended the interests of their members in both social and working areas.

⁹ Čechurová, J. (1998). Sociální programy politické reprezentace českých buržoazních kruhů po vzniku ČSR. In *AUC – Philosophica et Historica 3, Studia Historica I*. Praha, pp. 120–122.

¹⁰ He declared of the situation in Czechoslovakia in one interview for a Spanish paper in 1919 that, "The time for expropriation will come... The process of reform must be flexible and adapted to the conditions of the time and place. But reform must be radical." Masaryk, T. G. (1933). *Cesta demokracie*. Praha, p. 463.

¹¹ A law on an eight-hour working day was passed soon after the war in neighbouring Poland, Germany and Austria and in other European countries such as France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Holland and Sweden. Skoch, J. (1928). *Mezinárodní organizace práce a Československo*. Praha, pp. 55–56.

The state's social policy continued to expand in the following years. First there was Act 199/1919 Sb. on the Organisation of Welfare for Disabled Ex-servicemen¹² and Act 207/1919 Sb. (on Accident Insurance) and Act 268/1919 Sb. (on Health Insurance) which expanded health insurance to take in all employees, i.e. including agricultural workers. In 1920, legislation came out (Act 142/1920 Sb. and procedural regulation 346/1920 Sb.) on pensions for war invalids. Act 262/1921 Sb. z. a n. on the Introduction of Paid Leave was passed on July 1, 1921, initially for miners and subsequently, by means of the law of April 3, 1925 (67/1925 Sb. z. a n.) for other employees.¹³

The coming years of economic growth could not fail to be reflected in all spheres of social life. Unemployment, which had the greatest effect on the social standing of families, fell. Alleviating the impact of unemployment was one of the areas of social policy pursued most urgently by the state. Although it naturally was not eliminated completely, and wages rose, it remained at the forefront of interest for state bodies and trade union organisations. It could, therefore, be no surprise that the existing law on unemployment benefit of December 1918 was replaced in September 1921 with the new decree 322/1921 Sb. which exactified the conditions stipulated for the payment of benefits. In the next months, its validity was extended until the previously passed law on the "Ghent System" (267/1921 Sb.) on State Unemployment Benefit Contributions came into effect on April 1, 1925. This law transferred the obligation of paying the unemployed monetary support from state bodies to union

¹² Expenditure on disabled ex-servicemen represented a considerable burden on the state for the whole of the interwar period; the number of persons drawing this pension in 1923 was around 588,000. In: Winter, L. (1931). Sociální péče ve veřejném hospodářství. *Sociální revue*, No. 12, pp. 572–573.

¹³ Čapka, F. (2015). Podíl českých odborů na rozvoji sociálně politických aktivit v počátečním období Československé republiky (1918–1923). In *Sborník prací Pedagogické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity, řada společenských věd*, No. 29/1, pp. 56–73. The law did not relate to workers in agriculture and forestry, labourers performing seasonal work and domestic workers. The number of days' leave depended on the length of employment and ranged from 6 to 8 days a year. Apprentices were entitled to 8 days after six months. State employees were entitled to leave of a length of 2–6 weeks. A number of other European states introduced similar laws on leave for employees. Austria is given as the first (1919), followed by Poland (the law passed in May 1922); after a year's employment, employees in Poland were entitled to an eight-day holiday, after three years employment, to a fifteen-day holiday. A two-week holiday was stipulated for young labourers and apprentices. White-collar workers were entitled to two weeks of paid leave after six months' employment and to four weeks after one year. In: Deyl, Z. (1985). *Sociální vývoj Československa 1918–1938*. Praha, Academia, pp. 101–105.

organisations, subsidised, in part, by the state.¹⁴ In terms of the form and extent of unemployment benefits, this meant that Czechoslovakia joined other European countries (France, Finland, Belgium, Holland, Norway and Spain) that had chosen the Ghent system. Other states (England, Austria, Bulgaria and Poland) introduced unemployment insurance.¹⁵

In outlining just the essential measures taken in the area of social policy in the years of the First Republic, it is impossible to neglect Act 221/1924 on the Insurance of Employees Against Illness, Invalidity and Old Age, widely known as the “Social Security Law”. The law was passed by the Chamber of Deputies on September 23, 1924 (and by the Senate on 9 October of the same year) and came into effect on July 1, 1926. The principal contribution it made was in introducing entirely new and revolutionary workers’ invalid and old-age insurance which, with minor alterations, continued to apply until 1948. Two of the essential features of the approach to social issues of the time can be seen in connection with the adoption of this law. The first is the method of its adoption. The two strongest political parties – the Social Democratic Party and the Agrarian Party – did a deal: agrarian duties for farmers in exchange for social security for the workers. And while social security was approved, the whole issue of customs protection for agriculture stretched out for many years to come. This note is intended merely to point out the frequently practised barter deals made between the left and the right. The second of the given features is that the interwar governments reinforced systems for individual categories of workers – particularly for miners, for ordinary employees and workers, for state and private clerical workers; each of these systems had its own legislation, differing benefits and services. The enactment of the given social security was as far as the right-wing parties were willing to go.

¹⁴ According to the Ghent System, only workers organised in a union (for at least six months prior to losing their employment) could obtain benefits. The state paid the unions first half, and from 1930 two thirds, of the sums provided. The unemployed could receive benefits for no more than 13 weeks, and from 1930 no more than 26 weeks (in extraordinary cases as long as 39 weeks) in a year. Rákosník, J. (2001). Gentský systém v období 1. Československé republiky. In *Časopis Národního muzea, řada historická řada*, No. 170/3-4. Praha, pp. 84–105. Also: Čapka, F. (2015). Státní sociální politika a odbory v českých zemích v první fázi poválečného vzestupu (1923–1925). In *Sborník prací Pedagogické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity, řada společenských věd*, No. 29/2, pp. 103–113.

¹⁵ Unemployment insurance was introduced by law in Poland on 18. 7. 1924 and was obligatory for employees of industrial concerns with more than five employees. The insured parties received benefits from the eleventh day of unemployment for a period of 17 weeks in one year, amounting to 30 % of the wage for unmarried workers and as much as 50 % in the case of married workers.

While the nineteen twenties do not give rise to any fundamental problems of interpellation, assessment of the social policy of the nineteen thirties is more ambiguous and considerably controversial in the historiography. The fact remains that none of the Czechoslovak governments in this decade set about making any essential reforms of the kind that had been made in the preceding years. The years of the great economic crisis in Czechoslovakia (1930–1934/1935) did not create the desired environment for reform. The state of stagnation of social reform legislation continued until the end of the First Republic and typified the helplessness and lack of concept of the last two governments of the agrarian Milan Hodža. The fall in state income resulting from falling tax revenue forced these governments to implement an austere budgetary policy. The socialist parties were forced into a defensive position and focused largely on preserving the existing standards of the social legislation. The only exception was the amendment of the original law on the Ghent System and expansion of the productive network to include the unemployed at the beginning of the crisis (Act 74/1930 Sb.), within the framework of which projects orientated towards the development of infrastructure were implemented (such as roads, sewers, and irrigation and drainage) with the aim of creating new jobs.¹⁶

The economic crisis tested the existing systems of financing and the overall operation of the state social policy of Czechoslovakia as a whole, and its social and political consequences posed little practical threat to the structure of social care of the time. The social policy system was preserved and survived the crisis. Certain undemocratic elements which shook the economy and, in particular, the worsening political situation in Central Europe and within the state did, however, grow in force.

It can, in conclusion, be stated that the social policy of the First Republic kept step with developments in Europe as a whole in terms of both theory and practice. The overall extremely democratic atmosphere of the young state, based on the humanitarian traditions of the Czech nation and the social philosophy of T. G. Masaryk, contributed to this. Although the global economic crisis of the nineteen thirties put brakes on the realisation of social reform, its practical implementation produced positive results. The main body engaged in this area was, naturally, the state, though the role played by individual district and local authorities and the voluntary sector, based on the principles of humanity and charity, also played an extremely large role.¹⁷

¹⁶ Rákosník, J. – Tomeš, I. (2012): *Sociální stát v Československu. Právně-institucionální vývoj v letech 1918–1992*. Praha, Auditorium, pp. 82–104.

¹⁷ Kotous, J. – Munková, G. – Štefko, M. (2013). *Obecné otázky sociální politiky*. Praha, Ústav státu a práva AV ČR.

Józef Smetana Czech and Polish Teacher in Volhynia in the Twenty-Year Interwar Period

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The article is an attempt to reconstruct the biography of Józef Smetana during the twenty-year interwar period at public schools in Volyn. It is only possible to a certain extent taking into account the archive records found at the District Archive in Lutsk (Łuck). The archive contains a personal file from which useful material was taken while reconstructing family and teaching facts concerning Józef Smetana. Many questions concerning his biography still remain unanswered. Perhaps further research will allow researchers to establish what happened to Józef Smetana and his family after 1939.

Key words: *teacher; Józef Smetana; Volhynia; the twenty – year interwar period*

Since the mid 19th century Volhynia has become a place where quite a large number of the Czech population who arrived there both from areas of Poland, Królestwo Polskie, and Czechoslovakia settled down. They mostly worked in farming, but also pursued all sorts of other professions and jobs. There were also teachers among them. Based on Z. Cichočka's work Zbigniew Tobjański claims that in 1928 in Volhynia there were 36 Czech teachers.¹ A year later, in 1929, Józef Smetana also joined the group of Czech teachers. It is worth pointing out that this Polish and Czech teacher conducted his educational activities amongst children in Volhynia. Why is he called a Polish and Czech teacher? Because he was born in Poland (Królestwo Polskie), but was of Czech nationality.

As he wrote himself in his curriculum vitae, he was born on January 26, 1908 in Zelów. His father, Jan, was a farmer. His mother, Amalia, from

¹ Tobjański, Z. (1994). *Czesi w Polsce*. Kraków: Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Czechów i Słowaków w Polsce, p. 74.

Howorków was a housewife. At the age of seven he was sent to a village school in Zelów. That school was divided into three sections and after completing it he began further learning – from grade IV – in a seven-grade school. In 1922 he graduated from it. Then he passed an examination and was accepted to the State Teaching Seminary in Ostrzeszów. But he gave up during the fourth course. There were two reasons for this decision: the first was the unexpected and untimely death of his mother; the second one was emigration. Józef's father emigrated to Czechoslovakia along with the whole family. Józef spent 1926 at home, but at the beginning of 1927 he went back to Poland, and for half a year he was a student at a junior secondary school in Łódź. During the holidays in 1927 he made the decision to return to education at the teaching college. He was convinced that the teaching profession was his destiny. He was admitted for the fourth course of the Ostrzeszowski Teaching Seminary. He finished the courses in 1929 receiving the diploma of a public school teacher.²

With the help of the Czech Schools Motherland in Volhynia he got a teaching post. On August 21, 1929 this institution sent a file of documents concerning Józef Smetana to the school inspectorate in Łuck applying for the position of a teacher in one of the schools with Czech language which was situated in the Łuck district.³ The inspector accepted the request of the Czech Schools Motherland (CSM), and the education office of the School District appointed him a teacher on September 1, 1929 at the public school in Kolonia-Szklín which was in the commune of Poddębno.⁴

Smetana made the official pledge on the following day, on 2 September, and began his duties on September 4. The commune provided him with free accommodation.⁵

As a teacher Józef Smetana asked the radio technical company "Radio Jar" for an instalment purchase of a radio set. This company turned to the School Inspectorate in Łuck with the following enquiry: "Mr Józef Smetana, a teacher at Szklín school, ordered a radio set to be repaid in instalments. Since Smetana's budget didn't allow him to pay it off quickly, therefore we decided to give him longer instalments. We learnt from the declaration of the radio set sent by him that Mr Smetana is

² State archiv of Volhynian District in Łuck (SA-VD), fond 38, op.1, sp.1645, k. 1, curriculum vitae.

³ Ibidem, k. 2, The document to the school inspectorate in Łuck from August 21, 1929.

⁴ Ibidem, k. 3, The document to SMC in Łuck from September 2, 1929.

⁵ Ibidem.

22, so he probably doesn't have a regulated attitude to military service and this could influence the repayments of the radio set. Considering these conditions we want to know if Mr Smetana has taken part in military service. With apologies to the Inspector for any trouble and with grateful thanks in advance we are faithfully yours".⁶

In his answer to this letter, the inspector asked the management of the school in Szklin for Smetana's service papers to be cancelled.⁷ But he didn't receive any answer and could not inform the company about anything. February 27, 1930 that company turned again to the inspectorate with a question about Smetana's military service.⁸ The inspector again applied for a copy of the service papers or an explanation concerning military service. In response he was informed that Smetana was ranked in "common moving with a weapon" by the Conscription Committee pursuant to article no. 38 of the act on common official duties.⁹

In December 1930 the company also asked about the place of Smetana's employment and whether he worked anywhere in the inspectorate area. The reason for this was that Józef Smetana wanted to get the loan in reference to the position of teacher.¹⁰ The inspectorate confirmed that Smetana was occupying the position of class teacher at the school in Kolonia Szklin, in the commune area of Łuck.¹¹

In November 1931 Józef Smetana got married, although the date of the marriage ceremony, according to the source materials, was a surprise for him. In the letter from 18 November 1931 to the inspectorate in Łuck he wrote to the attendance officer: "you are very welcome to justify my absence from school on November 16, this year. My marriage ceremony was held on that day but I was informed about this fact on November 15 of the same year. I did not have any time or possibility to ask for a day off".¹²

Less than a month later on December 15, 1931 the education office sent the marriage certificate¹³ issued by the evangelical reformed congregation in Vilnius, who were supposed to put in the record files.¹⁴

⁶ Ibidem, k. 4, The document to the Polish radiotechnical company Radio Jar from February 10, 1930.

⁷ Ibidem, k. 4a, The document to the company from February 19.

⁸ Ibidem, k. 5, The document RADIO JAR in Łuck from February 27, 1930.

⁹ Ibidem, k. 5a, The document to the company from March 13, 1930.

¹⁰ Ibidem, k. 10, The document to the company from December 30, 1930.

¹¹ Ibidem, k.10a, The document to the company from January 12, 1931.

¹² Ibidem, k. 11, The document to the school inspectorate from November 18, 1931.

¹³ It had numbers 1276 and it was issued on November 23, 1931.

¹⁴ SA-VD, k. 13, The document to the school inspectorate in Łuck from December 15, 1931.

It is necessary to mention that Józef Smetana was of calvinistic faith, why is why a marriage certificate was issued by the evangelical reformed congregation in Vilnius.

Helena Gusnar became Józef's wife and she was a Polish woman coming from a mixed Polish and German family. She was born in Stryj on August 17, 1909. As she wrote about herself: "I am of Polish nationality, of Roman-Catholic religion. My family is also of Polish nationality. My mother came from a purely Polish family and was Jan Malinowski's daughter, an insurgent of 1863 and officer of the Polish State Railways on duty in Bolechow, but who died in Stryj in 1921. My father, Fryderyk Gusnar, also an officer of the Polish State Railways and at present on a retirement pension, comes from a mixed family. His mother was a Pole, and his father was German. Our household was influenced by Polish tradition, therefore I learnt about my father's origin after many years when I grew up".¹⁵

Three years after the marriage ceremony Helena gave up her teaching activity of her own will. It was caused by the fact that she and her husband worked in two different districts, so functioning in their marriage and family was quite difficult. Apart from that Józef thought that on one teacher's salary they would be able to survive and he didn't want to block the working place for teachers who didn't have any funds to exist. However, Helena did not like this idea: "I could not accept that decision, because I was a born teacher and I regret missing out on this profession".¹⁶ So four years after being away from the teaching profession she tried to come back to it again.

Helena graduated from public school in 1924 and based on positive exam results she was admitted to a Private Polish Teaching College, a member of the state colleges in Stryj, which she graduated from in 1929. Immediately after that she got the job of temporary teacher in a one – grade public school in Łukówka, in the Horochowski district. At the beginning of 1930/31 school year, at her own request, she was sent to a three-grade school in Zofiówka, also in the Horochow district.¹⁷

When Helen gave up the teaching profession in October 1932 Józef Smetana applied for supplements to be granted to his wife. He wanted to be entitled to this allowance from October 1th, 1932. He referred the letter to the education office.¹⁸ That office accepted the request and on the day

¹⁵ Ibidem, k. 43–44, Helena Smetanowa's curriculum vitae from September 10, 1936.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ Ibidem, The document to the education office from October 1932.

of August 31, 1932 they granted Smetana the monetary supplement to his wife amounting to 44 multiplicands monthly. The grant was supposed to be given from September 1st, 1932.¹⁹

In Smetana's family two children were born. A daughter called Lada was born on April 15, 1932 and a son – Libor on February 4, 1934.²⁰ Mrs Smetana was quoted as saying that the children were brought up in a Polish atmosphere: "we are running our household in a Polish way and the children are being brought up to be Polish patriots".²¹

When their daughter Lada was born Smetana applied for an economical supplement to the child. He was supposed to receive it from May 1, 1932.²² The amount of the supplement was identical to the one which his wife received, which means 44 multiplicands monthly.²³

In 1933 Smetana was classified for the IX group at grade "b". In January 1934 he was moved to the X group and was also given a supplementary benefit of 15 PLN monthly. Additionally he was entitled to 5% of the official addition.²⁴ But Smetana appealed against the education office's decision regarding the amount of the benefit. It is worth mentioning that originally the amount of the supplement was higher, as it was PLN 30 which was then cancelled and reduced by 50%. The appeal, to which he had been entitled, was received by the school inspectorate in Łuck within the time provided by law.²⁵

On 18 April 1934 Smetana turned to the school inspectorate in Łuck, with the request, sent by this inspectorate to the education office, asking to be paid the rent allowance. In the letter the inspector informed the education office about the details concerning Smetana's teaching profession.²⁶

On September 8, 1934 Smetana asked for a day off on September 12. On that day he was supposed to appear in front of the investigating magistrate in Łuck as a witness. Unfortunately the subject of the case was not known.²⁷

From a letter sent by the school inspectorate in Łuck to Czesław Szot the commune chef officer of Skobetka, it is possible conclude that

¹⁹ Ibidem, k. 15, The letter of the education office from October 25, 1932.

²⁰ Ibidem, k. 49, The extract from the list of the service and qualifying state, without the date.

²¹ Ibidem, k. 43–44, Helena Smetanowa's curriculum vitae from September 10, 1936.

²² Ibidem, k. 18, The document from June 2, 1933.

²³ Ibidem, k. 19, The document to J. Smetana from July 18, 1933.

²⁴ Ibidem, k. 21, The document to J. Smetana from January 20, 1934.

²⁵ Ibidem, k. 22, The document from March 19, 1934.

²⁶ Ibidem, k. 23, The letter to the education office from April 18, 1938.

²⁷ Ibidem, k. 24, The letter to the attendanceschool officer from September 8, 1938.

Smetana was then both a teacher, and manager of the school in Szklin. The inspector informed Smetana that there was a place where his wife should also have lived.²⁸ The chief officer of that commune searched for contact with her too and nobody knows why. It is quite interesting that he wrote in the letter to the inspectorate that Helena had been a teacher in Jadwinówka and that her maiden name was Guznara.²⁹ These two facts disagree. Firstly, the place of her employment was written down by the chief officer as Jadwinówka, but Helena claimed that she had worked in Zofiówka. Secondly, Helena's maiden name was misspelt by the chief officer.

In November 1934 the doctor filed an application with the attendance officer asking for a leave of absence for Smetana. He wrote: "As Mr Smetana (sic!) has just gone through an infectious illness which is not precisely defined I am applying for sick leave for him including five days from November 8, 1934 to November 13, 1934".³⁰

On June 18, 1935 Smetana informed the school inspectorate that he would be spending his holidays in Suchdol on the Odra River in Czechoslovakia.³¹ He left the school possessions under the care of both the village administrator – Wacław Hożasa and the school caretaker – Józef Wesela.³²

During these holidays the attendance officer sent a letter to the education office, along with Smetana's documents in order to issue a decree of the finding. As an attachment he sent the extract from the personal records.³³ In response to this request the education office informed Smetana that from June 25, 1935 he had become a permanent teacher of public schools.³⁴

In May 1936 Smetana wrote to the inspectorate with the request to be transferred to a parallel position in another school. He wanted to work in Niwy Hubińskie, a town situated in the Czaruków commune.³⁵ It turned out that the work there could be done by him but not before 1 December 1936.

²⁸ Ibidem, k. 25a, The letter to the chief officer of Skobelka, from June 11, 1934.

²⁹ Ibidem, k. 25, The letter of the chief officer of Skobelka to the attendance officer in Łuck, from June 1, 1934.

³⁰ Ibidem, k. 28, The letter of the doctor to the attendance officer in Łuck, from November 7, 1934.

³¹ It is most probably about Suchdol a small town on the Odra River. Probably his father lived there after he left Żelów in 1926.

³² SA-VD, k. 30, The document from June 18, 1935 to the school inspectorate in Łuck.

³³ Ibidem, k. 32, The letter to the education office from August 16, 1935.

³⁴ Ibidem, k. 33, The letter from the education office from September 2, 1935.

³⁵ Ibidem, k. 35, The letter to the attendance officer in Łuck, from May 6, 1936.

The financial considerations were an obstacle to gaining the target. By the end of November at this school a previous teacher called Nosek was supposed to get the briefing for the work.³⁶

A formal letter from the inspectorate concerning the same matter was received by Smetana and contained the following: "In relation to your application from May 6, 1936 I am notifying you that I cannot transfer you to the equivalent position to the school in Niwy Hubińskie, because the job at this school is occupied by Mr Nosek, who is to get the financial compensation. If you are interested in moving to the first year of the public school in Lipjany, Kiwerce commune please, using the return post, send an application asking to move to this town. Lipjany is about 5 km from Łuck (sic!). The school is Polish, and Russian and Czech are taught as facultative subjects. Please report the possible resignation from the proposed post".³⁷

Smetana made use of this proposal. He submitted an application with the request to be transferred to the school in Lipjany. The application was dated on September 22, 1936.³⁸ The decision to set him up as a teacher was taken by the education office on October 1, 1936. At the same time, apart from teaching, he dealt with the administration department of the school and he was therefore entitled to a financial allowance.³⁹

At this stage our knowledge about Józef Smetana's further life and educational activities ends. The file of personal records stored in the archive in Łuck doesn't contain any other information. We do not know anything about Smetana's family's history. It is not known whether after the Russian invasion or later after the German one he stayed in Volhynia or whether he left for Czechoslovakia. Perhaps a further preliminary survey of the library holdings and archives from Suchdol on the Odra River will show us some other tracks of Józef Smetana and his family. This article has not closed this issue, but rather it opens the doors to further research in order to draw up the biography of this Polish and Czech teacher more precisely and widely.

³⁶ Ibidem, k. 36, The J. Smetana's letter to the attendance officer in Łuck from May 6, 1936. The information about this fact marked with green ink, on the left side of the document, written in the slanting italics.

³⁷ Ibidem, k. 38, The letter of the attendance officer from September 11, 1936.

³⁸ Ibidem, k. 39, The Józef Smetana's letter to the school inspectorate in Lutsk (Łuck) from September 22, 1936.

³⁹ Ibidem, k. 41, The letter of the attendance officer from September 23, 1936.



1. Identical Card of J. Smetana.

Sorbian Members of the People's Chamber in the GDR (1949–1990)

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The activities of Sorbian deputies in the People's Chamber, the highest legislative body in the German Democratic Republic, is a subject that has yet to be fully studied. This paper outlines the main findings of our research, undertaken in Germany in the years 2014–2016. For our study of Sorbian deputies, we have divided the existence of the People's Chamber into three basic periods: the Era of Kurt Krjeńc (1950–1964/1967), the Era of Jurij Grós (1967–1990), and the Era of Democratic Changes (1990). Each period is associated with important figures from Sorbian Lusatia. We counted a total of 28 deputies in the People's Chamber who were in some way associated with life in this region. However, there was no chance of promoting the interests of the Sorbs in the People's Chamber, since despite being the GDR's highest legislative body, its role was purely formal and symbolic.

Key words: Sorbs; politics; People's Chamber (Volkskammer)

For centuries, the historical region of Upper Lusatia – much of which has belonged since 1635 to one German state or another (Saxony, Prussia, unified Germany, the GDR, and a reunited Germany) – played an important role in the history of the Czech and Polish states. Today, twenty-six years after the demise of the GDR and subsequent German reunification, we have a sufficient historical distance to allow us to write scholarly works on this unique era in modern history. And yet, historical research continues to be hindered by the fact that many archives have not been made accessible and will remain inaccessible for the near future. Although historians can make use of first-person interviews ("oral history"), the results are often highly subjective and must be subjected to thorough historical review. When it comes to the history of the GDR, there are several foundational works in existence, including in particular Hermann Weber's classic *Die DDR 1945–1990* (5th updated edition, München 2012)¹ and numerous

¹ A Czech translation of this book, originally published in 1999, was released under the title *Dějiny NDR*. Praha, NLN, 2003.

monographs by Stefan Wolle.² The history and culture of the Sorbian minority represents a separate chapter in the history of the GDR, with the Sorbs enjoying special status under the socialist GDR, although the situation changed with the educational reforms of 1964 (7th DB, Die Durchsetzung der Siebenten Durchführungsbestimmung) and 1968 (4th DB, Die Durchsetzung der Vierten Durchführungsbestimmung).³

Over the past twenty years, numerous monographs have explored various aspects of Sorbian life during the aforementioned time period. An incomplete list includes Martin Kasper's *Die Lausitzer Sorben in der Wende 1989/1990. Ein Abriss mit Dokumenten und einer Chronik* (Bautzen 2000), Ludwig Elle's *Die Domowina in der DDR. Aufbau und Funktionsweise einer Minderheitenorganisation im staatlich-administrativen Sozialismus* (Bautzen 2010), and Edmund Pech's *Ein Staat – eine Sprache? Deutsche Bildungspolitik und autochthone Minderheiten im 20. Jahrhundert. Die Sorben im Vergleich mit Polen, Dänen und Nordfriesen* (Bautzen 2012). More recent works from the past five years include Timo Meškank's studies focused primarily on Sorbian collaboration with the Stasi, which caused a significant uproar in Sorbian life. But nobody has yet written an extensive, comprehensive overview of the history of the Sorbs during the GDR period.

During the existence of the GDR, members of the Sorbian minority sat on representative bodies at various levels of the political hierarchy. One topic that has received insufficient attention in Sorbian as well as German historiography is the question of Sorbian representatives in the GDR's highest legislative body, the People's Chamber (Volkskammer).⁴ This circumstance motivated me to undertake a project in which I spent the past two years looking at this issue.⁵ The project's main objective was to determine which Sorbian individuals were members of the People's Chamber during the GDR era, to gather detailed information about them,

² Cf. for instance Wolle, S. (2013). *Die heile Welt der Diktatur. Alltag und Herrschaft in der DDR 1971–1989*. Berlin; Wolle, S. (2013). *Der große Plan. Alltag und Herrschaft in der DDR 1949–1961*. Berlin; Wolle, S. (2013). *Aufbruch nach Utopia. Alltag und Herrschaft in der DDR 1961–1971*. 2nd edition, Berlin etc.

³ Cf. for more detail in Pech, E. (2012): *Ein Staat – eine Sprache? Deutsche Bildungspolitik und autochthone Minderheiten im 20. Jahrhundert. Die Sorben im Vergleich mit Polen, Dänen und Nordfriesen*. Bautzen.

⁴ For a more detailed look at the Volkskammer, see e.g., Patzelt, W. J., Schimer, R. (Eds.) (2002). *Die Volkskammer der DDR. Sozialistischer Parlamentarismus in Theorie und Praxis*. Wiesbaden; Lapp, P. J. (1975). *Die Volkskammer der DDR*. Opladen.

⁵ The project was undertaken at TU Dresden and the Sorbisches Institut (Bautzen) thanks to a grant from the Humboldt-Stiftung.

to evaluate their political activities, and to engage in a comparison of these people's profiles (their social origins and their relationship to the church, the Domowina, and Sorbian life in general). At the same time, it was important to outline which political parties or institutions sent candidates to the People's Chamber. Since no researcher has specifically studied the question of Sorbian deputies in the GDR's highest legislative body, from the beginning we were able to work on the basis of our own research.⁶ It soon became apparent that the process of seeking out the former deputies of the People's Chamber is very complicated, which also influenced the project's timeline (it was necessary to spend much more time searching).

In this paper, we would like to share some of the findings of our research, in which we discovered that during the period under review 28 Volkskammer deputies (fully-fledged deputies and successor candidates – Nachfolgekandidaten)⁷ were of Sorbian heritage or were closely (sometimes only partially) associated with the Sorbs. The research was first done through the Sorbian (primarily *Nowa doba*)⁸ and German press (in particular the *Sächsische Zeitung*) and through various institutions, including the Sorbisches Institut (Bautzen), Stadtbibliothek Bautzen, and Sächsische Landesbibliothek / Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden. Also important was our archival research at the Staatsfilialarchiv in Bautzen, the Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv in Dresden, the Bundesarchiv in Berlin, and the Archiv BStU in Berlin. At the same time, we recorded interviews with former Volkskammer deputies (Jurij Grós/Jurij Groß and Jurij Čornak/Georg Zschornack), and with selected deputies of the Bundestag (Marja Michalkowa/Maria Michalk

⁶ Exceptions include generalized works such as K. J. Schiller and M. Thiemann's *Geschichte der Sorben. Band 4. Von 1945 bis Gegenwart* (Bautzen 1979), which provides the number of Sorbian representatives for certain periods, or T. Meškank's monograph *Instrumentalisierung einer Kultur. Zur Situation bei den Sorben 1948–1989* (Bautzen 2014). Meškank's work was originally published in Sorbian as *Kultura w službje totalitarneho režima* (Budyšin, 2011).

⁷ "Nachfolgekandidaten" were elected to the Volkskammer starting in 1958. At first, their number was 100, which was gradually increased to 200. They were something like substitutes who had no voting rights. These members of the Volkskammer were there to replace a regular member if necessary. They were present at all meetings and also sat on most committees (with some exceptions). Cf. Lapp, P. J. (1975). *Die Volkskammer der DDR*. Opladen, pp. 76–77.

⁸ *Nowa doba* began publishing in January 1947 in Bautzen as a weekly; after October 1947, it appeared twice a week, after July 1948 three times a week, and in October 1955 it became a daily. The last issue of the Sorbian newspaper *Nowa doba* appeared more than two months after German reunification, in December 1990.

and Angela Stachowa) and the Sächsischer Landtag (Benedikt Dyrlich, Sieghard Kozel/Sieghard Kosel, Hajko Kozel/Heiko Kosel), as well as others who had been in contact with Sorbian politicians in the past (Gert Kral/Krahl, Hańža Winarjec-Orsesowa). The audio recordings and subsequent transcripts of the interviews will serve as an important source for future studies of the political life of Sorbs during the GDR period.

Over the course of our research, we found that there is a significant lack of written sources on many Volkskammer deputies. On the other hand, there is a relatively good number of sources on the main Sorbian functionaries of the Domowina who sat in the Volkskammer – Kurt Krjeńc (Kurt Krenz), Jurij Grós, and Jurij Handrik (Georg Handrick). However, there is significantly less information available on the other Sorbian deputies in the Volkskammer. Many of them were written about in the Sorbs' official newspaper *Nowa doba*, but for some former members of the People's Chamber practically the only information available is what can be found in the archives (e.g., Ingeborg Janke, Elisabeth Rehork). Another frequent difficulty is the task of identifying the true ethnic identity of the people we came across: in some cases the Sorbian press described even those people who were only partially associated with Sorbian national life as "Sorbian candidates." For instance, their spouse was of Sorbian heritage (Dieter Zwahr, Elisabeth Pech) or they had only distant Sorbian roots (Michael Kolanski, Manfred Scheler). One interesting case is that of Ingeborg Janke, whose Sorbian heritage was not reported in the Sorbian media, but who is described as Sorbian in the *Sächsische Zeitung*.⁹

The current state of research has unambiguously shown that the role of the Volkskammer as the GDR's highest legislative body was purely formal and symbolic. Representatives could not participate in debate, but merely voted (the successor candidates had no voting rights). The elections to the chamber were not democratic either; the Volkskammer representatives were people who had been delegated by the SED and the other ruling parties and institutions. As a result, the country's highest legislative body was home to very few truly great personalities (who had no interest in the post anyway). The same applies to deputies of Sorbian heritage, where there was an equal lack of great personages (unlike, for instance, during the pre-Nazi era). One possible exception was the

⁹ Inge Janke (VEB Rafena-Werke) zu ihrer Niminierung als Volkskammerkandidatin: Großartig, daß wir mitregieren. Belegschaft des VEB Rafena-Werke will 3 500 Fernsegergeräte zusätzlich produzieren. *Sächsische Zeitung*, Radeberg, 7. 9. 1963.

president of the Domowina, Kurt Krjeńc, who was well known in Sorbian circles and who enjoyed relatively great popularity among the Sorbs. But almost nobody today can remember the names of most of the other Sorbian deputies (who were for the most part manual workers and peasants unknown by the majority of people). As previously noted, deputies could not engage in debate during sessions of the Volkskammer. Debate only took place in the committees, where everyone including the Sorbs tried to promote their region's interests. In no way could their efforts be described as promoting the national interests of the Sorbian minority – it always involved the specific geographical region or area associated with the deputy's mandate (which of course was home to Sorbs as well), but not the improvement of the Sorbs' legal status.

From the Volkskammer's first session in 1950 until the year 1981, there were always 2–5 deputies of Sorbian heritage during each electoral period. However, there were no electoral rules to guarantee that the Sorbs would have a certain number of deputies. The final word was with the SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands) and the relevant parties of the GDR's National Front. The SED's members usually included leading functionaries of the Domovina, at least one of whom was a member of the GDR's parliament. As might be expected, in 1950–1990 most Sorbian deputies and Nachfolgekandidaten were delegated by the SED (nine), followed by the CDU (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands) with six representatives, and the DBD (Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands) in third place with five. The penultimate (ninth) People's Chamber for the 1986–1990 electoral period had an unusually large number of people associated with Sorbian life in the GDR: 11 fully-fledged deputies and successor candidates.

During the first democratic elections in 1990, six people of Sorbian heritage made it into the People's Chamber (this was also the last election to this legislative body). In other parties and organizations (outside the SED), Sorbs were represented in lesser numbers. After a comprehensive exploration of the subject at hand, the Sorbs' participation in the People's Chamber can be divided chronologically into three basic periods: the *Era of Kurt Krjeńc* (1950–1964/1967), the *Era of Jurij Grós* (1967–1990), and the *Era of Democratic Changes* (1990). This periodization will also be included in our planned book. Other chapters will look at Sorbian deputies in leading German institutions prior to World War II, the Volkskammer and how it functioned, elections in the GDR, and propaganda.

Of the 28 deputies whom we found (both fully-fledged deputies and successor candidates), five were informants for the Stasi (IM – Inoffizieller

Mitarbeiter; prior to 1968 Geheimer Informator): Jurij Krawčik (Georg Krautschick, CDU) Jurij Grós (SED), Jurij Handrik (SED), Jurij Pěčka (Georg Pötschke, SED), and Michael Koplanski (DBD). The Stasi thus clearly recruited its agents from among all the political parties and social organizations. Only one of the aforementioned Stasi informants, Jurij Pěčka, was active in Lower Lusatia. Another Sorbian deputy, Dr. Měrcin Wjeńcko (Martin Wenzke, NDPD: National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands), was a member of the SA before and during the war. He was active in the Lower Lusatian town of Cottbus.

Five of the aforementioned deputies were employed in the Domowina or in other important Sorbian institutions: Kurt Krjeńc, Jurij Handrik, Jurij Grós, Jurij Pěčka, and Erich Křižan (Zschieschan). Two of the deputies were doctors (Měrcin Wjeńcko and Dieter Zwahr), and three (Ingeborg Janke, Werner Maruš/Marusch, and Stanisław Tilich/Stanislaw Tillich) held some kind of engineering degree. Two deputies worked as teachers (Jurij Pěčka and Ludwig Nowak/Noack) and two as “new-teachers”¹⁰ (Jurij Grós and Erich Křižan). Most of the remaining deputies of Sorbian heritage held various blue-collar or agricultural professions (although some, such as Marja Michałkowa, were secondary-school graduates).

The three periods that we have outlined in the history of the People's Chamber in relation to Sorbian national life are all associated with one person who symbolizes the said period. In the first period this was Kurt Krjeńc (1907–1978), a journeyman machinist, prewar member of the communist party, and longtime postwar president of the Sorbian Domowina who held many top functions in the SED. He was elected (nominated) to the People's Chamber seven times (elections in the years 1950–1976). For the second period, our choice of main personality was Jurij Grós (born 1931), a journeyman carpenter and later a new-teacher who became a leading Sorbian party functionary shortly after the SED's rise to power, and who held the post of first secretary in Domowina, where he replaced Kurt Krjeńc. He was a deputy in the People's Chamber for three electoral periods, starting in 1981 as a Nachfolgekandidat (elections in 1981–1990). The period of revolution and democratic changes is symbolized by Stanisław Tilich (born 1959), a member of the CDU and originally a construction engineer by trade, who began his political career as a deputy in the final session of the People's Chamber

¹⁰ “Neulehrer” were graduates of special teaching courses in occupied Germany in 1945–1949. The aim was to ensure that German children and youth would not be taught by teachers associated with Nazism. In the Soviet occupation zone, these courses generally lasted for 4–8 months.

following the 1990 elections. He later rose to political power in the Free State of Saxony, where he was a State Minister on several different occasions. He has been a regular member of the Saxon Parliament since 2004, and has been the Saxon Minister-President since 2008. In 1994, he was elected to the European Parliament.

These facts confirm that as fully-fledged citizens of the GDR and a reunited Germany, Sorbian representatives have actively participated in the functioning of the country's highest legislative body and have also been present at lower political levels in the towns and regions. But they are not delegated by the Sorbian Domowina or by any other Sorbian institution on the basis of pre-agreed criteria. Sorbian representatives tried to change this situation in early 1990, when a new constitution was being prepared. One member of the New Election Law and New Constitution working groups during negotiations of the Central Round Table in Berlin was Jan Malink (Maling), who attended as a Sorbian representative. He was given the task of promoting a modified version of his own proposal for the Sorbs' independent parliamentary representation, which had some similarities to later Sorbian councils in Saxony and Brandenburg. According to this proposal, the Domowina would elect three Sorbian deputies who would not have voting rights but who would have veto rights for votes on Sorbian matters. This proposal was presented to the People's Chamber via the Central Round Table, but without success: It was voted down during the first reading on 29 January 1990. On 20 February 1990, the People's Chamber adopted the new election law without any special Sorbian provisions.¹¹

¹¹ Malink, J. (2000). Jako Serb za Centralnym kulojnym blidom. *Rozhlad* 50, No. 7–8, p. 270.

The State and the Church in the Post-War Struggle for the Ideological Aspect of the Polish Academic Society (Wrocław 1945–1956)

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According to the treaties of Teheran (1943) and Yalta (1945), Wrocław was made a part of the Recovered Territories as a compensation for the eastern Polish territories being taken by the USSR. All the Polish people who arrived started creating a new, diverse society that had no prior connection to the previously German city.

The Polish Government faced the task of introducing peace and order to the city and organizing education because it was supposed to double as a political indoctrination tool that would shape the young generation even among students. A number of demands were made to incorporate universities as quickly as possible into the process of creating a socialistic nation and society. The political opinions of a majority of faculties and the Church stood in opposition to these demands and to the communist government.

An official war with the Church had started, coupled with repressions. The Church fought not only for its place in the religious life of the citizens but also in the political and social one. The postwar history of Polish universities is closely related to these activities because of, among other things, the student participation in various academic ministries.

Key words: *Postwar Poland; country; the Church; indoctrination; academic ministry*

At the beginning of the 20th century, Breslau, called 'Die Blume Europas' (Europe's Flower), was considered to be the biggest German city east of Berlin. At that time, the city had over half a million inhabitants. The Polish minority in the city consisted of 4,000 people. However, the number fell after 1918 due to migration to the new Polish State.¹ Before

¹ S. Orgelbranda *Encyklopedia Powszechna* (1912). Warszawa: S. Olgebranda synowie, t. XVIII (suplement cz. II), p. 709.

1933, Wrocław had a Polish consulate, Polish School, Polish Library, a branch of the Poles in Germany Society, "Polish House", a Polish scout team and the Choir Society "Harmony." In addition to that, two churches offered masses in Polish. From 1933, both the Polish culture and education were in a difficult situation. All signs of being Polish were eradicated. The final straw was the expulsion of all Polish students from the University of Wrocław and a resolution that was passed in Leopold's Assembly Hall, which stated that: "We are certain that no Polish foot will ever cross the threshold of this German university ever again".²

In 1945, despite the fact that the course of the war was already decided, the Germans decided to keep on fighting and not to surrender the city. The Festung (Fortress) Breslau battle lasted from January 1945 until the German capitulation on May 6th, 1945. Even though there was no damage to the city during the first half of January, around 70 to 80 percent of its buildings were destroyed as a final result of the battle.

According to the treaties from Teheran (1943) and Yalta (1945), Wrocław was made a part of the Recovered Territories as a compensation for the eastern Polish territories taken by the USSR. These decisions changed the borders of Poland and, as a consequence, started a resettlement process that lasted for a couple of years. As a result of resettlement, people from Central Poland and Lesser Poland arrived in a city destroyed and burned down by the Germans and the Soviets. Among them, there were inhabitants of Warsaw, which was ruined during the uprising, looters, thrill-seekers and those that had to hide their past because of ties to the AK (Home Army) or to London. One of the more significant groups consisted of the people of Kresy Wschodnie (the Eastern Borderlands), which were annexed by the USSR and now are a part of eastern Lithuania, western Belarus and Ukraine.³

All those who arrived started creating a new, diverse society that had no prior connection to the previously German city. It was a mix of different experiences and ideas on what their future, and the future of the country, should look like. The majority considered this new reality to be temporary, similar to the way in which they perceived the new borders of Poland. As a result, some of them did not unpack their belongings even for a couple of years after the war had ended, believing that they were yet to return to the true Motherland. This feeling of not belonging was multiplied by the

² Davies, N., Moorhouse, R. (2002). *Mikrokosmos. Portret miasta środkowoeuropejskiego. Vratislavia. Breslau. Wrocław*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, pp. 394–395.

³ Kersten, K. (1995). Jajta – mit i rzeczywistość. In *Jajta z perspektywy półwiecza*, S. Nicieja (Ed.). Opole: Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, pp. 15–25.

ever-present rubble and the surrounding German language: street names, signposts, statues and storefronts. Poles moved into German houses with German furniture, books, paintings, clocks and German newspapers sticking out from under the wallpaper.

Life in the city was very difficult. There was looting, even during the day, in which even the Soviet soldiers participated. The bad reputation that Wrocław got was known across Poland, to the point where the administration of Kraków proposed that “the unemployed, the spivs and the criminals” should be relocated to Wrocław.⁴

However, German Breslau was slowly beginning to fade and Polish Wrocław started to appear. The Breslauer population was regularly being relocated (exiled) and more Poles replaced them. Over a short period of time, a total exchange of population took place. By the end of May 1945, there were around 2,000 Poles and over 200,000 Germans in the City. In March 1947, there were 197,000 Poles and only 17,000 Germans living in the city.⁵

The new Polish Government was facing a difficult task of introducing peace and order to the city. Organizing education seemed like a particularly difficult task as it was supposed to double as a political indoctrination tool that would shape the young generation.

On August 24th, 1945, the University of Wrocław and the Wrocław University of Science and Technology were created as “Polish academic schools,” with one rector, two vice-rectors, a shared Senate, budget and administration. Prof. Stanisław Kulczyński, who arrived in Wrocław in May of 1945 from the Lwów University of Jan Kazimierz, was named the first rector of the joint universities. Until 1947, the university operated chiefly in accordance with the bill from March 15th, 1933. The pre-war laws and academic structures served as a guarantee for the freedom of science and the independence of academic society.⁶

Student candidates, who came to Wrocław after the war was over, were very diverse when it comes to their societal, cultural and political backgrounds. They were not able to start their studies immediately as the entire university infrastructure had been destroyed, including lecture halls, classrooms, the library and museum collections.⁷ They also had no

⁴ Thun, G. (2008). *Obce miasto Wrocław 1945 i potem*. Wrocław: VIA NOVA, pp. 223–231.

⁵ Davies, N., Moorhouse, R. (2002). Op. cit., p. 454; Kaszuba E. (1997). *Między propagandą a rzeczywistością. Polska ludność Wrocławia 1945–1947*. Warszawa: PWN.

⁶ Suleja, T. (1995). *Uniwersytet Wrocławski w okresie centralizmu stalinowskiego 1950–1955*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, pp. 13–16.

⁷ Kulak, T. – Pater, M. – Wrześniński, W. (2002) *Historia Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 1702–2002*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, p. 206.

place to live. In December of 1945, there were only 198 places available in student houses.⁸ The students themselves had trouble finding food, clothes and there was a shortage of academic books. The university was in dire need of faculty members as well. At the time, most of the faculty came from the Lwów University of Jan Kazimierz and other Lwów schools. They introduced the academic traditions and academic heritage of Lwów to Wrocław and also often brought their collection of academic books with them. The government officials quickly noticed the danger of allowing the University of Wrocław to become the heir to the pre-war traditions of the Lwów University. In the eyes of the government, the University of Wrocław was supposed to be only a small, provincial higher education school.⁹

The first academic year of 1945/1946 at the University of Wrocław started on November 15th, 1945. Around 2,350 students started their studies at the university, including 1,221 first-years. The faculty consisted of 50 professors and 120 assistant professors. However, the official celebration of the opening of the university and the Wrocław University of Science and Technology took place as late as June 9th, 1946. The highest government officials and the representatives of diplomatic institutions, including the USSR ambassador, participated in the celebrations. This specific date was chosen for propaganda purposes: on June 30th, there was a referendum on the acceptance of political and economical changes in Poland.¹⁰ This was one of the first instances where the University was used for political purposes by the communist government. The government itself was not content with the nearly-guaranteed autonomy of universities, both in terms of the way they were democratically managed and the way the academic society shaped the course of research topics, independent of political conditions. All this stood in opposition to the “systemic realities of *people’s democracy*”.¹¹ As a result, a number of demands were made to incorporate the university as quickly as possible into the process of creating a socialistic nation and society and, thus, breaking away from the pre-war ideals of university autonomy and universalism.

The political opinions of a large part of the faculty, especially those from Lwów, stood in opposition to these demands and to the communist

⁸ Ciesielski, S. (1993). Warunki socjalno-bytowe studentów Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego w latach 1945–1956. In *Studia i materiały z dziejów Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego*, t. II, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, p. 177.

⁹ Kulak, T. – Pater, M. – Wrzesiński, W. (2002). Op. cit., pp. 207, 210–211.

¹⁰ Ibidem, pp. 222–223.

¹¹ Suleja, T. (1995). Op. cit. p. 16.

government. The faculty believed that it was their duty to teach students to “think for themselves, reach the truth on their own and to cultivate a high sense of ethics that would guard their patriotism”.¹²

The kind of influences the professors had on their students were deemed dangerous by the communist government because, in the eyes of the government, these students were to become the faculty that would help them create the new political reality of the country in the future.

The Church was another obstacle the communist government faced when bringing their vision of socialist higher education schools to life. The Church had a lot of support from the Polish society, which started to irritate the new government. As a result, the government started fighting with the Church: on September 12th, 1945, it broke the concordat and, on the following day, decided to annul the pre-war bill on compulsory religion classes for children of the Roman Catholic faith. In the following years, an official war with the Church had started, coupled with repressions that included intensified censorship, spot searches, threats, arrests, interrogations, mock trials ending with high punishments (including capital punishment), the confiscation of the Church property (lands and buildings), the closing of catholic schools, and limiting the number of permits for catholic celebrations.¹³

The difficult relationship between the state and the Church was especially important in the western part of the country. The government hoped that resettling the area with a diverse, often random, population that was snatched from their previous environments would be beneficial for ideological indoctrination. At the same time, the government also hoped that similar factors would deprive the Church of the ability to influence the unintegrated society. However, the displaced population, especially the part from Kresy, ended up being especially resistant to propaganda and seemed very religious. This phenomenon was also present at the Wrocław universities, where the faculty and many of the students had a hostile position towards the government and its representatives.¹⁴ After all, a lot of the students practiced traditions similar to those of their professors.¹⁵

¹² Prof. Józef Gierowski (1999). In *Pięćdziesiąt lat Duszpasterstwa Akademickiego we Wrocławiu*, Wrocław: Papieski Wydział Teologiczny, pp. 35–36.

¹³ Szuba, L. (2002). *Polityka oświatowa państwa polskiego w latach 1944–1956*. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL; Raina P. (1994). *Kościół w PRL. Lata 1944–1959*. t. I, Poznań: Polska Prowincja Dominikanów; Jaworska, K. (2013). Rola Kościoła katolickiego w integrowaniu społeczeństwa dolnośląskiego w latach 1945–1951. *Zeszyty Naukowe Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Zawodowej w Legnicy*, t. 9, pp. 8–19.

¹⁴ Davies, N. – Moorhouse, R. (2002). Op. cit., pp. 491–492.

¹⁵ Szwagrzyk, K. (1996). *Golgota wrocławska 1945–1956*. Wrocław: Telewizja Polska.

With this kind of support from the society, the Church fought not only for its place in the religious life of the citizens but also in the political one. The history of Polish universities, including the University of Wrocław, is closely related to the activities of the Church due to, among other things, the student participation in various academic ministries. Those who felt lost in the new and alien societal, political and cultural reality, sought the support and stability available in the Church, which provided spiritual guidance, material help and a feeling of security.

Academic ministries in post-war Poland could relate to their previous experiences from the 19th and 20th century, when the contemporary catholic academic organizations offered students the ability to expand their personal religiousness and Christian outlook on the world.¹⁶ Among these ministries, there was the Sodality of Our Lady Ministry of Academics created in Lwów (1889), Kraków (1891) and Warsaw (1916). In the interwar period, these ministries were functioning in all academic communities in Poland. The work done by these ministries was based around systematic meetings during which discussions and lectures were held. Over time, several sections were created to include other work.¹⁷ Another important ministry working in interwar Poland was the Catholic Academic Youth Society "Odrodzenie," ("Revival") which was tied to the Warsaw, Kraków and Wilno academic centers before the World War I. After Poland regained independence, the Society changed its policy into a catholic and a patriotic one, especially after merging with the academic organization Catholic National Youth (1929). The Society was fairly popular and influential among students. It aimed to introduce catholic principles into the way universities operate. Through meetings, the society increased the importance of national, educational and moral concepts, the Christian-social doctrine and also sport and artistic initiatives. The initiative came from the students, who did not work directly with priests.¹⁸ Another

¹⁶ Jakubiak, M. (2016). *Relacje państwo-Kościół na tle polityki oświatowo wychowawczej sanacji*. Warszawa: PWN; Świętostawski, W. (1927). Zadania uczelni akademickich jako ośrodków kształcenia mas młodzieży, *Nauka Polska*, t. 8.

¹⁷ Gajewski, S. (1993). *Chrześcijańskie organizacje akademickie w Polsce (1889–1939)*, Rzeszów: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna, pp. 5–27; Gotąb, M. (1928). *Akademickie Sodalitje Mariańskie w Polsce. Rys historyczny ruchu i jego rola w życiu akademickim*. Lwów: Ossolineum.

¹⁸ Turowski, K. (1987). „Odrodzenie”. *Historia Stowarzyszenia Katolickiej Młodzieży Akademickiej*. Warszawa: Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Studiów Społecznych, pp. 14–52; *Czem jest Odrodzenie – Stowarzyszenie Młodzieży Akademickiej (1928)*. T. 2, Lublin: Uniwersytet [Lubelski]; Przybecki, A. (1999). *Między poczuciem zagrożenia a potrzebą obcości. Koncepcja duszpasterstwa akademickiego w Polsce po przełomie 1989 roku*, Poznań: UAM, Wydział Teologiczny, pp. 70–72.

significant student organization before World War II was the Academic Catholic Youth Association "Iuventus Christiana," which operated in Warsaw, Poznań, Wilno, Lwów and Kraków. Its aim was religious and societal formation, teaching critical and independent thinking as well as the courage to proclaim one's own belief. In addition to that, the organization also aimed to prepare students to pick their own approach to life. The organization had self-study and learning at its core and worked on various goals in smaller seminar groups. The role of priests was limited to that of advisors.¹⁹

In the interwar period, the Church had also maintained its activities through other catholic organizations: pastoral (e.g. the Academic Catholic Union in Lwów), charitable (e.g. Academic Charity Society "Pomoc Bliźniemu" ("Helping Your Neighbor) in Warsaw, Lwów and Lublin), mission (Academic Missions) or spiritual retreats (e.g. Spiritual Retreat Union of Saint Dominic in Lwów).

The first academic ministry that operated as a Church institution was created in Kraków through the actions of academic ministries of the Jagiellonian University in 1927 and in the Saint Anna Church in Warsaw in 1928. In the thirties, these institutions were present in all academic centers in Poland.²⁰

During the war, the work of ministries was either suspended (in Wilno, Poznań), conducted in secret (in Warsaw) or continued in a limited scope (Lwów, Kraków, Lublin).

After the war, the ministries could not continue operating in the same way because of the different political environment of the new Polish state. Over the course of 1945–1947, the reactivation and creation of new Catholic associations and academic ministries was possible thanks to the pre-war bill on academic associations from 1933 that was still in power at that time. Thanks to the bill, the Sodality of Our Lady Ministry of Academics "Iuventus Christiana" and the "Caritas Academica", created in Poznań in 1945, which conducted religious and societal activities, were able to operate. Its primary goal revolved around helping the poor and students affected by the war by giving out grants, scholarships, free meals, books and clothing and also by organizing preventoriums, common rooms, canteens or by helping students to get employment. Resources were gathered in street collections, charitable parties, sales of

¹⁹ Niwiński, M. (1932). *Iuventus Christiana*, *Przegląd Powszechny*. T. 194, nr 580.

²⁰ Przybecki, A. (1986). *Urzeczywistnianie się Kościoła w środowisku akademickim. W poszukiwaniu koncepcji duszpasterstwa studentów w Polsce*. Poznań: Papieski Wydział Teologiczny, p. 52.

Christmas trees, Palms and candles. The work of the "CA" was supported by the Norwegian Red Cross, the Polish Center of Blood Donation, Caritas, The Church, The Council of Polish Expatriates in the USA, social organizations and private donors.

One of the contemporary forms of Church activity in the academic societies at that time was setting up Institutes of Higher Religious Knowledge, which also operated in a few academic centers before the war. These Institutes partook in developing religiousness among students by preparing lectures and conferences on Christian philosophy and moral sciences. Additionally, the Institutes had also popularized religious press and books, helped secular teachers prepare for teaching religion and organized conferences for engaged couples.²¹

In the case of academic workers, some of them found their way to the Catholic Intelligentsia Clubs as a result of the "October Thaw" in 1956. The first clubs were created in Warsaw, Kraków, Poznań and Toruń. The Wrocław Club was created in 1958. The majority of their work was based around ecumenical and social activities and the German issues, which were very relevant for Wrocław.²²

As early as in 1946, the Catholic associations started to lose their privilege to freely operate at universities. Their place was taken by youth organizations mandated by the state: The Youth's Fight Union, The Union of Country Youth "Wici," The Union of Democratic Youth, The Organization of Youth of the Worker's University Society.²³

The activity of Catholic student organizations was coordinated by the academic ministry, which was officially recognized in 1946 by the Polish Episcopate as a Catholic institution. In the years 1945–1949, it was run in two ways: elite and mass. The elite way was conducted mainly through the Catholic student organizations, which were to be first revived and then integrated into academic life by the academic ministry. The mass way was targeted towards the entire academic community, mainly

²¹ Biedroń, T. (1991). *Organizacje młodzieży katolickiej w Polsce w latach 1945–1953*. Kraków: Znak; Bober, S. (2011). *Walka o duszę dzieci i w pierwszym dwudziestolecu Polski Ludowej*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.

²² *Pięćdziesięciolecie Klubu Inteligencji Katolickiej we Wrocławiu: wkład klubu w budowę postaw obywatelskich we Wrocławiu i na Dolnym Śląsku*. (2008). W. Wysoczyński (Ed.). Wrocław: Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej.

²³ „*Jesteście naszą wielką szansą*”. *Młodzież na rozstajach komunizmu 1944–1989*. (2009). P. Ceranka, S. Stępień (Ed.). Warszawa: IPN; *Oblicze ideologiczne szkoły polskiej w latach 1944–1955*. (2002). E. Walewander (Ed.). Lublin: „Bamka” Studio Komputerowo-Wydawnicze; Kochanowicz, J. (2000). *ZMP w terenie. Stalinowska próba modernizacji opornej rzeczywistości*, Warszawa: Trio.

through formation and religious work, including spiritual retreats, academic pilgrimages to Częstochowa, academic masses and meetings with famous priests.

The increasing conflict between the State and the Church gave start to a propaganda "battue" aimed against the Church. Priests were accused of political and economic crimes and the monitoring and arrests of priests started. The youth was being forced more and more often to participate in activities on Sundays to block them from participating in religious practices. The Union of Polish Youth became more active, and participation in this formation started to become, in many cases, mandatory. From 1947, the government wanted to limit the scope to which the Church participated in state celebrations.²⁴ In the same year, the autonomy of higher learning schools was lifted and the creation of the Polish United Workers' Party at the end of 1948 marked the intensification of an ideological fight between the communists and the only remaining independent social structure – the Roman Catholic Church. Released on August 5th, 1949, the decree on "the protection of freedom of conscience," was aimed at organizations that participated in the practice of religious cults and forced them to be formally legalized by enforcing them to deliver member lists to the government.²⁵ In response, the Church suspended the activities of all youth religious organizations, including the activities of the academic ministry. As a result, the academic community started organizing around churches, where, in addition to religious activities, there were also formation activities being carried out²⁶.

In 1953, the National Commission of Academic Ministry was created. The statutory document confirmed the inclusion of the ministry into the structure of the Church. Its goals included the organization of religious life in the academic community, ethics education and expanding the religious knowledge of the students. Additionally, the Commission also took care of academic boarding houses and charitable help. In the same year, the pastoral centers in Warsaw and Poznań were ordered to cease all activities.

²⁴ Ordyłowski, M. (2000). Władze komunistyczne wobec Kościoła katolickiego na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945–1948. *Dolny Śląsk*, nr 8, p. 109–110; Jaworska, K. (2009). *Relacje między państwem a Kościołem katolickim w (archi)diecezji wrocławskiej w latach 1956–1974*. Legnica: Zeszyty Naukowe PWSZ w Legnicy, p. 78.

²⁵ Fijałkowska, B. (2001). *Partia wobec religii i Kościoła w PRL*, t. 1: 1944–1955. Olsztyn: Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski.

²⁶ Błasiak, D. (2003). *Duszpasterstwo akademickie jako środowisko społeczno-kulturowe. Proces stawania się członkiem grupy od „oni” do „my”*. Katowice: Księgarnia św. Jacka, pp. 37–43; Przybecki, A. (1999). *Między poczuciem zagrożenia ...* Op. cit. pp. 98–125.

In Wrocław, almost immediately after the cessation of hostilities, the Church started working in favor of the academic community. In 1945, there was one pastoral center operating in the city, and it was made into an official ministry only a year after that. It was organized by a monk – Father Stanisław Mirek, who came to Wrocław from Lwów and set up the ministry around the Jesuit university church. He continued his pre-war work in the parish of Saint Maciej, which also housed the university. Both these temples suffered heavy damage on Easter Monday of April 2nd, 1945, when the Soviet forces bombarded them. As a result, they had to be rebuilt.

The especially difficult conditions of living in the ruins of Wrocław meant that the students suffered and required some charitable help to be able to survive. Providing help for the students was made easier through the cooperation of Father Mirek and a Redemptorist priest, Father Marian Pirożyński, who had arrived in Wrocław in June, 1945. He became the first administrator of the Holy Family Parish. As early as in January, 1946, Father Pirożyński initiated a number of masses for students, first spiritual retreats and a pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of the Virgin Mary in Bardo, in which around 300 young people participated. As the manager of the diocese Caritas²⁷ branch, he was able to restore the “Caritas Academica” organization. Thanks to that, he was able to organize three canteens, two academic libraries and, in February of 1946, he was able to open two student houses with 30 places each, which grew to 70 places each after some renovations. Thanks to the donations from UNRRA, he was able to clothe and feed the poorest and most needy students. He also financed their vacations.²⁸

Father Mirek had also developed ways to help students by including them in his priestly work. They continued a pre-war tradition and conducted collections in churches to gather funds that would be later used to run student canteens, to buy clothes for students, to pay for their medical treatment and vacation trips for the poorest students. Father Mirek also cultivated the pre-war traditions of Lwów and Warsaw and conducted priestly work among students in the form of lectures and spiritual retreats. In 1947, he started academic masses at 12:00 in the University Church.

In January 1950, Father Mirek was arrested. The apparent reason for the arrest was a letter he signed asking for permission to perform

²⁷ Janiak, E. (2000). *Dzieje i aktualna działalność „Caritas” Archidiecezji Wrocławskiej. Dolny Śląsk*, nr 8, pp. 168–169.

²⁸ Ciesielski, S. (1993). *Op. cit.* p. 177.

a collection for the sake of poor students. An inquest, lasting for more than a year, was eventually forfeited due to lack of evidence. However, during spring of the following year, the priest faced another baseless charge related to a collection for the cause of helping the poorest students who were “persecuted for their faith by the government, which took their scholarships, benefits, and free meals from them”.²⁹ During the interrogation, the priest was forced to stand up for several dozens of hours without being able to rest. He was also beaten. Eventually, the court sentenced him to one and half years of prison.

The Center of Academic Ministry of Father Marian Pirożyński was closed down by the government after the detention of Father Mirek in 1950.

In 1953, in addition to the Academic Ministry run by Jesuits, another ministry for students was set up in the Wrocław cathedral by Father Aleksander Zienkiewicz (often called “Uncle”), who was tied to Nowogródek before the war. The ministry received the small church of Saint Idzi as its headquarters. Initially, the ministry operated in secret and its activities were based around the Sunday mass, weekly lectures, spiritual retreats and summer trips to the sea. This secrecy lasted until October of 1956, when Bishop Bolesław Kominek was officially assigned to the Wrocław archdiocese.

Although the communist terror was toned down a little, the SB (Security Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) still interrogated priests and students, threatened and harassed them. Father Zienkiewicz³⁰ was also among the affected. Despite the threat of prison and high financial penalties, the priests still organized secret summer and winter camps, which helped to enrich the internal life of young people and served as a way to integrate the academic community together to a great degree.

In 1957, at Katedralna no. 4, the Catholic Scientific Institute was opened, which was to serve as a higher Catholic culture center. The students, along with the priests from the church of Saint Idzi, were moved there. When, in the next year, the Institute was closed down, a Catechetical Study remained there and, along with the students and Father Zienkiewicz, they created the Center of Academic Ministry (called “Four”). Since the ministry located in the University Church lost some of its power at that time, “Four” became the central place from which the academic ministry in Wrocław operated. Father

²⁹ Lubczyński, Z. (1999). In *Pięćdziesiąt lat Duszpasterstwa Akademickiego ...* Op. cit. p. 40.

³⁰ *Ksiądz Aleksander Zienkiewicz. Kaptan i wychowawca. (2001). Symposium w pięćdziesiątą rocznicę śmierci. Wrocław 18–19 listopada 2000 r.* Wrocław: Papieski Wydział Teologiczny.

Zienkiewicz used to mention that “the best youth from all over the city came to him and you could say that it was a renaissance of interesting people, ideas, initiatives, and interests, with systematic lectures and conferences. The students came en masse to participate in academic ministry masses and spiritual retreats in the cathedral”.³¹ Conservatories, lectures and conferences about theology, philosophy, society and history became the basis for intellectual formation. Work began in relation to the “Love, marriage, family” initiative. Meetings with remarkable people from different areas, e.g. Polish Primate Stefan Wyszyński, Bishop Karol Wojtyła, Father Franciszek Blachnicki (who created the Light-Life movement), writer Roman Brandstaetter, Wanda Póttawska and Elżbieta Sujak (medical doctors practicing family counseling) or Poles returning after spending years in soviet gulags, served as formational and culture-making experiences.

October of 1956 and March of 1968 served as a way to prepare for the “Solidarność” movement. After that, the Martial Law era was brought in. Wrocław students who participated in the academic ministry were a part of these events. The Church always stood closely behind them, against the communist violence, defending freedom and the subjectivity of the society. The academic priests played an important role in this time of turmoil. Father Zienkiewicz (1910–1995), an intellectual priest, mentor and a social-worker, is a perfect example of that stance. He stood hand-in-hand with students during the worst years of the Stalinist regime, celebrated with them the “October Thaw,” the release of the Polish Primate and the selection of cardinal Wojtyła to become the new Pope. He enjoyed the creation of “Solidarność” and, along with his student pupils, experienced the events past the 13th of December, 1981 to participate with the students in meetings with Pope John Paul 2nd and to learn what it meant to be free after 1989. When students finished their studies and left the academic ministry, he often performed wedding ceremonies for them and baptized their children or even grandchildren. He persisted in his service nearly to his last days, and his students persisted by his side when he was dying. He was known and is remembered by many citizens of Wrocław. His catchphrase was “Watch out! A person!” and he often quoted the words of Ludwik Hirszfel (1884–1954), a Polish doctor and microbiologist: “If you want to set someone on fire, you have to burn yourself” – which is a perfect testament to his dedication to his pastoral work for the sake of the academic community during the difficult time of communist enslavement. At the moment, there is an ongoing beatification process for Father Zienkiewicz.

³¹ Zienkiewicz, A. (1999). Zarys historii 30-lecia Centralnego Ośrodka Duszpasterstwa Akademickiego we Wrocławiu. In *Pięćdziesiąt lat...* Op. cit. pp. 84–85.

School Strikes in the Bytom Commune in 1906 and 1920

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At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries Upper Silesia was the arena of spectacular social and political movements. An experimental area in this regard was Bytom (Beuthen) along with its commune, where the Polish and German communities would clash and where even the tiniest of animosities were blown up to the scale of diplomatic scandals due to the propaganda.

The school strikes in 1906 and 1920 had a significant impact on the awakening and formation of the Polish consciousness in Upper Silesia. The school strikes that took place in Upper Silesia in 1906 were aimed at introducing the teaching of religion in the Polish language. In the Bytom commune the strikes were incidental in character; they did not gain the support of the Polish political elites. As a consequence, no Polish minority schools were created in Bytom before World War 1. The situation changed significantly only during the twenty-year period between the wars. In 1919 a conference of teachers in Bytom gave rise to the Upper Silesian Teachers Association and in 1923 the Polish-Catholic School Association for Opolian Silesia was founded. The main objective of the former was to admonish the authorities about giving equal rights to the Polish language and the right to create Polish schools, while the latter aimed to work out a legal basis for a private and public Polish minority school system, organising courses for teachers as well as materially supporting youth organisations and creating scholarship funds. The authorities not fulfilling the postulates for organising regular classes in Polish became the direct reason for holding a strike in the summer of 1920. The strike also encompassed the Bytom commune with 11.4 thousand participants (34.3%).

Key words: *school strikes; Upper Silesia; Bytom*

Even though we are under Prussian government we have not forgotten to respect the beliefs of our ancestors, speak Polish nor dress as our ancestors used to (...).

Who are we then? We are indeed not Prussian, but Polish.

"Dziennik Górnśląski" 1848

Upper Silesia was a place of spectacular socio-political activity at the end of 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. The awakening national identity – thanks to the influence from Galicia and Greater Poland and later the hopes of the Polish to annex the area of the newly reformed Poland and the insurgents and Silesian Uprisings before the plebiscite were vital in building a basis for the rights of Polish minority schooling. Bytom was an experimental educational area. Both the city and the district were places where the Polish and German camps often clashed, and even the slightest of conflicts were escalated by propaganda to the rank of a political scandal. After the plebiscite, Bytom became a border town. Efforts were made to show its German heritage by naming it the last bastion of Germany at the East borders of the country, which was reflected by the well-developed network of educational institutions at all levels of education. Taking into regard the development of Polish minority schooling in Bytom one should notice the systematic work of the Polish Government and pro-Polish educational organizations in the area. They satisfied the need for regular Polish language and religion lessons in the district, and in Bytom proper two centers of Polish culture were created – the Polish Gymnasium and the Polish People's University, which raised the elite of Polish intelligentsia.

1. Strike incidents in schools in 1906

At the onset of 20th century discrimination against the Polish minority in the Opole district was constantly escalating, especially towards teaching in Polish. Polish language was dominant in that area, especially in rural districts. In the cities German-speaking clerks, owners of industry and overseers in it, were a majority. The structure of language corresponded to the level of education. The early 1870s saw the escalation of germanization. Several bills passed in Upper Silesia were used as model bills for other areas called Polish in the borders of Germany. The overall goal was the total elimination of teaching in the Polish language and making German the sole language used in education, regardless of the school type. The first decrees were made by the government of the Opole (Oppeln) district in September 1872 they were local bills consulted with the ministry of education. It was the local nature of the changes that allowed for public discussion on teaching to be omitted and for the use of Polish in that part of Prussia.¹

¹ Schneider, K. – Bremen, E. (1886). *Das Volksschulwesen im preußischen Staate in systematischer Zusammenstellung der auf seine innere Einrichtung und seine*

Along with the language, also school books and aids in Polish were banned. The only instance of allowing religion to be taught in Polish was in the lower grades of primary schools but only if German was used simultaneously.² There was a ban under penalty of fines and even imprisonment on organizing free private lessons of Polish in Opole district.³ However, there was a special reward fund for teachers whose results in teaching German in primary schools were promising.⁴ From 1905 onwards there were special donations to teachers in German schools with a "large percentage of Polish children" i.e. 20% of children taking part in classes.⁵

From 1876, according to the authorities of the Opole district, German became the official language. The changes were excused by the need to make German more accessible to the Polish and to strengthen the bonds between Polish youths and German ones. At the same time German people were given protection against polonization. The main obstacle in realizing the aforementioned goals was seen by the authorities in the overcrowding of schools and the lack of leverage in assigning teaching posts. On July 15th, 1886, a new bill giving the government the sole right to employ new teachers in areas called Polish, the Opole district included, was passed. Local government in accordance with the school boards gave an opinion about a prospective teacher, but the final decision was made by government clerks.⁶ Public schooling in Upper Silesia and Greater Poland employed over 13.6 thousand teachers including about 5 thousand (37%) Polish teachers. According to Prussian authorities, at least two thousand Polish teachers needed to be let go, on the grounds of their involvement in pro-Polish activities.⁷ The eviction act of 1885 was also a factor in this situation and its aim was to rid Prussia of

Rechtverhältnisse, sowie auf seine Leitung und Beaufsichtigung bezüglichlichen Gesetze und Verordnungen. Bd. 3. Berlin, pp. 474–481; Kwiatek J. (1987), *Górnośląska szkoła ludowa na przelomie XIX i XX wieku*. Opole: Instytut Śląski w Opolu, pp. 18–19.

² Schneider, K. – Bremen, E., op. cit., pp. 474–477; Głowacki, H., *Szkolnictwo i oświata na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1816–1914*. Opole: Instytut Śląski w Opolu, Sign. A 48. Vol. 6, p. 37; Borodziej, Ł. (1972). *Pruska polityka oświatowa w okresie Kulturkampf*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, pp. 127–132; Trzeciakowski L. (1987). *Kulturkampf w zaborze pruskim*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, p. 187.

³ Borodziej, Ł., op. cit., pp. 207–208.

⁴ Kwiatek J., op. cit., p. 20.

⁵ Ibidem. pp. 27–28; Musiot, T. (1970). *Strajki szkolne na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1906 i 1920*. Warszawa-Wrocław: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, p. 24.

⁶ Borodziej, Ł., op. cit., p. 189.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 192; J. Kwiatek, op. cit., s. 28.

all people without a permit to live there. About 26 thousand people were deported, all in accordance with the law.⁸

People in Congress Poland had to deal with a similar situation. In January 1905 there were numerous workers' strikes in Russia and Congress Poland. Apart from the big cities like Warsaw or Łódź there were factory strikes and students' demonstrations in towns near the German border like Częstochowa, Sosnowiec and Dąbrowa Górnicza. The Revolution brought tangible positive changes on Polish land under Russian occupation, such as the right to found Polish institutions such as the Polish School Motherhood. Polish was also allowed to be used at commune halls.⁹

Echoes of society's displeasure reached Upper Silesia. According to the census of 1905 Upper Silesia had a population of two million, 1.2 million of which were either Polish-speaking or bilingual (Table 1). In 1906 in Bytom city commune there were 10.1 thousand students, among whom 5.8 thousand spoke Polish and 4.3 thousand spoke German. In the rural commune 30.8 out of 35.5 thousand students spoke Polish. There were only 4.7 thousand German-speaking students. Opole district had similar tendencies. Most of the German-speaking students lived in cities and Polish-speaking students were the majority in the country. Overall, there were 411.1 thousand students in Upper Silesia, of whom 288 thousand spoke Polish and 109.6 thousand German.¹⁰

Table 1. The censuses of 1905, 1910 and 1925 with regard to speaking Polish in Bytom and the Bytom rural commune.

Commune	Population 1905	Population 1910	Population 1925	Native language- German 1905	Native language- German 1910	Native language- German 1925	Native language- German and Polish 1905	Native language- German and Polish 1910	Native language- German and Polish 1925	Native language- Polish 1905	Native language- Polish 1910	Native language- Polish 1925
Bytom c.	60 273	71 679	84 625	38 513	41 766	63 658	1 816	2 360	18 686	22 644	27 294	2 188
Bytom r.	168 109	60 155	78 377	122 965	12 944	29 837	4 867	4 176	38 133	122 965	42 505	10 310
Total	2 035 651	1 267 062	1 360 814	757 200	613 624	810 966	55 230	51 586	384 574	1 158 828	581 701	151 168

Source: Golachowski S. (1950). *Materiały do statystyki narodowościowej Śląska Polskiego z lat 1910–1939*. Poznań–Wrocław: Instytut Zachodni, p. XVI.

⁸ Brożek, A. (1963). *Wysiedlenia Polaków z Górnego Śląska przez Bismarcka 1885–1887*. Katowice: Śląsk, p. 34; Borodziej, Ł., op. cit., p. 184.

⁹ *Rewolucja 1905. Przewodnik Krytyki Politycznej* (2013). Piskała, K. & Marc, W. (Eds.). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, p. 132; Davies, N. (1981). *Boże Igrzysko*. Kraków: Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, p. 841; Musioł T., op. cit., p. 17–18.

¹⁰ Musioł, T., op. cit., p. 20 and 60; Idem. *Szkolnictwo polskie w rejencji opolskiej 1919–1939*. Katowice: Śląsk 1964, p. 55.

The Upper Silesian school strikes of 1906 were directed toward introducing the teaching of religion in Polish. There were only isolated incidents of school strikes in the Bytom commune. Political dissension was a major factor against the consolidation of the pro-Polish movement. The letter asking Cardinal Georg Kopp from Breslau, who was called “an enemy of the Polish” by the press, for support of the strike to introduce the teaching of religion in Polish was the butt of many a satirical article, especially those in “Gazeta Robotnicza”. Even political leaders Adam Napieralski and Wojciech Korfanty had a negative attitude towards the strike. Social circles were unable to force a direct confrontation and fruitful discussion, despite putting considerable effort into it. The meeting which was planned to take place in Zygmunt Seyda’s¹¹ apartment on October 18th 1906 was fruitless. The following meetings planned in Bytom and Oświęcim, where representatives from educational societies from Greater Poland and Galicia were to be present, fell through. The only meeting happened in Katowice through the initiative of Rev. Aleksander Skowroński. Its aim was to prepare a rally about the “religious upbringing of Polish children”. During the rally there were plans to give the participants postcards depicting the fight for teaching Polish in Upper Silesian schools. They were ordered at a printing press in Lviv¹². From 1904 Skowroński himself was the representative of Silesia in the Polish Central Election Committee. During the strike in 1906 he was the leader of a small group of Silesian clergy openly supporting the teaching of religion in Polish. He was elected a member of parliament on January 25th 1907. Due to the displeasure of Cardinal Kopp he forfeited his mandate.¹³

At the direct suggestion of Cardinal Kopp the planned assembly in “Reichshalle” fell through. The meeting was cancelled and the preparation committee, set up by Rev. Skowroński, was dissolved. The protest was a public one. There were numerous newspapers which

¹¹ Zygmunt Seyda (b. 18th April 1876 in Poznan, d. 25th [28th] January 1925 in Warsaw), lawyer, national activist, journalist and member of Prussian and Polish parliament; he was affiliated with Polish National Democracy. One of the top activists of Greater Poland and the Silesian National Democracy. He was a member of Reichstag as a Polish minority representative between 1907 and 1918. A member of the House of Deputies of Prussian Landtag in Berlin 1908–1918. Between 1919 and 1925 he was a member of the Polish parliament and its vice-Speaker from 1922. He took part in writing the March Constitution. Trzeciakowski, L. (2003). *Postowie polscy w Berlinie 1848–1928*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, p. 491.

¹² Archiwum Państwowe w Opolu (APO), Rejencja Opolska, Wydz. II. Sign. 251, Raport prezydenta Rejencji Opolskiej, 22 X 1906; Musioł T., *Strajki szkolne*, p. 30.

¹³ Czaplinski, M. (1977). Skowroński Aleksander. In *Śląski Słownik Biograficzny*. Kantyka, J. – Zieliński, W. (Eds.). Katowice: Śląski Instytut Naukowy, pp. 379–383.

reflected the displeasure of society, such as: “Górnoślązak”, “Gazeta Robotnicza”, “Gazeta Opolska” and “Dziennik Śląski”¹⁴. This situation divided the Upper Silesian clergy into “pro-Polish” and “pro-German” camps. The German Centre Party also opposed the requests of the Polish-speaking people. The strike did not spread but was confined to a dozen or so towns where the parents refused to send their children to religion lessons in German. It was mostly in the Zabrze (Hindenburg) and Gliwice (Gleiwitz) communes, with the main point in Zabrze.¹⁵ The parents were threatened with significant fines and with losing their jobs. At some point the threats contained legal action and a jail sentence. German employers and courts became an excellent warranty of discrimination. There were even attempts to take the children via court rulings or putting minors into correctional houses. The individual drama taking place in Upper Silesia communes was commented on by the regional and international press. At the turn of 1906 and 1907 the strike slowly died out. The teachers eliminated any signs of Polish culture. There were numerous court cases ending with fines for defamation as German teachers had official government status. Fines were also given to owners of newspapers sympathetic to the strike, such as “Dziennik Śląski”, “Górnoślązak”, “Katolik” and “Gazeta Robotnicza”.¹⁶ The matter of the state manipulating the free will of its citizens had even gone to parliament, as it was discussed in November and December 1906, as well in the newly elected parliament in 1907. The deputies made the following statement: *We ask the Chancellor what he intends to do to effectively stop Prussian authorities from meddling with the freedom of conscience and the right to raise children in accordance to one’s spiritual beliefs and the rules of one’s Church guaranteed by the Civil Code.*¹⁷ Sadly, this problem was not resolved in a way that would satisfy the Polish.

2. Between Germany and Poland- the state of Polish minority schooling in Upper Silesia after World War One

The socio-political changes which happened after World War One in regard to German state administration had a visible effect on the

¹⁴ *Gazeta Robotnicza* (1906), Issue 90; *Gazeta Opolska* (1906), Issue 89; *Górnoślązak* (1906), Issue 254; *Dziennik Śląski* (1906), Issue 265.

¹⁵ *Der Schulstreik in Oberschlesien*, *Volkswacht* (1906), Issue 364.

¹⁶ *Schlesische Zeitung* (1905), Issue 40; *Gazeta Robotnicza* (1907), Issue 49, pp. 51 and 54.

¹⁷ Musioł, T. *Strajki szkolne*, pp. 41–43.

reorganizing of the educational system, including the Polish-speaking people's requests. In Upper Silesia the situation was particularly strained, as there were two camps forming there with opposing views on who Silesia should belong to – pro-German, which opted for staying in Germany, and pro-Polish, which wanted the lands to be returned to the Polish Motherland. The situation became complicated due to the upcoming plebiscite and political lobbying and general antagonistic attitudes related to it.

Before World War One Bytom had no minority schools even though a large percentage of its population spoke Polish. The first bills proposed by the government to make impromptu educational changes were in essence preserving the status quo. The hardest problem to solve was how to introduce teaching in Polish in a relatively instant manner. On November 20th, 1918 Germany allowed for religion to be taught in Polish, and on December 31st, 1918 for reading and writing to be taught in Polish. Classes were only offered if requested beforehand by the parents. However, due to the procedures being murky the bill had a reverse effect, mainly because of Polish inaction, successful blocking of Polish initiatives and hiring Polish-unfriendly Germans as teachers of the Polish language.¹⁸

Rules regarding the regular teaching of Polish in public schools were introduced on 1st February, 1919. They were to take place in the overall teaching program. Under no circumstances were they to be just an extracurricular activity. There were two hours weekly dedicated to teaching Polish. The Silesian dialect was also allowed to be used. However, teachers of Polish were to be paid less.¹⁹

The rights and obligations of the Polish minority of the Opole district concerning education were regulated in part by the Reich Constitution of 1919. Article number 113 described the right to use one's native language including the right to be taught it.²⁰ It was not ratified, however. Minority schooling was not discussed by the Prussian Constitution of

¹⁸ Rozczulająca uprzejmość rządu niemieckiego (1919). *Dziennik Śląski*, Issue 69; Lusek J. (2012). Próby ideologizacji bytomskiego szkolnictwa w latach 1933–1939. In *Bytom w cieniu dwóch totalitaryzmów. Szkice z dziejów miasta 1939–1989*. Rosenbaum, S. (Ed.) Katowice: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Oddział w Katowicach, pp. 58–59; Eadem (2010). *Szkolnictwo niemieckie i polskie w Bytomiu w latach 1740–1945*. Opole, p. 24.

¹⁹ Zdrojewski, E. (1934). *Szkolnictwo polskie na Śląsku Opolskim do roku 1929*. Katowice: Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych, pp. 1–5.

²⁰ Ernst, R. (1992). *Dokumente zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte, Bd 4: Deutsche Verfassungsdokumente 1919–1933*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, pp. 151–179.

1920 either. Article 73 was too vague – local parliaments had the right to allow foreign people to be taught in a language different than German.²¹

In 1919 local social activists initiated the groundwork for a People's Council in towns and communes. Wojciech Korfanty and Józef Rymer were a part of the Council's Commissariat. Bytom was the seat of the Head People's Council Sub commissariat. Its Education Department headed by Józef Eckert was founded in January 1919. It had sub-departments with each of them responsible for a different level of education. The department for folk schools' teacher preparation was headed by Jan Reginek, middle schools-Władystaw Komischke and public schools- Emanuel Imiela. The subcommissariat was disbanded very quickly on May 14th, 1919.²²

After the plebiscite was announced, the Central Plebiscite Committee, under the leadership of Parliament Speaker Wojciech Trąbczyński (Parliament Speaker 1919–1922, Senate Speaker 1922–1927), was established in Warsaw. Its aim was to help the Upper Silesians during the plebiscite. In 1920 the Interallied Governing and Plebiscite Commission took control of Upper Silesia. The school sub-department headed by Robinet de Clery fell under the Internal Affairs Department of the Commission. Poland was represented by the Polish Plebiscite Commissariat, which had an Education Department founded in 1920 and headed by Władystaw Komischke. It was divided into sections: Polish classes (headed by Wawrzyniec Magiera), public schools (Paweł Kaiser), seminars and seminar courses (Tadeusz Przysiecki) kindergartens (Emanuel Krzoska) and administrative (Emanuel Imiela).²³

In communes, as per the Head of the People's Council, there were plebiscite committees – Bytom's was headed by Dr. Jan Hlond. Each school district appointed a school expert. In Bytom, those experts were: Wojciech Baron (Bytom I), Sebastian Stach (Bytom II) and Ignacy Dworaczek (Bytom III). Experts were supported by School Care and School Deputations. They consisted of parents, teachers, local government members and clergy. Their main goal was to care for the physical and mental development of the youth, and their priority was

²¹ *Verfassung des Freistaates vom 30. November 1920* (1920). Berlin; Lusek, J., *Próby ideologizacji*, p. 58; Koehler, P. – Menschig, E. (1911). *Verordnungen betreffend das Schulwesen des Regierungsbezirks Oppeln. Bd. 1*. Breslau, pp. 634–641.

²² *Ze spraw szkolnych* (1919). *Katolik*, Issue 15; *W sprawie nauki polskiej w szkołach ludowych* (1919). *Katolik*, Issue 33.

²³ Karuga, W. (1968). *Organizacja Polskiego Komisariatu Plebiscytowego dla Górnego Śląska*. Opole: Instytut Śląski w Opolu, p. 34.

patriotic and civic education. They were not permitted, however, to alter the educational process.²⁴

3. In the name of the Polish language school strikes of 1920

The main obstacle the Education Department had to overcome was organizing and teaching the Polish language and religion in Polish, as well as taking care of orphanages and courses for teachers. On January 11th 1919 parents in Upper Silesia were given the opportunity to have their children taught Polish and religion also in Polish. The declaration to do so was signed by 94 thousand people, which meant that 22% of children of school age (430 thousand) were to be taught Polish.²⁵ Between January and March 1920 there are several preserved reports of the representatives of communal plebiscite committees, including the Upper Silesia Teacher Association, who oversaw the daily affairs of villages in the Bytom rural commune. One of the first reports, from February 26th, stated that Polish and religion classes are taught in nearly every public school, mainly using the Upper Silesian dialect. Only three schools gave the names of their teacher. Those were the schools in Rozbark (Rossberg), Szombierki (Schomberg) and Nowy Bytom (Friedenshütte). The report stated:

Polish was most likely taught in virtually every town in the Bytom commune. Religion classes [in Polish] are for students of every grade. Reading and writing in Polish starts in the fourth grade. The condition of receiving tuition in Polish is that the parents give a written request. The classes are given by teachers of the Upper Silesia dialect. It is difficult to discern what patriotic influence they have on children. In Rozbark religion was taught by Mr Krzanowski who is seen as Polish. He was stripped of the post and it was given to Mr Nowak, who calls his pro-Polish colleagues traitors. In Szombierki religion in higher grades is taught by Mr Rosemann and Mr Skowronek, who allegedly are not able to do it

²⁴ Musioł, T. *Strajki szkolne*, pp. 60, 68–73; Krupa, W. (1966). *Organizacje Polskiego Komisarjatu Plebiscytowego dla Górnego Śląska*. Opole: Instytut Śląski w Opolu, p. 34; Madeja, J. (1960). *Sprawy szkolne za czasów plebiscytowych*. *Kwartalnik Opolski*, Issue 2, pp. 67 and 74.

²⁵ W sprawie nauki polskiej w szkołach ludowych (1919). *Katolik*, Issue 33; Lukaszek H. (1930). *Das Schulrecht der nationalen Minderheiten in Deutschland*, Berlin, p. 26; Musioł T. (1961). *Publiczne szkoły powszechnie mniejszości polskiej na Śląsku Opolskim w latach 1923–1939*. Katowice: Śląsk, p. 56.

competently, while the lower grades are taught by Mr Rozkwitalski, who is fluent in Polish. In Freie Vereinigung in Bytom the teachers are Messrs: Kunert, Bittner, Rissmann – vacationed for this purpose, in Frydenshuta [German Friedenshütte, Silesian dialect Fryncita] Ertel, in Rozbark Neugebauer – dean. Mr Cyrus from Frydenshuta is the secretary of the German Inspector Association in Opole – vacationed. The Upper Silesian Teacher Association in the Bytom commune.²⁶

To realize the goals for teaching Polish qualified teachers were needed. Out of 65 thousand teachers in Upper Silesia only 368 of them were Polish. They came to Upper Silesia after World War One. They came mainly from Greater Poland, but some were from Galicia. According to the statistics in 1919 in the Bytom commune there were only 11 qualified teachers who could teach the Polish language.²⁷ On March 18th, 1919 district authorities passed an edict in which they promised to secure the necessary number of Polish-speaking teachers and to provide funds for their preparation.²⁸ In most schools Polish language classes were taught by German teachers.²⁹

According to 1920 statistics in the plebiscite area German administration carried out 112 immediate courses which were attended by 1200 teachers, while the aforementioned Education Department had seven courses for 224 students up to 1922.³⁰ The bad staff situation was to be improved by a teacher exchange with Greater Poland.³¹ Their numbers were too few, however, to properly organize a correct Polish teaching system.

In 1920 under the patronage of the Bytom Teachers Seminar there was a series of one year seminars which were to prepare qualified teachers for Upper Silesia minority schools. They took place in a rented hall of a Bytom hotel “Lomnitz” (1920) and the boarding house for Classic

²⁶ Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach (APK) 12/15, Polski Komisariat Plebiscytowy dla Górnego Śląska w Bytomiu (1918–1921), Sign. 112. Organizacja nauki języka polskiego w szkołach. Sprawozdania terenowych Komitetów Plebiscytowych dla Wydziału Szkolnego (1921), pp. 4–5.

²⁷ APK, 12/15, Sign. 152, Związek Nauczycieli Górnoślązaków (1920–1921), pp. 46–48; Sign. 124, Statystyka szkół na Górnym Śląsku (1920–1921), p. 21.

²⁸ Polska szkoła w świetle prawnych przepisów (1924). *Nowiny Codzienne*, Issue 8.

²⁹ Agitacja antypolska w szkołach (1919). *Katolik*, Issue 26.

³⁰ APK, 12/15, Sign. 152, pp. 46–48; Ze spraw szkolnych (1919), *Katolik*, Issue 15; Musioł T., *Szkolnictwo polskie*, pp. 61 and 70; Klon F. (1960). Kształcenie nauczycieli śląskich w okresie plebiscytowym. *Kwartalnik Opolski*, Issue 2, pp. 86–89.

³¹ Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz. I. Hauptabteilung Repositorium 76 Seminare. Preußische Lehrerbildungsanstalten (1810–1939), Sign. 1 b nr 25. Gebietsabtretungen (1919–1924).

Gymnasium students (1921). There were three Polish language courses for teachers in total, from 1920 till 1922. Outside of Bytom there were also courses in: Zabrze, Gliwice, Orzech, Tarnowskie Góry (Tarnowitz), Rybnik and Katowice (Kattowitz). Course participants were mainly manual workers or from a farming background from Upper Silesia. 66 women in total finished the courses. They were employed by Polish schools and preschools.³²

Maria Chwałówna, a teacher in Leki in Koźle (Cosel) commune and Katowice, recounted her time in an all-female high school, which had little respect towards Polish even from Polish-born intelligentsia, and the Bytom seminary where she became convicted that she should work for her Motherland:

When I was sent to high school I was astonished that no other girl spoke Polish and that speaking Polish was laughed at. Generally the opinion was that Polish is ugly and only simple unintelligent people speak it. Yet it was even worse in the Bytom seminary. Most of my classmates came from Polish families. They were ashamed of their language and Polish surnames. There was a large garden at the seminary, where Polish workers worked. I often translated conversations between the teacher and the workers. (...) In the "Katolik" bookstore I bought myself Polish language manuals. When we were saying goodbye the principal of the seminary R. [Stephan Reinke] told us we needed to work for an idea, but sometime our ideas may become shattered and then we need to find new ones. I thought to myself then: I'll set myself an idea so lofty no one will be able to shatter it nor will it fall. POLAND will be my idea.³³

In March 1919 there was a teachers' conference in Bytom. It began the formal association of Polish language teachers in Germany – Upper Silesia Teacher Association. In 1923 the Polish Catholic School

³² APK. 12/15. Sign. 111. Organizacja kursów języka polskiego dla nauczycieli. Programy, obsada (1920), p. 6; Sign. 141. Utworzenie i organizacja seminariów nauczycielskich dla Górnolązaków (1920), pp. 43 and 57; Klon F., op. cit., p. 85; Gawlik, S. (1979). *Dzieje kształcenia nauczycieli na Śląsku Opolskim (1765–1975)*. Opole: Instytut Śląski, pp. 88–89; Lusek J., op. cit., pp. 263–264; Eadem (2007/2008). Instytucje kształcenia nauczycieli w Bytomiu z końcem XIX i w I połowie XX wieku. *Oberschlesisches Jahrbuch*, Issue 23/24, p. 67.

³³ In September 1920 she was excluded from "Deutscher Lehrerverein" for admitting to being a part of the Upper Silesia Teachers Association. During the 3rd Silesian Uprising she was a medic in a field hospital of the Uprising Army in Toszek. Muzeum Górnoląskie w Bytomiu (MGB). Sign. H-1978. Księga Pamiątkowa Pracy Społeczno-Narodowej Kobiet na Śląsku od roku 1880–1922. Maria Chwałówna. Z moich wspomnień o Polsce, pp. 219–220.

Association for Opole Silesia was born. The main goal of the former was to fight for the equality of Polish language and the right to establish Polish schools. Many teachers did not want to become involved with the Association for fear of discrimination, much less to become a part of it. Edward Hoinka – a teacher from Karb (Karf) – wrote the following to the Polish Plebiscite Commissariat: *with the current tense situation in Upper Silesia, one needs to be careful*. Nevertheless, the Association grew in numbers- in January 1920 there were over 130 of them, including 20 from the Bytom commune.³⁴ The main goal of the latter association, founded in 1923, was to build legal grounds for public and private minority schooling in the Opole district, preparing courses for teachers and funding youth organizations and stipend funds.³⁵

In May 1920 right before school strikes began, there were a few dozen initiatives to make Polish more accessible to children and adults in Upper Silesia. Religion classes were held in all public schools. Polish language was taught in the secondary school in Nowy Bytom and public schools in: Brzeziny/Birkenhain (in 5 sections for 450 students), Chropaczów/Schlesiengrube (in 7 sections for 390 students), Rozbark (in 5 sections for 400 children), Nowy Bytom (in 4 sections for 160 children), Karb (8 sections for 540 students), Szombierki (3 sections, 300 students), Dąbrowa Wielka/Gross Dombrau (8 sections, 850 students), Rokitnica/Rokitnitz (7 sections for 460 students) and Szarlej/Scharley (8 sections). Polish was taught by 65 teachers, among whom those sympathetic to Polish as reported by the Education Department of the Polish Plebiscite Commissariat numbered only around 25.³⁶ There were also kindergartens and courses for adults in: Lipiny (Lipine), Szombierki, Miechowice (Miechowitz), Nowy Bytom, Chropaczów, Karb, Rokitnica and Brzeziny. Kindergartens were meant for the children and the activities there were to familiarize them with Polish traditions – games and songs. Classes for adults were separated into age groups: 14–28 and older than 28 – people who worked– the latter courses took place in the

³⁴ APK, 12/15, Sign. 108. Sprawozdania z prac Wydziału Szkolnego, p. 6; Sign. 152, p. 50; Rozczulająca uprzejmość rządu niemieckiego (1919). *Dziennik Śląski*, Issue 69.

³⁵ APK, 12/645, Magistrat Miasta Bytomia (1742–1945). Sign. 4271, Polnisch-Katholischer Schulverein (1923); Popiołek O. (1959). *Wykaz organizacji i instytucji polskich na Śląsku Opolskim*. Katowice: Śląsk, pp. 25–26; Musiot, T. *Publiczne szkoły powszechnie*, pp. 47–50; Wawrzynek, W. (1963). *Polskie stowarzyszenia akademickie na Śląsku Opolskim w latach 1924–1939*. Opole: Instytut Śląski w Opolu, p. 8.

³⁶ APK, 12/15, Sign. 163, Sprawozdania składane Wydziałowi Szkolnemu przez terenowe Komitety Plebiscytowe (1920), pp. 73 and 105.

evenings. The classes covered reading, writing, speaking, grammar, and the history and geography of Poland and Upper Silesia.³⁷

August Motyka – a teacher involved in teaching classes in Polish – had an accurate if harsh opinion of the enthusiasm of people without correct organization and awareness of the weight of the undertaken action. He wrote the following to the Education Department of the Polish Plebiscite Committee:

The reason why school strikes in Upper Silesia broke out is widely known. In this letter I want to express my experiences and thoughts regarding employing strikers by immediate forces. How is it from an educational standpoint. Children are coming in droves, which is a very good sign, but they lack perseverance, which is caused by the following: children see that their presence is voluntary so they are loud, late and do not bring writing utensils or their notebooks are just stacks of dirty papers stuffed into their pockets. Teachers' words have little meaning, and last in the heads of students for a very short time, because the classes are seen as unimportant as it is taught in the afternoons and the classes are full of children of both sexes and different levels of education and psyche. Keeping order, which is required for learning, is impossible with children lacking the idea of how our case is important. Other than that, I want to put emphasis on the danger of teaching them only the activities they enjoy, such as playing and singing. However, singing and playing must be regular for the children to come in the first place. Reducing classes to only playing can make all our efforts for naught, or at least just a trifle compared to morning classes in German. We have to do our best to facilitate love towards our native language through teaching and intellectual work, which will give games a grounding. For example, a soldier tired by several days' worth of marching can only then know what rest is, or we can appreciate the benefits of evenings and Sundays after working hard all week. Teaching via exercises in reading, writing and speaking requires goodwill that the children, with rare exceptions, lack, and that forces the teacher to use some kind of leverage over them to enforce obedience. However, commissariat teachers lack said leverage. This means that when a teacher reacts in an energetic manner to enforce order he may cause some of the children not to come back, because they feel offended. When a teacher does not want to cause dissent he acquiesces to the rowdiness. This causes the children to feel that they can get away with murder, which unfortunately affects the

³⁷ APK, 12/15, Sign. 163, pp. 105, 137, 151 and 167.

learning experience in a very negative manner. The chaos can be prevented by sorting children into smaller classes divided by age and abilities. It is better to spend twice the amount of time, but in proper decorum. The teacher would influence the parents to send their children to classes regularly. The gathering of children from all social strata combined with assigned homework will also prompt different social strata to cooperate, be they manual workers or farmers.³⁸

German authorities were not very prompt in acquiescing to the requests of parents regarding regular Polish classes, which resulted in a strike which took place in 1920. The strike also reached the Bytom commune, and it was only schools from the rural commune which took part in the strike. Out of 33200 children of school age 11400 (34.3%) students in 36 out of 56 schools (Table 2) took part in it. The following towns and villages took part in the strike: Bobrek, Brzeziny, Brzozowice (Brzozowitz), Chebzie (Morgenroth), Chropaczów, Dąbrowa Miejska (Stadt Dombrau), Dąbrowa Wielka, Godula (Godulla), Kamień (Kamin), Karb, Łagewniki (Hohenlinde), Miechowice, Orzegów (Orzegow), Piekary (Deutsch Piekar), Rokitnica, Rozbark, Szarlej and Szombierki³⁹

Table 2. Number of public schools and teachers in Bytom city and rural communes (1920)

School District	Catholic schools		Evangelic schools		Jewish schools	
	Number of schools	Number of teachers	Number of schools	Number of teachers	Number of schools	Number of teachers
Bytom I	11	204	2	20	1	6
Bytom II	22	279	1	2	-	-
Bytom III	21	278	2	3	-	-
Bytom IV	2	13	1	2	-	-
Total	56	774	6	27	1	6

Source: APK, 12/15, Sign. 124, Statystyka szkół na Górnym Śląsku (1920–1921), pp. 8 and 16.

The demands of the strike committees were the same in most places. Parents demanded that classes for lower grades were to be taught in

³⁸ APK, 12/15, Sign. 120, Strajki szkolne polskich dzieci (1920–1921), pp. 23–24.

³⁹ APK, 12/15, Sign. 109, Żądania polskiej ludności wprowadzenia obowiązkowej nauki języka polskiego (1920); Sign. 118, Doniesienia i zażalenia nauczycieli niemieckich prowadzących propagandę antypolską (1920–1921), p. 120; Musioł, T., *Strajki szkolne*, p. 104.

Polish, and in upper grades in Polish and German. German teachers were to stop discriminating against teachers teaching in Polish and to stop forcing children to observe religious practices in German. Sadly, there are very few surviving documents pertaining to the strikes of 1920. They are mostly memoirs and short excerpts from school chronicles, and the main sources are reports of Communal Plebiscite Commissariats.⁴⁰ School strikes in the Bytom commune lasted from June to the middle of September in 1920.

The first school to strike, on June 1 1920, – was the public school in Szombierki. According to the statistics on June 12 1920 there were almost 900 strikers, which constituted about 90% of the school's students.⁴¹ In the report from June 1 1920 Staniendas – head of the communal plebiscite committee stated:

The plebiscite committee in Szombierki made the following requests on behalf of the local citizens on May 20 1920: 1. First, second and third grades are to be taught only in Polish; 2. Higher grades in Polish and German; 3. Classes should end at noon, not 1 p.m.; 4. German "Jugendspiele" are to be abolished; 5. Teachers may not force children to attend school mass (Schulmesse); 7. Teachers will not terrorize Polish schoolchildren; 8. Unless our demands are met by June 1st, Polish parents will not send their children to school. On May 31st our delegation went to the village elder with our written demand but was met with an unacceptable response we can under no circumstances agree with. That means what has been promised has been done. Today, on June 1st, the Polish schoolchildren's strike in Szombierki begins. (...) Staniendas. Head of C.P.C.⁴²

A strike was also started by the school in Brzozowice. In the public school chronicle it stated:

In 1920 there was a strike because of a lack of response to our demands regarding teaching in Polish. The strike demoralized students because it was radical and lasted for a very long time. After the strike finished, the teaching of Polish and religion in Polish was introduced.⁴³

⁴⁰ On June 11, 1920 Polish Plebiscite Commissariat informed regarding the bill of May 17, 1920: *Please send "notices" of reasons, size (the number of strikers) and the circumstances of a school strike and important occurrences which accompany it.* APK, 12/15, Sign. 107, Wytyczne co do sprawozdawczości dla Wydziału Szkolnego oraz wydawane przez Wydział Szkolny terenowym Komitetem Plebiscytowym (1920–1921), p. 17.

⁴¹ Szombierki pod Bytomiem. Walka o szkołę polską (1920). *Katolik*, Issue 77.

⁴² APK, 12/15, Sign. 109, pp. 123 and 133.

⁴³ Musioł, T. *Strajki szkolne*, p. 107.

A tense situation between pro-Polish activists and a local teacher caused a strike. Jan Gajek and Wincenty Świder – spokespeople of the commune plebiscite committee noted that the teacher used corporal punishment on the children who talked about the strike to their peers.

On Saturday Mr Schumnik (...) beat our children in a beast-like manner for telling others about the school strike beginning on Monday (...) both boys were beaten with a thick stick, the so called Zeigestock (map pointer) 3/4 of an inch thick and 75 centimeters long. Each boy got 24 strikes on their bottom while the teacher insulted and threatened them. (...) Generally Mr Schumnik is a most unpleasant person who insults and discriminates against the Polish on every occasion he gets.⁴⁴

Walenty Świder in his report for the Polish Plebiscite Commissariat from June 26th 1920 wrote about the strike: German classes were boycotted while Polish ones were taught.

I hereby report that the strike is going on; around 85% of children do not go to school. Supplemental Polish classes are given by an academic Mr Wiśniewski, until noon in the class of Mr Czaja, and in the afternoon in the school (...) from Saturday on there is a second teacher – Mr Motyka.⁴⁵

On June 15th 1920 the Education Department got a report from Dąbrowa Miejska. As with other places, local authorities, German teachers and the police were trying to prevent the school boycott. Corporal punishment towards the children was used liberally and parents were fined heavily. Wincenty Matysik, commune secretary of the plebiscite commissariat wrote:

On Monday, June 14 1920 a school strike started in a public school. There are 477 students and on the 14th there were only 20 children in the school. Today, that is June 15th, there were a lot more students attending, due to a lack of foresight of some of the mothers, who brought the children to school themselves. Some due to threats of severe repercussions for absence from the teachers. One of the teachers, Mr Peterek, chased children down the road and sent them to school. He took one girl from the road with him to the school. Teachers also took books and schoolbags from attending children, so that no one knew they were in school and that they would come the next day. The same can be said about the policeman Mr Honisek who collected children and walked them to school. On Monday the 14th there was a 13-year-old schoolboy named Jerzy Cipar who encouraged children to skip school without harming

⁴⁴ APK, 12/15, Sign. 118, p. 50.

⁴⁵ APK, 12/15, Sign. 120, p. 10.

anybody. One of the mothers of a child named Schudey made a complaint about him that he was meddling with her children and she wouldn't let her children go on strike. When the teacher to whom the mother complained was going back from school he found the boy by chance and hit him twice on the head with his cane so hard that the cane broke. The teacher's name is Jerzy Pilep. There are two witnesses to that incident – Richard Bulik and Teodor Jendrysik. Furthermore, Mr Giller punished a boy named Brysch on the 10th and 11th even before the strike, for merely speaking out of turn during classes, in such a barbaric fashion that the boy's right hand became swollen and the flesh separated from the bones. The boy's mother went with him to the local doctor for a forensic examination, but he refused and insisted on operating on the hand immediately. There is also the incident of police sergeant Mr Pyka, an enemy of the Polish cause, who visited Mr Wilczek at Tarnogórska Road 62 D and asked him why he did not send his children to school and later told him not to with threats of repercussions, but Mr Wilczek told him he knew best when to send his children to school and then he asked him to leave and never come back. I ask the Education Department to notify the authorities of this to stop the terror and discrimination against the Polish and to punish the German teachers. People are outraged and ready to lynch the Prussian henchmen. I further ask the Department to check if parents really may be fined for not sending their children, for the fear of being fined causes some of them to break the strike. I ask Mr Commissar once more to take immediate action against the teachers to punish them or even cause them to get fired. Local teachers said that if this area was annexed by Poland and they had to teach Polish they would leave Upper Silesia at once. Up until now there was only one hour of Polish a week in a very lackadaisical manner, where the teacher taught in German and the children were punished severely for even the slightest mistake to dissuade them from learning Polish.⁴⁶

Another school which participated in a strike was the public school in Brzeziny. In a report from June 27th 1920 there was a lot of information regarding the cost of the strike and the need to resolve the situation and resume classes. The commune secretary of the plebiscite commissariat wrote:

Since June 11 our children have been striking. To keep them together we organize trips to different places under the guidance of their teacher, Mr Skrabania, who teaches the children out in the open. The trips cost our

⁴⁶ APK, 12/15, Sign. 120, pp. 7–9.

Committee over 300 marks because we buy something on almost every trip. Yesterday, on June 26th the Education Department had a meeting to discuss the strike. One of the guests at the meeting was Mr Neumann, a Kreisschulinspektor from Bytom. We established that up to the third grade, that is for children aged 6 to 9, classes should be given only in Polish, and only after that in both Polish and German. We demanded information on how many teachers would be able to do that. There are 6 male and 2 female teachers. We were required to approve two teachers, but we can only approve one of them if he is an Upper Silesian and can speak Polish fluently. The second teacher, who has been teaching here since April, was denied on the basis of not being able to speak Polish. The Kresischulinspektor said in regard to the strike that we should send our children to school because a lack of education affects them negatively and that in the Zabrze, Katowice and even Chebzie (Morgenroth) communes the children resumed classes. I would like to ask whether we should stop the strike or not. Up to today no agreement was reached during the meeting. We await the decision of the Education Department. We also demanded that our children not be threatened or discriminated against after returning to school, because we would have to take other precautions. We also demand that politics not be practiced in schools. We also wanted to have patriotic pictures removed from schools. At the meeting was our enemy, a dean named Będzinka- we talked to him about politics until he had enough of it. To our response to their claims that they were teachers by the grace of God even the Kreisschulinspektor cringed. When the Kreisschulinspektor told us to send our children to school he assured us that Polish representatives will sit in all departments and that our demands will be taken into consideration when we present them to the Commission. We ask the Education Department how we should respond and that we would appreciate an answer as soon as possible. Out of 900 children 678 are striking.⁴⁷

Among the strikers were also students of the public school in Szarlej. On June 10th they made demands regarding introducing teaching in Polish. One teacher, Mr Jejtner did not make much out of those demands, which caused a boycott. As in other schools, during the strike children were taught in Polish, in Jana Kubański's inn by Antonina nee Rokicka [Niedbalska],⁴⁸ and she recorded:

⁴⁷ APK, 12/15, Sign. 120, pp. 15–18.

⁴⁸ Antonina Rokicka-Niedbalska (b. March 7th 1893, d. April 23th 1975), pedagogue. She was affiliated with the Polish Military Organization and took an active part in Silesian

I came to Upper Silesia in the spring of 1920 (...) I immediately started to secretly teach Polish to the children of miners in Szarlej. The children yearned to learn (...). At that time the locals demanded the introduction of Polish into schools. There were school strikes here and there. Lessons took place [in Szarlej] in the biggest exhibit hall of [Jan] Kubański. The mere act of the students assembling lasted for half an hour, as all children from all the classes, a few hundred of them, came at once. They took their places at the restaurant tables and I stood next to the blackboard (...) Classes went on for over two hours without breaks. (...) The parents approached me and said: "Polish is so beautiful". One time a local named Lizurek came to the hall and warned me that the Germans wanted to arrest me. There was a German police officer right on his heels (...). The children shot to their feet and started shouting: "We won't go to the German school". (...) At that moment the windows flew open and mothers' arms showed through them. The hall became half empty. Children who stayed banged their fists on the tables and shouted: "We won't go to the German school". At the same time people carried the Germans out. They came back with a direct order: "Missy teacher, we won't let any harm happen to you". I had some doubts whether to stay or go. I acquiesced to the demands of the people inspired by their heroic attitude. I began teaching nearly everyone, because they were thirsty for the Polish language.⁴⁹

The police used firearms during the arrest of Anna Rokicka which made the incident famous in all of the Opole district. Even Robinet de Clery from the Education Department of the Interallied Governing and Plebiscite Commission intervened.

There was also a strike in Dąbrowa Miejska Seweryn Dziembowski; the school sub-inspector wrote in his report from June 1920:

During the school strike (four fifths of the school population) afternoon classes were given outside of the school. After the strike ended there are two Polish courses being organized and they should start on July 1st.⁵⁰

Fines which were given to the parents of the striking children were designed to deter them from continuing the boycott. Appeals to remove

Uprisings. During World War Two she was a part of the resistance under the codename "Magda". She retired at the rank of lieutenant. She was awarded with the Order of Polonia Restituta, Cross of Independence, Upper Silesia Star and the Golden Badge of Polish Teachers Association for her efforts in teaching the blind. She wrote many articles for typhological journals. *Monografia Cmentarza Bródnowskiego* (2007), Warszawa: Urząd Dzielnicy Warszawa Targówek.

⁴⁹ APK, 12/15, Sign. 120, p. 23.

⁵⁰ APK, 12.15, Sign. 163, p. 186.

the fines were sent to the Education Department of the Plebiscite Commissariat in Bytom and it then intervened to the authorities of the Opole district and the school inspectors. They used the precedent of strikes in Westphalia, where the children held a strike because of religious reasons⁵¹. The punishment was especially harsh for parents of students in Szarlej. In November 1920 they protested against repercussions in a plea to the Education Department:

The Plebiscite Committee in Szarlej has appealed to the inspector several times but without any visible success. Parents who refused to pay the fines were taken to court. From other towns in our commune we heard nothing like that. Only in Szarlej do they punish incessantly for striking. This means that the people are bitter and we need to resolve the situation as soon as possible. We implore the Education Department to take care of the matter.⁵²

Among those intervening to abolish the fines were: Jan Hlond and Władysław Komischke from the Polish Plebiscite Commissariat and Robinet de Clery from the Interallied Governing and Plebiscite Commission. However, the authorities of Opole district flat out refused.⁵³

The strike did not stop the kindergartens and language courses from running even though some of the people responsible for them were reassigned to working with the striking children. In Bytom the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul ran a Polish kindergarten where there were around sixty children. There were also kindergartens in Rozbark, Piekary and Miechowice. The main language used there was German, but they also taught Polish. Classes containing fun and games were taught in Bytom, Brzozowice, Karb, Bobrek, Lipiny, Świętochtowice (Schwientochlowitz), Piekary, Rozbark, Orzegów, Dąbrowa, Miechowice, Chropaczów, Szarlej, Nowy Bytom, Łagiewniki and Hajduki (Bismarkhütte). The classes in Miechowice were taught by a teacher named Ms. Firlusowa. About 80 children took part in those. She also founded an education club. In Karb the classes were taught by Mr Mrozek from Biskupice (Biskupitz). He taught six days a week both in the mornings and afternoons. Classes in Bobrek had a similar timetable and were taught by Mr Mroczek, a teacher from Biskupice. In Chebzie the classes were taught by Mr Bothor from the industry department, twice a week. He also gave private lessons. In Lipiny Polish language classes were held in a girls' high school. The Christian Mothers Association had

⁵¹ APK, 12/15, Sign. 120, p. 35 (18 August 1920).

⁵² APK, 12/15, Sign. 120, p. 49.

⁵³ APK, 12/15, Sign. 120, pp. 34 i 53.

a Polish kindergarten there. Polish language courses were also organized by the Płomień Society. The classes were taught by Czauderna with Dean Skiba teaching commerce-related language. In Orzegów Polish classes were given to three groups, 400 children in total.⁵⁴ Among the teachers of Polish in the Bytom commune were: Szweda, Tomaszewski, Pillich (Secretary of the Saint Jack Education Society in "Schlesischer Hof" hotel in Bytom), Stefan Przybylski, Jerzy Scheurich, Henryk Winkler (Polish Red Cross member who ran a Polish library near Bismarck Smelter), Gracjan Drozd, Wiśniewski, Gawlik, Józef Nawrath, Konrad Szczurek, Anna Pająkowa, Rozalia Krypczykówna, Monika Śładkówna, Anna Kaprolówna, Anna Musiałkówna, Anna Zabiegalanka.⁵⁵

In August 1920 vocational courses for railway employees were given in the People's University in Bytom. The courses were taught by August Motyka and Dr Landowski. The building in which the People's University was located was also the Polish Women's Society headquarters.⁵⁶ It was also the seat of the Romanian library run by Janina Żnińska which after the death of Dr Łuk in Jassy, Romania was transported to Upper Silesia. Żnińska organized a handicraft club for Bytom children affiliated with the People's University. It was just a ruse to teach children Polish songs and carols. At her initiative traditionally clad Silesian dolls were made. The set of eight dolls was a representation of a traditional wedding. It was sent to Poznań and deposited in a museum there.⁵⁷

Another charity activist in the Bytom commune was Maria Znatowicz-Szczepańska – wife of Head Consul of the Polish Consulate in Bytom – Aleksander Roman Szczepański (1922–1929). She came from Królewiec (Königsberg). Her motto was: "Each Pole should help other Poles through their work". In the consulate room in Bytom she held games for children and taught them to sing Polish songs. There was an annual Christmas

⁵⁴ APK, 12/15, Sign. 163, pp. 179–183, 186, 207, 277–284, 359–361.

⁵⁵ APK, 12/15, Sign. 163, pp. 441.

⁵⁶ APK, 12/15, Sign. 163, pp. 412–414.

⁵⁷ During the plebiscite the library was moved to the Polish Consulate in Bytom. Janina Żnińska oversaw it until 1927, when books were given to the Bytom Education Association. It was finally given to the Silesian Museum in Katowice. Janina Żnińska was born in Wąbrzeźnia in Pomerania, and in 1895 she moved to Bytom. A merchant by trade, she spent her free time practicing her acting in amateur actors' groups of industrial societies. She was also a skilled director. She was an active member of the Polish Women's Society, the "Sobótka" Society as well as being the founder of the Singing Clubs Association and the "Iskra" Reading Society. During World War One she set up a sewing room in the People's University. She initiated collecting clothes which were repaired and given to the Homeless Committee. In 1925 Żnińska moved to Katowice. MGB, Sign. H-1978, Janina Żnińska, pp. 180–183.

Eve with presents at the consulate. Children who were to attend their First Holy Communion were given candles and prayer books. On the day of the Communion the children were invited to a formal breakfast. Znatowicz-Szczepańska organized sewing courses during which there were morality, religion and hygiene lectures. The lack of a minority school for Polish children forced them to organize separate classes to teach reading and writing in their native language. The courses took place during winter with qualified teachers. In 1923 the Szczepański family moved to the United States to Chicago, where Aleksander Szczepański got the post of Head Consul.⁵⁸

The Bytom commune strike lasted until fall 1920. On August 12th Dr Magiera of the Education Department of the Polish Plebiscite Commissariat reported:

Because the strike resulted in inquiries by inspectors in schools we agreed to end it. We should be mindful of teachers with a hostile attitude toward the Polish and complain about them to the commune inspectors.⁵⁹

In all districts of the Bytom commune the difficulties in teaching Polish because of German propaganda were emphasized. There was a distinct lack of Polish schoolbooks- one of the reports stated: "Katolik" primers and Komischke's reading books cannot be implemented as there are no bills regarding the use of Polish school books. There was a problem with establishing education clubs and libraries. Seweryn Dziembowski, school sub-inspector reported in June 1920: Tiny collections are called a "Library" even though they consist of a few ragged books.⁶⁰

Conclusion

The school strikes in 1906 and 1920 had a definite effect on the birth of Polish national identity in Upper Silesia. The first of them happened only in one place while the latter was region-wide, a result of the tense atmosphere caused by the lack of clarity about who Upper Silesia belonged to and also by the enthusiasm following the First and Second Silesian Uprisings. After the plebiscite on March 20th 1921, two thirds of Upper Silesia was left in Germany. Poland got most of the Bytom rural commune – 65% of its area. The divide was based on the results of the voting – 59% of the people voted for Poland in the rural commune, and

⁵⁸ MGB, Sign. H-1978, Marja Znatowicz-Szczepańska, pp. 392–393.

⁵⁹ APK, 12/15, Sign. 120, p. 33.

⁶⁰ APK, 12/15, Sign. 163, p. 186; Sign. 109, p. 3.

only 25.33% voted for Poland in the city. Most of the Poles living in the areas which remained in Germany moved to cities which lay on the other side of the border – Królewska Huta, Siemianowice or Katowice. With the stabilization of the socio-political situation after the plebiscite in the late 1920s and 1930s, Polish courses were systematically cancelled in Upper Silesia (Table 1). The 1933 Opole district census showed that 100 thousand people used Polish as their native language and that there were 266 thousand bilingual people. In the Bytom commune, both city and rural, the number of people speaking Polish or bilingual people also decreased systematically. There were only 10 courses of Polish for 111 students and 33 courses of religion for 1100 students. In 1938 there was only a single religion class in Polish for 9 people. In 1939 the courses were cancelled completely. This tendency also applied to minority schools. A Polish minority school (Minderheitsschule) was established in 1927 in Dąbrowa Miejska, in Public school no. 10. In 1927 there was just a single class with six students in 1928 and five in 1929.⁶¹ In 1933 there were only 17 minority schools for 189 children in the Opole district. In 1939 there were six schools with 49 students left.⁶²

⁶¹ APK, 12/666, Kreisschuleinspektion Beuthen I (1879–1941), Sign. 2, Statistik Schulverhältnisse (1904–1938, pp. 209–213; *Statistisches Handbuch der Stadt Beuthen* (1928), Beuthen, pp. 108–116; *Schematismus der Volks- und Mittelschulen Schlesiens. Bd. 3: Oberschlesien* (1931), Breslau 1931, s. 12; *Heimatbuch der Stadt Beuthen OS*, Beuthen 1928, s. 110; *Deutschlands Städtebau. Beuthen OS* (1929). Berlin–Halensee: Magistrat Beuthen OS, p. 68.

⁶² APO. 1, Nadprezydium Prowincji Górnośląskiej w Opolu. Sign. 122, Statistik über des Minderheitsschulwesen, pp. 28, 83 i 127; Sign. 123, Statistik über des Minderheitsschulwesen, pp. 74, 173, 205, 208, 251a i c, 304, 324 i 348; Orzechowski, K. (1949), Zagadnienie asymilacji mniejszości na tle szkolnictwa polskiego na Górnym Śląsku. *Przegląd Zachodni*, Issue 5/6, p. 409; Musioł T., *Publiczne szkoły powszechnne*, pp. 53 and 55.

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