

Original article

Lviv as the cradle of Polish independence organizations

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INFORMATION

Article history:

Submitted: 30 December 2019

Accepted: 18 May 2020

Published: 15 September 2021

ABSTRACT

Lviv occupies a special place in the history of Poland. With its heroic history, it has earned the exceptionally honorable name of a city that has always been faithful to the homeland. *SEMPER FIDELIS* – always faithful. Marshal Józef Piłsudski sealed that title while decorating the city with the Order of *Virtuti Militari* in 1920. The past of Lviv, the always smoldering and uncompromising Polish revolutionist spirit, the climate, and the atmosphere that prevailed in it created the right conditions for making it the center of thought and independence movement in the early 20th century. In the early twentieth century, Polish independence organizations of various political orientations were established, from the ranks of which came legions of prominent Polish politicians and military and social activists.

KEYWORDS

Lviv, independence, Union of Active Struggle, Riflemen's Association, Józef Piłsudski, Kazimierz Sosnkowski



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Introduction

In our history, Lviv undoubtedly occupies a unique place among Polish cities and, in particular, borderland strongholds. With its beautiful, chivalrous history, it earned the opinion of “ornaments of the Kingdom” and the “ark on the waves of the flood” [1, p. 39]. After the siege by the Swedes in 1655, Jan Kazimierz, returning from exile, found a safe refuge there. For several centuries, Lviv was a strong bulwark of Poland and Christianity and many times saved the connection of the south-east of Poland with Europe and Western civilization with combat effort. It won the exceptionally honorable name of the city that has always been faithful to the homeland. *SEMPER FIDELIS* – always faithful. The titled was sealed by Marshal Józef Piłsudski, who decorated the city with the Order of *Virtuti Militari* in 1920.

The glorious past of Lviv, the always smoldering and uncompromising Polish revolutionist spirit, the climate, and the atmosphere that prevailed in it created the right conditions for making it the center of thought and independence movement in the early 20th century. Apart from open organizations, there were formed numerous underground groups, as well

as unions associating school and university youth and people coming from the Russian partition to study in Lviv. The longing for independence and the unification of the homeland were increasingly heard in Lviv's youth's souls. The conditions for underground work were becoming more and more favorable, as Józef Piłsudski noticed during a short visit to this city in the summer of 1896. When reflecting on the further building of foundations of the fight for independence, he concluded that it is necessary to have own people there. Many of the then-revolutionary and independence activists said that the soil in Lviv was fertile, just a clear slogan and program were needed.

Piłsudski escapes to Lviv

After the discovery of the "Robotnik" printing house in Łódź in 1900, Piłsudski was arrested on the night of February 22-23, and then he escaped from the hospital in St. Petersburg on the night of May 14, 1901. After that, there were rumors that he left for England, but he just secretly arrived in Lviv. The organization of the escape from the St. Petersburg hospital and crossing the border between the Russian and Austrian partitions was carried out by Piłsudski's faithful companion, Aleksander Hozman Mirza Sulkiewicz (alias Tatar, Mały, Czarny Michał, Polski Tatar), a Muslim, member of the Second Proletariat, co-founder and prominent activist of the PPS, member of the Combat Organization of the Polish Socialist Party, the Union of Active Struggle, and soldier of the 1st Brigade of Legions. He gave his life for Poland in the battle of the 1st Brigade near Sitowicze in Volhynia on September 18, 1916 (while saving the wounded).

After arriving in Lviv, Piłsudski stayed with the Jodek family that was of outstanding merit to Poland, and a little later he moved to their villa in Brzuchowice near Lviv. There he recovered after his stay in a Russian prison and established broader contacts with the Lviv independence environment. *After his prison experience, and especially after simulating a mental illness and a nervously tiring stay in a room shared with madmen, Piłsudski required a longer rest [...] despite his exhaustion, Piłsudski began to arrange his further work. The persuasions of his comrades from London to come and work there at editing one of the PPS magazines, did not suit his, as he writes, "domestic nature". He wants to "continue his career", namely, work in the country* [2, p. 28].

In the following years, Piłsudski visited Lviv and Brzuchowice several times, maintaining the old contacts and establishing new ones, especially strong with representatives of the academic environment and the PPS members. In the summer of 1903, during his stay in Brzuchowice, he made contacts with the Lviv-based, progressive and independence-oriented Radiant Organization. After returning to Rytro, where he spent the summer, Piłsudski wrote an article, a reply to the survey, "How I became a socialist" for "Promień", a youth magazine published by this organization. The future Marshal of Poland contained in it, inter alia, important words about the role of mother in his upbringing, socialism and independence: *a socialist in Poland must strive for the independence of the country, and independence is a significant condition for the victory of socialism* [Quoted after: 2, p. 30].

Development of the pro-independence movement in Lviv

Due to the favorable conditions for underground activity in Galicia, in the first years of the 20th century more and more independence activists moved there, mainly to Krakow and Lviv. The years 1904-1905, the period of the Russo-Japanese War and the Revolution in

Russia, is the time when the Polish national instinct demanded to use the shock experienced through the tsarist regime for the Polish cause. Secret military organizations began to spring up spontaneously, the fighting spirit was revived, and the tools needed for it were becoming increasingly real. The revolutionary and insurrectionary events that took place in Poland in 1905 were a strong shock to Polish public opinion, and they strongly touched the society. As Janusz Pajewski writes: *It was both a revolution and a great national liberation fight. Never had such great crowds moved to fight for liberation in Poland as in 1905* [3, p. 22-23].

These events undoubtedly resulted in a decisive and – as the course of subsequent events showed – a permanent increase in the political awareness of the broad masses of the society. Polish political thought began to crystallize in all three partitions. Back in 1897, Józef Piłsudski said in an interview with Władysław Studnicki that after the period of resignation following the lost January Uprising, it is necessary to *get people used to the idea of independence, and we do not know how this idea will be implemented. Maybe a war, maybe a revolution* [4, p. 15-16]. The insurgent idea, the idea of armed struggle to regain independence, spread after 1905 in Polish society. It was received with particular interest and commitment in the academic circles of Polish cities, primarily Warsaw, Krakow, Lviv, Vilnius, and many others. The insurgent ideas reached and found numerous supporters in the ranks of senior high school students. The revolution of 1905, despite its defeat, showed that the national liberation thought did not cease to exist in Polish society, and, at the same time, made it clear how serious revolutionary and independence layers are in the Poles. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 awakened the thought of the Poles' active struggle for independence. However, an organized Polish force was needed for an armed act, which Józef Piłsudski perfectly noticed and understood. Analyzing the events of that time and Polish possibilities in organizing a serious insurgent force, he noticed a clear weakness in this matter and the need to build organizational structures for the future army. Taking a serious position in the leadership of the Polish Socialist Party, he drew attention to the lack of *a disciplined, organized, resilient group that could be used for various actions; a group based on military discipline and obedient to the orders of the leadership* [...] *This is an important thought for Piłsudski's later activities, which will never leave him. He will implement it in the coming years in various forms: the Combat Organization of the PPS, the Union of Active Struggle, the Riflemen's Association, and finally in its fullest form – the Polish Legions* [2, p. 31]. Under the influence of the Russo-Japanese War, Józef Piłsudski began his in-depth study of the history of wars, he was particularly absorbed in studies devoted to the Napoleonic wars and the Boer wars; he read the works of Carl Clausewitz and many other prominent military theorists.

Revolutionary and independence forces were concentrated mainly in Galicia, which resulted from the fact that it was there that Poles had the most developed civil and political liberties, and the possibility of political activity was the greatest among the three partitions. In Galicia, revolutionary military training was carried out during secret combat courses. In Lviv, were organized courses and exercises for independence youth from Krakow. Field exercises and shooting lessons were conducted under the Józef Piłsudski's supervision, at the municipal shooting range at Kurkowa Street, where the Lviv Shooting Brotherhood, whose traditions date back to the turn of the 14th/15th century, had its headquarters. The Brotherhood's task was to train the townspeople in the use of weapons. In one of the reports of the Austrian Police one can read: *Piłsudski began to spread the idea in words and in writing that to gain independence for Poland, one should move from a dream to creating forces and organizations that, at the right moment, can take up an armed fight with Russia for Poland's independence* [1, p. 14]. In his work about Piłsudski, Leon Wasilewski recalls: *In his military propaganda,*

Ziuk found much more rewarding ground in Lviv than in Krakow – so he more often and longer stayed in this city [5, p. 15].

One of the first secret independence organizations in Lviv was the conspiracy Organization “Intransigent”, which was established at the end of 1904. Its goals and tasks were like those of the later Union of Active Struggle. The Central Committee composed of Władysław Studnicki (a well-known journalist and initiator of the organization), Marian Kukiel (student of the Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv), Ignacy Witold Lubicz-Sadowski (studied agricultural chemistry at the Lviv University of Technology, considered the soul of the organization), Medard Downarowicz and Stanisław Bęklewski (students of the Lviv Polytechnic) was the head of the “Intransigent” [6, p. 20; 7; 8]. The members of the organization came mainly from the Lviv community of academic youth and senior secondary school classes. There was established the officers’ council consisting of thirteen reserve officers of the Austrian and Russian armies, with the task to develop regulations and training programs. Despite the conspiratorial conditions, the Organization “Intransigent” developed quite intensively, going out with its activity into the field, also smaller towns. At the end of March 1905, its ranks numbered about 300 members representing quite a strong force under the then conditions [8, p. 1]. The main task of the “Intransigent” was military training of Polish youth and the creation of cadres for the future insurgent army, which was to fight against the Russian partitioner. In the summer of 1905, Marian Kukiel was appointed the commissioner of the city of Lviv at the Commander of the City, who was then the reserve officer of the Imperial-Royal in the Austro-Hungarian Army, Tadeusz Ścibor-Rylski, later a soldier of the Polish Legions and the Polish Army reborn in 1918. Most of the members of the Central Committee of the “Intransigent” organization belonged to the PPS, the main party of the revolutionary independence movement. The task of preparing the insurgent cadres was largely accomplished, as the members underwent basic military training, and in 1908 joined the Union of Active Combat [6, p. 21].

Under the influence of the war and revolutionary events of 1904-1905, some underground organizations operating in Galicia decided to start agitation and organizational activities also in the territory of the Russian partition. Such activity, apart from members of the PPS, was also undertaken by some activists of the Lviv “Radiant Organizations”. The then editor of the “Promień” magazine, and at the same time the PPS member, 20-year-old Marian Kukiel was sent to agitation and revolutionary work “for the cordon”, to Częstochowa, located in the Russian partition. Here, after the “setup”, at the end of 1905 he was identified by the Russian authorities and imprisoned for six months in Piotrków Trybunalski. After serving his sentence, he returned to Lviv, where he continued his underground activity. His mother, Helena Kukielowa née Sroczyńska, who came from a family with deeply rooted traditions of the struggle for independence, lived in Lviv. People from the Lviv underground, including Walery Sławek and Tomasz Arciszewski, had just started to appear in her apartment. In Lviv, there was a strong center of independence thought and underground organizations.

After the end of the war and the revolution of 1905, Józef Piłsudski was also gradually shifting the basis of preparations for armed struggle to the territory of Galicia, which took over a large part of the active element from the Russian partition, i.e., political activists protecting themselves there and recruiting future fighters for independence. In 1907, Kazimierz Sosnkowski, a young emigrant from the Russian partition and a student of the Lviv Polytechnic, took over the leadership of the militia circles created in Lviv by the Combat Organization. Marian Kukiel recalls and characterizes Kazimierz Sosnkowski from that period as follows: *Very young – twenty-something years old – he showed great organizational skills, as if inborn (after his grandfather from Grochów) military talents, a mind absorbing knowledge about*

war and mastering its issues, initiative and energy, great intellectual culture, and personal charm. He grew up quickly to the tasks assigned to him. He tried to combine polytechnic studies with them [9, p. 30]. Kazimierz Sosnkowski recruited more and more activists to militia circles, mainly young people, mostly students of the Lviv Polytechnic. He engaged, among others, Zygmunt Bohuszewicz and Władysław Sikorski, a member of the "Union of Rebirth", a reserve officer in the Austro-Hungarian Army, whom Marian Kukiel considered one of the most outstanding independence activists, in cooperation. Sikorski was one of the very active lecturers training members of Lviv independence activists, including militia circles organized by Sosnkowski. Marian Kukiel, who often took part in these conspiratorial meetings, wrote years later: *I'm going to someone's apartment at Pełczyńska Street. Józef Piłsudski is there. There is Kazimierz Sosnkowski. There are probably [Walery – J.Z.] Sławek and [Aleksander – J.Z.] Prystor. There are some future ministers, some generals. And the future Commander-in-Chief, Władysław Sikorski, teaches us the elementary infantry tactics using matches* [10, p. 33]. Training in militia circles went beyond the framework of training for underground and guerrilla warfare, thanks to J. Piłsudski and K. Sosnkowski it entered the training courses for insurgent military operations and increasingly broadly reached young people of various political orientations. In the spring of 1908, Marian Kukiel, Kazimierz Sosnkowski, and Władysław Sikorski took part in the convention of the Polish Youth Union in Zurich, where the vast majority were youth members and supporters of social democracy or the left wing of the PPS. Recognizing the increasingly clear shift of socialist youth abroad to the "all-Russian" and anti-uprising positions, Kukiel, Sosnkowski and Sikorski concluded that military preparations should be based on a broader element, go beyond socialist circles, and the training process should become a military school. The training would be conducted in close connection with the PPS but not under its banner anymore. It was supposed to be the nucleus of the future Polish Army, not a party militia [6, p. 23-24; 9, p. 30].

Analyzing the experiences of the Russo-Japanese War and the 1905 revolution, Józef Piłsudski finally came to the conclusion that revolutionary troops, even if they were the best trained and self-sacrificing, but poorly equipped and armed, could not be used against the Russian Army. He decided that only the army can successfully take action against a regular army.

After M. Kukiel, K. Sosnkowski and W. Sikorski returned from Zurich to Lviv, preparations for the establishment of a new typically military organization began [2, p. 37]. After a conversation between Sosnkowski and Józef Piłsudski in the summer of 1908, the former decided to organize what he thought he was reading in the mind of the future Marshal. At the end of June 1908, the Union of Active Struggle was established. Apart from K. Sosnkowski, a group of Lviv conspirators participated in the preliminary preparatory work, including W. Sikorski, M. Kukiel, Mieczysław Dąbkowski, Zygmunt Bohuszewicz, Jan Jur-Gorzechowski, Władysław Jaxa-Rożen, and Ignacy Lubicz-Sadowski [6, p. 24; 11, p. 26]. The founding meeting held in Sosnkowski's apartment at 12 Lenartowicza Street was attended by K. Sosnkowski, M. Dąbkowski, and M. Kukiel. The Union's activity was modest at the beginning of its operation; however, it quickly expanded and went beyond Lviv and encompassing other Galician cities with its organizational structure. Marian Kukiel recalls this first period of its activity in Lviv as follows: *Since 1908, there has been a proper military work, there is the Union of Active Struggle. It was not that we were unaware of the ridiculousness of these beginnings under the conditions in which it happened and of our own unpreparedness and awkwardness* [10, p. 33]. And this is how the UAS, the first Polish secret officer school after over 100 years of captivity and the first organizational unit of the emerging military cadres, was established in Lviv. At the first meeting, the "Rules of the Union of Active Struggle" and the ideological

declaration contained in it were adopted. We read there: *Striving for a revolutionary uprising of Poland against the Moscow invasion, the Union of Active Struggle states that the goal of the concerted efforts of all its members is the Independent Democratic Republic. The UAS sees the way leading to this goal in the broadest possible release of the revolutionary energy inherent in the masses* [12, p. 51-52]. Many distinguished figures, who contributed to the independence of Poland, comes from this organization, as to mention, among others, Władysław Belina-Prażmowski, Kazimierz Fabrycy, Tadeusz Kasprzycki, Marian Kukiel, Julian Stachiewicz, Władysław Sikorski, Edward Śmigły-Rydz, and Tadeusz Wyrwa-Furgalski. Since then, Lviv became the dominant center in independence work.

The Lviv youth were the first to take the initiative to actually work to regain independence. Barbara Mękarska-Kozłowska, the daughter of one of these young conspirators, wrote about the youth in her work entitled "The Borderland Mission of Lviv": *The youth from Lviv was extraordinary. One day, rollicking schoolchildren, one with the other, a beloved Lviv lay about, play together, like little Stachiewiczzes, older Julek and younger Wacek, with little Mękarskis (older Staszek – so cruelly tortured in Auschwitz – and the younger Stefan, my father). They all skip school, play "kits" on Pohulanka with passion, and breed pigeons together. And suddenly – overnight – still in school uniforms, they fall into a conspiracy in its varied and sometimes very picturesque form, however leading to the same path to joint effort in the armed struggle for Poland, for Lviv* [1, p. 16].

In 1910, on the initiative of the UAS, the Riflemen's Association was established in Lviv. The founding meeting was held on June 29 in an apartment at Zielona Street. A twin organization – the "Rifleman" Society – was established in Kraków in the same year. The legal basis for these organizations was the Act on Associations and the Ordinance of the Ministry of National Defense of 1909 on *supporting voluntary shooting*. The name "Riflemen's Association" is a literal translation of the term "Schutzen-Verein" used in the regulation.

Establishing paramilitary organizations

In the first period, the Riflemen's Association in Lviv was headed by the Department of the Riflemen's Association, composed of Władysław Sikorski (president), Medard Downarowicz, Hoser, Konopacki, Aleksander Litwinowicz, Kazimierz Sosnkowski, Ostrowski, Gustaw Daniłowski, Rysiewicz, and Hipolit Śliwiński. In fact, the management was exercised by the UAS Department. The establishment of the Riflemen's Association in Lviv and the "Rifleman" Society in Krakow allowed for the further development of the military movement. The possibility of using military shooting ranges, a certain freedom in organizing and conducting exercises and lectures, and purchasing military weapons and ammunition was obtained. These were priceless achievements for the soldiers of future Poland. As already mentioned, shooting organizations developed primarily in Lviv and Krakow, and this is for the simple reason that those cities were the largest concentrations of academic and school youth. The Main Headquarters headed by Józef Piłsudski established its seat in Lviv. The Commander-in-Chief had the staff headed by Kazimierz Sosnkowski at his disposal.

The activities of the Riflemen's Association in Lviv did not meet with such favor from the Austrian military authorities as the activity of the "Rifleman" Society in Krakow. Difficulties appeared, among others, due to the lack of full freedom in organizing field exercises and shooting at military shooting ranges. Also, it was not easy to obtain small arms and ammunition. The situation in this respect improved in 1913, when the Austrian Army gave the Union some help in the form of an additional batch of weapons for shooting exercises and training.

Local authorities also issued permits for carrying out exercises using weapons, for journeys and marches of larger units without any major problems. In the spring of 1913, permission was also given to dress the members of the Riflemen's Association [6, p. 27]. Until 1913, the authorities of the Imperial-Royal Army gave shooting organizations mainly older type rifles, such as the Werndl rifle and the single-shot rifle, of little use on the battlefield at that time. At the outbreak of World War I, these rifles were only used by soldiers of auxiliary and rear units and the Polish Legions. The Balkan crisis and the efforts of the Riflemen's Association led to receiving a small number of modern small arms, the Manlicher rifles. They were loaned to the Union for training purposes and were under the protection of its Lviv Headquarters.

At the same time, analogously to the ZWC, a secret "Polish Army" was formed within the independence division of the National Democracy (the so-called Fronda). It created its conspiratorial troops of a military nature, the Polish Rifle Squads, from whose bosom soon emerged other outstandingly distinguished figures, including Mieczysław Neugebauer, Marian Januszajtis, and Henryk Bagiński.

The "Falcon" Gymnastic Society, the first nest of which was established on February 7, 1867 in Lviv, following the example of the Czech "Falcon, established by Mirosław Tyrz in 1862, was also heading towards military development. The first "Falcon activists in Lviv were Klemens Żukotyński, Ludwik Goltental, Jan Żaplachta-Zapałowicz, Józef Milleret, Jan Dobrzański, Antoni Durski, Żegota Krówczyński, and Władysław Janikowski. The "Falcon" Gymnastic Society in Lviv – later called "Falcon Matrix" – operated as the only one in Poland for the first 17 years. The first branches outside Lviv were set up in Tarnów and Stanisławów in 1884, and new posts in Przemyśl, Kraków, Kołomyja and Tarnopolin 1885, in Nowy Sącz in 1887 and in Gorlice in 1892. In 1892, a uniform organization "Polish Falconry Union" was established with its seat in Lviv.

An initiative to extend military organizations to the environment of rural youth came from Lviv. That way the Bartosze Teams were created. It was an independence organization founded on Wawrzyniec Dayczak's initiative in 1908 in Lviv by the Polish Youth Union "Zet" to counteract the influence of the Ukrainian Sich Association. The Bartosze Teams consisted mainly of young people from the villages of Eastern Galicia, mostly academic youth studying in Lviv. During the Balkan War in 1912, the Bartosze Teams were transformed into a military organization, becoming, in a sense, a competition for the Riflemen's Association. From 1912, they functioned as a military organization. In 1914, they had 280 teams and over 7,000 members. Despite sometimes considerable ideological differences, all the above-mentioned organizations were united by one idea: independent Poland.

In May 1911, at a meeting of the Riflemen's Association in Lviv, Piłsudski delivered a lecture on "Battle crises". It was Piłsudski's first lecture with a purely professional-military content. The rapporteur for this lecture noted in the journal "Życie": *For many, Józef Piłsudski's lecture was a lesson in bravery and heroic perseverance, in this lecture a new tone was resoundingly entering Polish culture. In this lecture, the speaker emphasized that in the crises of battle, victory takes place in the secrets of the human soul, and said that the scales of victory are decided in the heart, will, character, and abilities of human endurance* [1, p. 17]. These words were later engraved on the gorget that the cadets from the Marshal Józef Piłsudski Cadet Corps No. 1 gave Piłsudski in Lviv on the occasion of his name day in 1933.

The Polish Military Treasury (PSW) operated mainly in Lviv. It was an organization established on August 25, 1912, in Zakopane, on the convention of representatives of several of the largest independence parties. Its purpose was to collect money for the activities of paramilitary

organizations in Galicia, and in the event of the outbreak of war, it was to be used to form the Polish Army [13, p. 476-477]. The PSW was to create financial foundations for the further development of the military-independence movement. It is worth mentioning the merits of the treasurer of this organization Hipolit Śliwiński (1866-1932), who was the Lviv architect, a social and political activist, a member of the UAS and the Riflemen's Association, co-founder of the Progressive-Democratic Party in Lviv, one of the most active organizers of the Polish independence movement in Galicia. In the years preceding the outbreak of World War I, Józef Piłsudski visited his house at Kadecka Street many times.

Important historical anniversaries, in particular, anniversaries of Polish national uprisings, were used to promote the idea of independence and the idea of an armed act. On January 22, 1913, on the 50th anniversary of the January Uprising, Józef Piłsudski gave a memorable speech at the Lviv City Hall. *Although the history of the Uprising was widely known in Lviv, Piłsudski's words electrified the audience. The speaker knew how to connect the past with the present and the military deed he propagated, that in his mouth the Uprising was not an out-of-date history, but a living deed, as if of the present day* [1, p. 19].

The anniversary of the January Uprising triggered great emotions in the inhabitants of Lviv, especially the "Exhibition of Souvenirs" depicting the history of this Polish uprising for national liberation. In September 1913, during the Exhibition, Piłsudski, at the head of the troops of the Riflemen's Association, paid tribute to the insurgents of 1863 resting at the Łyczakowski Cemetery [1, p. 19-20]. History, with its anniversaries, helped spread the idea of an armed struggle for independence.

The feeling of brotherhood in arms was growing among members of the Riflemen's Association, Polish Rifle Squads, Falcon Teams, Bartosz Teams, and Podhale Teams. Unity was establishing in the minds and hearts of the future soldiers.

In the spring of 1914, the Riflemen's Association in Lviv began publishing its monthly magazine "Rifleman". The publisher and editor in charge was the commander of the Lviv District of the Riflemen's Association, Edward Rydz-Śmigły, but all the editorial work rested on Marian Kukiel's shoulders. The first issue of the journal was released on April 1, 1914, and until the outbreak of the war, four issues were published. Their content included ideological, historical, programmatic, and critical articles discussing the issues of the shooting movement and military education, military and historical-military sketches, application tasks for riflemen, and a chronicle of the shooting movement [6, p. 31-32].

In 1914, during Pentecost, the annual exercises of the Riflemen's Association and Polish Rifle Squads were held in Dawidów and Szolomya near Lviv. After their end, the rifle battalion arrived in Lviv, where Piłsudski's parade took place at Badenich Street. The march of the rifle units made a great impression on the inhabitants, evoking beautiful memories of old knightly traditions, *it introduced an atmosphere of emergency and waiting* [1, p. 21].

On June 26, 1914, similar emotions evoked during the funeral of Józef Kajetan Janowski, the last secretary of the National Government in 1863, who died in Lviv. Piłsudski gave a farewell speech at the Łyczakowski Cemetery. Addressing the Riflemen and Teams members, he said: *future Polish soldier [...] Your dawn is a flash of lightning on a black cloud [...] Your grave may be nameless, you will find it in an unknown forest or in a prison dump, as they found half a century ago. They, our grandfathers, whom the one we are burying today led. [...] We are standing in front of the National Government, boys – it is fitting for us to say goodbye* [Quoted after: 1, p. 21]. It was Piłsudski's last speech before the war broke out. At the head of the funeral procession was Bishop Władysław Bandurski, who from then on, under the influence

of Piłsudski's speech, would combine his activity with the Legions, becoming their unofficial chaplain and *going down to the trenches on the front line, he carried words of encouragement* [1, p. 22]. Years later, Hipolit Śliwiński recalled Piłsudski's stay in Lviv in the years 1905-1914 as follows: *The figure of the Commander, his gift of pronunciation, mastery of the subject, the Spartan way of life, the extraordinary charm of his person – made a fascinating impression on the gathered people at the first meeting. He took people, moved minds and hearts [...] he sparked enthusiasm, created a legend and frames that had such a decisive influence on the wartime and post-war developments in the revival of own statehood* [Quoted after: 1, p. 23]. And one more quote from Śliwiński's memoirs, this time about the role of Lviv: *From here, from Lviv, calls to arms were sent to the whole country, hence the great call of an armed deed in 1914 – here, and not elsewhere, the first cadres of today's army were born and raised, here embryo the Polish State was established. In this epoch and in this atmosphere, children-heroes were born and raised, and their deeds covered the whole Polish nation with the laurel of fame in the eyes of the world. So Piłsudski found fertile and prepared ground in our city. And this city in history will take its own, prominent, great card* [1, p. 23].

On the first days of August 1914, on the order of Józef Piłsudski, Michał Sokolnicki arrived in Lviv and was appointed plenipotentiary of the UAS Headquarters for Lviv and the Lviv district. His main task was to prepare the riflemen's mobilization. He recalled his first briefing with them as follows: *I remember standing in front of their extended front in strangely neat uniforms, when I saw their stiff, hardened, and resolute force, I felt that some formidable, uniform force was emanating towards me. It was not only an army – it was the Polish state that was being formed* [1, p. 24].

Mobilization

Feverish mobilization work broke out in Lviv and in many other cities of Eastern Lesser Poland. The inhabitants made copious donations in kind, money, and valuables to the Polish Army that was being born here. The role of Lviv in the history of the future Polish Army and the great act of independence was clearly defined by Piłsudski in a dispatch sent on January 16, 1915, from the front in Lipnica Murowana, to the city president, Józef Neuman, who was in Vienna at that time. He wrote in it that Lviv was the cradle of the Polish military movement.

Wacław Lipiński, a conspirator, legionnaire and later an outstanding historian (postdoctoral degree in 1936 at the University of Lviv), wrote years later about the role of Lviv in the period of preparations for the military uprising for independence: *Staying in Lviv in this most active period of Piłsudski's life before the war must have bound him with extreme strong and cordial ties with this city, with its walls and air, which was so different many times than in other Poland. The atmosphere of the borderland city, the momentum and vigor, and the temperament of political and ideological life that characterized Lviv were the natural climate in which the young, political military thought cultivated by Piłsudski had to develop more abundantly, more vividly and stronger than anywhere else* [Quoted after: 1, p. 26].

In March 1916, while in Lviv in the Delegation of the Supreme National Committee, Józef Piłsudski spoke about his ties with that city and the role it played in shaping the Polish independence movement. *When we look at the ranks, we find the bravest individuals there, my best people are Lviv people, they are recognized and respected at every step...* [1, p. 28].

At the time of Piłsudski's arrival from Magdeburg to Warsaw in November 1918, heavy fights in defense of the city, the Defense of Lviv, had been going on for 10 days. In one of the first

operational orders, he ordered a relief force to be sent to the cradle of the independence uprising that was in a critical situation. The relief (5th Infantry Regiment from Przemyśl) was headed by Lt. Col. Michał Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz, a native of Lviv. On November 22, the city was free.

Lviv awarded the War Order of *Virtuti Militari*

Three months after the victorious Battle of Warsaw, on November 14 – during the Independence Day celebrations – Supreme Commander Piłsudski was handed the Marshal's mace. A week later, Piłsudski came to Lviv with that mace. On November 22, 1920, on the second anniversary of the relief of Lviv and the liberation of the city, he decorated the Lviv coat of arms with the Order of *Virtuti Militari*. *For the merits of this city and its belonging to Poland, I appoint the city of Lviv as a Knight of the Virtuti Militari Cross. Long live the city of Lviv* [1, p. 30]. A special honor and privilege for Lviv is the fact that the awarded VM order received the registration number 1. Until the outbreak of World War II, Lviv was the only Polish city honored with this distinction¹. In the speech after the parade of the Defenders of Lviv in front of the city hall, the Chief of State said: *Lviv, which Polish heart will not budge at this name? [...] his unforgettable role in history begins on the night of the darkest slavery. Then, when the darkness of our national fate became the most dense and heavy, Lviv fell to be the heart of Poland. After 1863, Lviv was the least conciliatory city [...] Lviv was always fearless. Here the hearts beat the strongest. Those who wanted to breathe in the feeling of freedom and refer to the tradition of struggle with their work, had to base their work on Lviv to be able to breathe the air of Poland, to be closer to freedom, where the heart yearning for freedom was beating. [...] Let me, as the one who dreamed about the armed movement here in Lviv and tried to implement it, personally thank the city, which hid me and my students, warmed me with passion* [Quoted after: 1, p. 31]. Lviv fulfilled its borderland mission at the bulwark of Poland without regretting the tribute of blood.

Remembering Lviv from her childhood, Barbara Mękarska-Kozłowska wrote in one of her works: *When I was a little girl, in a navy-blue uniform, my father and I often traveled around Lviv on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. We wandered among the old, winding streets, weeded at the High Castle, we walked around Łyczaków, Pohulanka, Żelazna Woda... During these trips, I got to know the past of my city better and better. The streets were populated by heroes – from armored knights to young Lviv Eaglets. It was enough to stop in the alley next to the Boim chapel or at the Armenian cathedral, close your eyes, and the pictures from the history of Lviv would come alive before your eyes. The stones of the old walls whispered about the great yesterday* [14, p. 9].

And finally, one more short but beautiful quote from Barbara Mękarska-Kozłowska's work "The Borderland Mission of Lviv": *Lviv may resemble its attitude as a citizen, soldier, hero with Słowacki's words: "The cloak on my spirit was not begged, but splendid with my ancestors' former splendors"* [1, p. 33].

Acknowledgement

No acknowledgement and potential founding was reported by the author.

¹ Apart from Lviv, only Verdun and Warsaw were honored with this distinction throughout the history of the Order of *Virtuti Militari*.

Conflict of interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

Author contributions

The author contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

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Biographical note

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Lwów kolebką polskich organizacji niepodległościowych

STRESZCZENIE

W historii Polski Lwów zajmuje miejsce szczególne. Swoją bohaterską historią wywalczył sobie wyjątkowo zaszczytne miano miasta zawsze ojczyźnie wiernego. *SEMPER FIDELIS* – Lwów zawsze wierny. Miano to w 1920 roku przypieczętował marszałek Józef Piłsudski odznaczając miasto Orderem Wojennym *Virtuti Militari*. Przeszłość Lwowa, tłący się nieprzerwanie nieprzejednany i bezkompromisowy polski duch rewolucjonisty, klimat i nastrój w nim panujący stworzyły w początkach XX wieku odpowiednie warunki do formowania w tym mieście ośrodka myśli i ruchu niepodległościowego. Tutaj właśnie w początkach XX wieku powstawały polskie organizacje niepodległościowe różnych orientacji politycznych, z szeregów których wyszły zastępy wybitnych polskich polityków, wojskowych i działaczy społecznych.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

Lwów, niepodległość, Związek Walki Czynnej, Związek Strzelecki, Józef Piłsudski, Kazimierz Sosnkowski

How to cite this paper

Zuziak J. *Lviv as the cradle of Polish independence organizations*. Scientific Journal of the Military University of Land Forces. 2021;53;3(201):534-45.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0015.3406>



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