

Historical education as a source of knowledge of Public security organs using the example of institutions responsible for providing security during the period of the Second Polish Republic

Abstract: In the system of educating officers of bodies responsible for public security, historical education plays an extremely important role. When developing new legal concepts or adapting existing regulations to civilizational and technology progress, it should be remembered that in the history of each country there is a historical heritage that allows avoiding errors and thus generating excessive material and social costs. Public order authorities should be trustworthy for the public, because only then they can be effective. Knowing how to work out confidence-building situations, how to avoid duplication of wrong decisions can be derived from the events of the past. By displaying the organizational and legal achievements of individual bodies responsible in the past for ensuring security for citizens, we gain an effective educational tool. When choosing the content of education, it is necessary to reach for achievements showing the effects of actions taken in the past and related to their perception (acceptance, dislike, condemnation) by society. For the purposes of this study, to signal historical issues related to public security bodies in the Second Republic of Poland which can be included in the didactic process, selected issues illustrating only the historical outline of the State Police and Fire Brigade were used.

Key words: police, fire brigade, education, history, security

History as a field of science has at least two purposes – it educates and nurtures¹. Exploring the issues concerning historical events, we seek our roots and explanations about the workings of the world that surrounds us. What factors shaped or continue to shape the society, what caused us, as a nation, to reach a place we are nowadays? We wonder about the relations among various ethnical groups that lived in the territory of a particular country and the influence which those relations had on the system, the structure of nationality, political stability and the place in international hierarchy. We study biographies of remarkable people (rulers, military leaders, reformers, revolutionists, scientists) trying to understand what inspired them, what made their work a success or a failure. By analyzing war campaigns of great leaders, soldiers aspiring to become leaders themselves learn how to win battles and avoid failures.

Therefore; the Latin maxim *historia testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae*² should be a lantern of sorts – indicating direction of research, methods and ways of educating people responsible for shaping and implementing systems that take part in providing security to the society. When developing new legal concepts which increase the level of security or else adapting the already existing regulations to civilization and technology progress, it should be remembered that both in the history of our country as well as other countries there is a historical heritage to be taken into consideration. A historical heritage makes it possible to avoid errors and consequently evading the generation of excessive material and social costs. While material costs are easy to compensate for, social costs imply a series of mental events that are difficult or even impossible to eliminate. Public order authorities should be trustworthy for the public, because only then they can be effective.

The knowledge about handling confidence-building situations, avoiding duplication of wrong decisions one can draw this from the events of the past. However; for historical education, to fulfill its task in preparing officers and employees of services responsible for national security for the effective implementation of their tasks, it is necessary to select the appropriate content of education. The educational program should highlight the organizational

¹ URBANOWICZ, B., *Polska edukacja historyczna w świetle literatury*, „Prace naukowe Akademii Jana Długosza w Częstochowie, Zeszyty Historyczne”, 2014 vol. XIII, pp. 207-225.

² History is a witness of times, light of the truth, life of the memory, the teacher of life.

and legal achievements of individual bodies responsible for ensuring the security of citizens in the past. In such case, it is essential to use data showing the effects of the undertaken actions as well as those relating to the perception (acceptance, dislike, condemnation) by the public of these bodies.

The universal globalization process forces introducing historical education³ to the officers' education system, in particular issues concerning multiculturalism and respect for human rights. To make it easier to understand the essence of the message contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is necessary to show the historical context of the enactment of this legal act. The historical context should deal with the following issues: when, by whom, why, in what circumstances and on the basis of which tragic events of the past it was enacted. The presentation of events violating the fundamental rights of minorities, which eventuated in the crimes of the Holocaust, genocide and ethnic cleansing will contribute to the justification of the introduction of appropriate legal regulations and the development of algorithms for the future to prevent similar atrocities. Proper recollection of these issues will help to better understand the mechanisms and consequences of modern human rights violations.

A feature of modern society is essentially unrestricted mobility, which results in the phenomenon of migration. Society is becoming an increasingly diverse community. Diversity does not mean only ethnic or religious diversification, the appearance of such person or group of people in a new environment results in the phenomenon of alienation and significant disruption of interpersonal communication. Therefore; it is necessary to develop the cultural competence of officers performing tasks with foreigners so that they are prepared to face the difference. Historical education may have a significant role here – strengthening the intercultural competence of officers of various services.

The achievements of historical and legal sciences indicate that the state together with its attributes, accepts the obligation to protect the community residing in its territory against all external and internal threats. At the same time, it is obliged to create favorable, equal conditions of existence, regardless of individual material resources, ethnicity, religious and political affiliation for all persons staying on its territory⁴. The complexity of issues related to ensuring security throughout history and especially in the nineteenth and twentieth century, lead to the fact that no country has one universal body entrusted with all administrative activities in the sphere of security and public order. This dependence caused the institutional system of internal security⁵ developing in the world and in Poland.

The construction of a modern system that guarantees security of the society is characterized by the search for optimal institutional solutions and delegation of powers. A similar situation – albeit in different historical realities – took place during the times of the Second Polish Republic. The authorities (institutions) responsible for ensuring and implementing solutions related to universal security and state security in the Second Polish Republic include: the State Police, the Fire Brigade, the Border Guard, the Border Protection Corps, the Department of Customs of the Ministry of the Treasury, the Railway Protection Guard (and formerly the Railway Guard, Military Railway Guard, State Police commissioned in 1920-1934 to ensure order and security in the railway area), Division II of the Polish Supreme Command (intelligence, counterintelligence).

³GARBULA-ORZECHOWSKA, J., *Edukacja historyczna w procesie globalizacji*, <http://instytut.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/08-Garbula-Orzechowska.pdf> [access date 14.03.2018]

⁴CIEŚLARCZYK, M., *Teoretyczne i metodologiczne podstawy badania problemów bezpieczeństwa i obronności państwa*, Siedlce 2009, pp. 151. ; Zobacz również GULCZYŃSKI, M., *Nauka o polityce*. Warszawa 2007.

⁵GROSICKA, K., GROSICKI, L., GROSICKI, P., *Organizacja i kierowanie instytucjami bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego państwa*, Pułtusk-Warszawa 2013, pp. 9.

To indicate historical issues related to public security authorities in the Second Polish Republic, only the historical outline of the State Police and Fire Brigade will be presented for the purposes of this study. The final selection of issues related to the history of these organs will depend on the assumed didactic goal.

Regaining independence after 123 years of lack of statehood put the administrative authorities of the state under an obligation to establish institutions responsible for internal security. It was difficult because individual political parties sometimes had solutions that differed extremely, modeled on existing systems in individual partitions⁶. In addition, each of the political formations wanted to be able to influence law enforcement agencies so that the formation would defend their interests. The initiative of the appointed public security bodies most often came from the civil (especially municipal) or military side. At that time: Polish National Gendarmerie, City and Commune Police, Railway Guard, River Guard, Field Police, City Militia based on the Citizens' Guards, Citizen Militia and People's Militia. These bodies operated quite efficiently. Unfortunately, there were numerous disputes over competence regarding the scope of responsibility. Consequently, the unification of existing police formations became the priority. As a result of the undertaken actions a draft bill was sent to the Sejm in May 1919. It called for creating a single police authority (in place of the previous formations), which was to be called the Security Guard. In the complex design, the new formation was to be built on military models while still fully subordinated to the minister of the interior. It was to be a state body financed in 75% by the state treasury, and the rest by local governments. On July 24, 1919, the Sejm adopted the Act establishing a nationwide apparatus of the public security service, rejecting the proposed name of the Security Guard and giving it the name of the State Police. In accordance with art. 2 of this Act, the State Police became the executive body of state and local government authorities, and its main task remained the protection of security, peace and public order. The issue of subordinating the Police to local self-government bodies (governor, district leader) was limited to performing administrative and ordering tasks by the police. However; subordination to prosecutor's offices and judicial authorities have been combined with the fight against crime. All issues related to organization, supply, supplementation, armament and training were treated as internal affairs of the authority, which were responsibilities of police superiors.

The State Police Act was in force until March 28, 1928, afterwards, it was replaced by a regulation of the sixth of 1928 of the President of the Republic on the State Police⁷. The ordinance corrected the political position, keeping the name of its own police formation. The police ceased to be a state organization of the security service, becoming "a military-like corps designed to maintain security, peace and public order"⁸. As a rule, executive functions in the field of security and public peace remained directly within the competence of the State Police. On the other hand, some powers in matters of public order were delegated to state and local government authorities, which the Police were to support or supervise in this respect⁹. Organizationally, the local police units were adapted to the administrative division of the state. The National Police Headquarters was the central office of the State Police, headed by the chief commander, reporting directly to the minister of the interior. The chief commander, at the request of the interior minister, was initially appointed by the Chief of State and then by the President of the Republic of Poland.

The internal structure of the National Police Headquarters was composed of:

1. Department I - Organizational and Training.

⁶ LETKIEWICZ, A., MAJER, P., *Polska Policja*, Szczytno 2012, pp. 63.

⁷ Dz.U.RP z 1928 r., no. 28, position 257.

⁸ MISIUK, A., *Policja Państwowa 1919-1939. Powstanie, organizacja, kierunki działania*, Warszawa 1996, p. 63.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

2. Department II - Economic.
3. Department III - Personnel.
4. Department IV - Headquarters of the Investigative Service.
5. Department V - General Command.
6. Inspection.
7. Independent Military Department.
8. Secretariat.

The commanding authority of the chief commander was limited to organizational and administrative issues, i.e. supply, supplementation and training.

At the province level there was a district command of Polish Police (State Police), whose work was managed by a district commandant subordinated to the chief commandant in terms of administration and organization. The district headquarters supervised the work of several district headquarters. District commanders within the scope of executive service subordinated to district leader¹⁰.

At the district level, there were district headquarters with district commanders at the head. The internal structure of the district headquarters included: district commandant, his deputy, commissioners, lower officials and auxiliary staff. It should be noted that the entire effort of police work was implemented in the vast majority of cases by district structures¹¹. District Commanders were subordinated to senior superiors and district administrative leader as administrative superiors. Submission to administrative factors was favored by the police financing system, which accounted for a quarter of all living costs by local authorities. Despite the abolition of this obligation, many local governments continued to allocate specific amounts to the maintenance of police facilities. The commanding activities of the district commander consisted of supervising police stations and the manner in which tasks carried out by police officers subordinate to him. In the event of criminal acts of significant species weight, the commandant was required to participate in police activities personally. In addition, he was obliged to inform the district administrative leader about events related to security breaches in his area.

Due to its autonomy, the Silesian province occupied a special place in the administrative structure of the country. The consequence was a different status of the Police, which appeared there under the name of the Silesian province Police. The organization and scope of operation was the same as in the State Police. Police of the Silesian province was subordinated to the Silesian province and local authorities without the authority of the Minister of the Interior. However; it was headed by the chief commander of the Silesian province Police¹².

In the organizational hierarchy, the smallest units were Polish Police stations, which were established in cities, districts or districts of large cities, and Polish Police stations located in communes. Service in police stations and outposts consisted of organizing patrol celebrations and street posts. Thus, these units constituted the main type of executive units of the State Police whose tasks included: maintaining order and public safety, conducting proceedings in cases of crime and performing activities ordered by prosecutor and judicial authorities in a specific area. There were also special task posts in the Polish Police field

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 48 and next.

¹¹ HALICKI, K., *Organizacja i funkcjonowanie Policji Państwowej w Okręgu Wileńskim w okresie międzywojennym - zarys problematyki*, [in:] STYS, H., TOMASZEWSKI, P., (Ed. By.), *Historia i polityka. Myśl polityczna i dyplomacja w XX wieku*, vol. 7, Toruń 2008, p. 112.

¹² LETKIEWICZ, A., MAJER, P., op. cit., p. 63.

structures, i.e. railway, water, station and border posts. The manner in which these units were organized was adequate for communal posts¹³.

The Polish Police Corps was divided into three organizational divisions. The Polish Police included the following services¹⁴:

- general (uniformed) police, carrying out preventive tasks and road traffic inspections;
- investigative (criminal) police, taking action in the event of a crime;
- political police, whose aim was to counteract and fight structures and phenomena threatening the constitutional order of the state.

Political police played a special role throughout the interwar period, although its name is misleading and suggests permanent surveillance of society restricting the freedom of professed political views. Its location in the Polish Police structures was not a good solution, hence the attempts to reorganize it and change the name, which did not improve its functioning, i.e.

- Political Defense (1919-1923);
- Information Service (1923-1924);
- Political Police (1925-1926);
- Investigation Service (1926-1939)¹⁵.

It was a specialized service whose main task was to prosecute perpetrators of crimes against state structures¹⁶, including persons suspected of subversive activity and in particular those disseminating communist-nationalist content. The implementation of these tasks was based on special methods and means of counterintelligence work, which were divided into investigative and operational. The former included: arrest, detention, searches of persons and flats, identification, interrogation, pursuit and search. The latter were considered operational methods: observation, surveillance, listening-in, correspondence censorship and widely used confidential intelligence¹⁷.

A developed role model of police education played an important role in the efficient functioning of the State Police. Schools for post officers and leaders were organized at the district headquarters, while improving schools and conducting specialized courses operated in Żyrardów, Mosty Wielkie near Lviv and Piaski near Sosnowiec. An officer school operated in Warsaw¹⁸.

The presented issues are only a starting point for classes in historical education regarding the State Police. Issues of Polish Police placement in the state administration system, tasks implemented for local government and the judiciary as well as presenting everyday life of officers would complement it.

Among the authorities that played a significant role in building the universal security system in the period of the Second Republic of Poland was the fire service. Similarly as in the case of the police, they had to undergo a difficult unification process, caused by the experience of the three partitions. The fire protection system in all districts depended on local government and social activity (volunteer fire brigades). In the first period of the independent state, the following district fire-fighting organizations were active: the Florian Union (Russian partition), Fire Brigade Association of Cieszyn, National Fire Brigade Association of Galicia

¹³ GIERSZEWSKI, J., *Komenda powiatowa i posterunki policji w powiecie chojnickim (1920-1939). Rola, działalność i struktura organizacyjna*, „Policja” 2005, no 2, p. 105.

¹⁴ JELENIOWSKI, M.K., *Model Policji Państwowej II Rzeczypospolitej*, [in:] SZYMANIAK, A., CIEPIELA, W., (Ed.by.), *Policja w Polsce. Stan obecny i perspektywy*, vol. 1, Poznań 2007, pp. 19-20.

¹⁵ A. LETKIEWICZ, A., MAJER, P., op. cit., p. 65.

¹⁶ The tasks assigned to the then Political Police are currently being carried out by the Internal Security Agency.

¹⁷ SIEMAK, Z., *Metody pracy Policji Politycznej w II Rzeczypospolitej*, „Policja” 2001, no. 2-3, p. 109.

¹⁸ MISIUK, A., *Historia policji w Polsce...*, op. cit., p. 119.

and Lodomeria in Lviv (Austrian Partition), Greater Poland Association of Fire Brigades, Pomeranian Association of Fire Brigades, Silesian Association of Fire Brigades (Prussian Partition)¹⁹.

Bolesław Chomicz, president of the Florian Association, initiated actions to unite the fire movement in the country in June 1919. As a result of actions taken in September 1921, a nationwide congress of fire brigade delegates took place in Warsaw. The result of the deliberations was the creation of the Main Association of Fire Brigades of the Republic of Poland. The unification of all fire brigades operating in the Second Polish Republic into a unified nationwide corporation was aimed at improving the investigation of matters related to firefighting – including improving techniques for combating fire hazards, unifying equipment and representing the firefighting environment in relations with state authorities and the public²⁰.

During the unification congress a decision was made to call together: the Supreme Council and the Main Board of the Fire Service of the Republic of Poland. The Supreme Council was joined by representatives of the founding associations, all levels of local government and insurance organizations. Bolesław Chomicz became an administrator at the head of the Main Board. The union's field structure was adapted to the current territorial division of the state, and was composed of province, regional and district associations. The basic organizational unit consisted of units of volunteer fire brigades, possessing a significant scope of independence. From 1923, the Main Association of Fire Brigades of the Republic of Poland was formed by the following provincial associations: The Florian Association, Association of Lesser Poland, Association of Greater Poland, The Pomeranian Association, The Cieszyn Association, The Cracow Union, Vilnius Union, The Lublin Union, Union of Nowogródek, Union of Lodz, The Białystok Association, Union of Kielce²¹.

Cultivated in fire brigades: honor, dedication and service to others, worship of the uniform, love of the homeland, economy, activating local communities, education and culture-forming activities²², implemented fire protection tasks and a number of other tasks in the field of helping citizens arouse widespread respect in society. The indicated elements meant that volunteer fire brigades became the largest social organization in the Second Polish Republic. In 1924, there were about 2,400 volunteer fire brigades including 200 court fire brigades, 120 military fire brigades, 40 railway, 15 scout fire brigades. In total, all units had approx. 150 thousand firefighters²³.

The cited data shows that fire protection was mainly based on volunteer units, which – despite being organized and eager – were inadequate in many cases. This was proven by reports and memorials sent by the Association's Main Board to the Ministry of the Interior. Lack of sufficient financial resources and properly prepared forces resulted in the lack of organized fire protection in many places of the country. Units of volunteer fire brigades obtained funds for their activities from membership fees, guard services provided by local communities and individual donors.

¹⁹ PILAWSKI, W., *Chronologia powstania ochotniczych straży pożarnych na ziemiach polskich w latach 1845-189*, Komenda Główna PSP, Warszawa 1998, p. 35.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 37.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 226.

²² Apart from fulfilling their statutory obligations, volunteer fire brigades – especially in small towns – played a significant culture-forming role. Various events such as readings and listening to the radio were organized in fire stations. Orchestras, amateur theater groups, choirs, libraries as well as reading rooms were being organized there. In 1938 volunteer fire brigades were running 700 libraries, 2500 club rooms, 1500 bands and 1000 orchestras.

²³ Ibidem, p. 232; MISIUK, A., *Instytucje bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego Instytucje Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego w Polsce, Zarys Dziejów (Od X wieku do współczesności)*, Szczytno 2012, pp. 229-232.

During organized cultural and artistic events, funds were obtained for equipment retrofitting. Local self-government units, appreciating the tasks performed by volunteer fire brigades, transferred funds to local units for their maintenance. Insurance and insurance institutions played an important role in providing financial support to fire brigades. A special role in this respect was played by Universal Mutual Insurance Company, which provided firefighting equipment to fire brigades, organized trainings for firefighters and transferred funds for statutory activities²⁴.

Until 1934, fire brigades operated on the basis of anachronistic legal solutions still in force of the partitioning countries. The law was unified in this respect with the adoption of the Act of 13 March 1934 on protection against fires and other disasters²⁵. The Act, as the body competent for the provisions regarding fire prevention and providing assistance to citizens in cases of natural disasters, was indicated by the Interior Minister. The provisions of the Act sanctioned the current role of the Polish Fire Service Association in shaping fire safety and development of fire brigades. The Act on protection against fires and other disasters was divided into volunteer, forced, professional and private guards. Professional fire brigades were compulsory for cities exceeding 40,000 inhabitants. Voluntary fire brigades remained the basic units in communes below 40 thousand inhabitants. In towns and communes below 40,000 inhabitants in which there were no volunteer or professional fire brigades (or their forces were insufficient), forced guards operated²⁶. Institutions and enterprises in which there was a significant fire risk due to their operations or which employed a large number of employees, were obliged to establish and maintain private fire units²⁷.

One of the most important functions of the state was – and, in fact, still is – the protection of security and public order. Fulfilling this function, the state created specialized organs to which tasks consisting in ensuring security and prosecuting perpetrators of crimes against the established legal order were assigned. With Poland regaining independence in November 1918, almost immediately began to organize a uniform security system, entrusting the implementation of tasks in a specific areas to specialized bodies. In the period of the Second Polish Republic it was a particularly difficult task, when the state was dealing with serious political and economic problems.

Almost throughout the whole interwar period optimal legal and organizational solutions were sought. Their main task was to improve the internal security system of the Polish state. In retrospect, we can say that not all of the actions have brought the expected results, especially those related to the system of border protection and crimes targeting state structures. The achievements of institutions implementing tasks related to the protection of security order in the Second Republic of Poland is an excellent material for usage in the educational process of officers of modern organs that implement tasks that protect society against internal and external threats.

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²⁴ Ibidem, p. 233 and next.

²⁵ Dz.U. 1934 no 41, position 365.

²⁶ SZAFLIK, J.R., *Dzieje ochotniczych straży pożarnych*, Warszawa 1985, p. 235.; BURZYŃSKI, E., RADWAŃSKI, Z., *Dzieje ochrony przeciwpożarowej w Polsce*, Warszawa 1964, p. 62, 63.

²⁷ Ibidem.

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