

NAUKI HUMANISTYCZNE

Adam SZYMANOWICZ*
Artur GOŁĘBIEWSKI

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SECOND POLISH REPUBLIC'S MILITARY INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITY IN THE EAST PRUSSIA (UNTIL 1920)

The Polish Military Organization (PMO) was probably the first one to commence its secret activity for Poland in the Eastern Prussian province. Since 1919, in East Prussia, there had also been local offices in Warsaw and Mława working for the Bureau of the Second Pomeranian Front Command.

The participation of Polish intelligence in the plebiscites in Warmia, Masuria and Powiśle, in 1920, is not a well-known fact in the history of Poland. At that time, the Plebiscite Department of Warmia and Masuria was established. It was subordinate to the Second Department. An average Pole is not aware of the fact that plebiscites established by the Second Department of the Polish armed groups existed at that time. Not only were the groups equipped with sticks, but also with guns, hand grenades and even machine guns.

The Masuria Guard was not basically the initiative of the local Polish people, as it was implied by the Polish side, but the structure created and commanded by officers of Polish intelligence. The Second Department contributed to the development of the existing Polish organizations as well as to the establishment of several new Polish organizations on the plebiscite terrains, the most significant of which were falconry and scouting.

The Masuria Guard, estimated at about 6,000 members, would not stand a good chance when confronted with ten times bigger German paramilitary armed groups and did not have much influence on the plebiscites' results. It was successful, however, in the secret service activity.

Key words: *East Prussia 1918-1939, Polish Military Organization, Plebiscite in Warmia, Masuria and Powiśle 1920, Masuria Guard 1920, military intelligence*

* kpt. dr Adam SZYMANOWICZ, kpt. mgr Artur GOŁĘBIEWSKI – Wydział Zarządzania Wyższej Szkoły Oficerskiej Wojsk Łądowych

INTRODUCTION

The Polish Military Organization (PMO) was probably the first one to commence its secret activity for Poland in the Eastern Prussian province. It was the first Polish union of military nature in East Prussia. Its activity was carefully watched by the Local Office no. 2 of the Pomeranian Front Command. The PMO embarked on its regular organizational work in September 1919; however, according to one of the reports from Local Office no. 2, the signs of PMO activity in East Prussia had appeared much earlier¹.

It is a well-known fact that the PMO did not become involved in any plebiscite activity, having *more urgent tasks to do* (the reports of the Local Office no. 2 and the members of the PMO did not specify the tasks). In the opinion of PMO leaders, there were a few things which had a negative impact on the work of the organization in East Prussia: *harsh living conditions of the Polish people, in accordance with Prussian rules, an old, prevalent system preventing Poles from any attempt to establish organizations and constant investigations strictly connected with such attempts, victimization, restricted contact with people in Poland*². There is no detailed information available confirming any closer relations between the PMO in East Prussia and the Second Agency or any other military circles. It is known, however, that its members were reporting to the Local Office no. 2 of the Pomeranian Front Command on the situation in the region of Warmia and Masuria³.

The network of the PMO organizations in East Prussia and Pomerania included 15 district headquarters⁴. The best-known activity of the PMO is that in the Olsztyn district, divided into 24 provinces. Each province was headed by a commandant appointed by the district commandant who had, on average, 7 villages subordinate to him. Each village was supposed to have one intermediary who, at the same time, would work as a secret agent. His job was to instill the national spirit into local people, to acquire information about everything that was happening in the subordinate village and to keep in touch with the district commandant. The district commandant could contact only the intermediaries subordinate to him. The PMO headquarters would be in close contact with the district commandants through an inspector to whom they were supposed to report on the situation in the region⁵. In early 1920, the expansion of the PMO network was thwarted probably due to the process of organizing the Masuria Guard.

¹ The remaining reports of the Local Office no. 2 do not specify the exact beginnings of the PMO activity in East Prussia.

² *Plebiscyty na Warmii, Mazurach i Powiślu w 1920 roku*. Wybór źródeł, Wydali P. Stawecki, W. Wrzesiński, Olsztyn 1986, Sprawozdanie Ekspozytury nr 2 Dowództwa Frontu Pomorskiego o działalności Polskiej Organizacji Wojskowej na obszarach Prus Królewskich, Prus Książęcych i Pomorza z grudnia 1919 r., s. 113 – 114.

³ *Ibidem*, Meldunek członka Polskiej Organizacji Wojskowej, R. Hoffmana, do Ekspozytury nr 2 Dowództwa Frontu Pomorskiego o zebraniu Rady Ludowej w Szczytnie i napadzie niemieckim na jego uczestników z 23 I 1920 r., s. 133 – 134.

⁴ *Ibidem*, Sprawozdanie Ekspozytury nr 2 Dowództwa Frontu Pomorskiego o działalności Polskiej Organizacji Wojskowej na obszarach Prus Królewskich, Prus Książęcych i Pomorza z grudnia 1919 r., s. 113 – 114.

⁵ *Ibidem*, Sprawozdanie ppor. J. Rudnickiego, kierownika Ekspozytury Dowództwa Frontu Pomorskiego, o stanie Polskiej Organizacji Wojskowej na Warmii i Mazurach z 16 XII 1919 r., s.108; *ibidem*, Sprawozdanie Komendy Polskiej Organizacji Wojskowej Dla dowództwa Frontu Pomorskiego z czynności organizacyjnych i o sytuacji w powiecie olsztyńskim, s. 95.

At the beginning of 1919, secret service on the very front as well as deeper in Germany – in Berlin, Szczecin, and Królewiec – was carried on independently of Warsaw by insurgent military authorities from Great Poland⁶.

1.1. SECRET SERVICE POSTS SITUATED NEAR THE GERMAN BORDER

In the same year, in the East Prussia region, there were also two local offices in Warsaw⁷ and Mława⁸ subordinate to the Office of the Pomeranian Front Second Command. In March 1920, another local office in Grudziądz was set up from the elements of the Pomeranian Front intelligence. It was headed by Capt. Aleksander Naganowski. This post was carrying on the intelligence activity covering the area of East Prussia, the Free City of Gdańsk and West Pomerania, taking account, first and foremost, of all the information concerning *Reichswera*⁹, paying less attention to the German intelligence and the political situation in the Republic of Weimar.

During the hardest struggles in the Polish-Bolshevik war, in August 1920, five permanent groups of agents, one flying group and posts in Berlin and Gdańsk were operating for their local offices. Two out of five permanent groups were working in Pomerania, and the other three in East Prussia and in the Bolshevik-Lithuanian sector. They were supported by the flying group, which was assigned urgent and emergency tasks. The most crucial task for local offices at that time was to gather information on the movement of Bolshevik troops as well as their contacts with German units.

Following the end of warfare, the Local Office in Grudziądz was again continuing secret activity strictly against Germany. However, despite high financial costs, it did not yield good results¹⁰. Most of the agents were identified and taken to prisons in other countries. This Local Office was closed one year after its establishment. None of its agents or informers was admitted to the Local Office in Gdańsk, which took over the tasks of the Local Office in Grudziądz¹¹.

A relatively stable political situation in western Poland contributed to the establishment of a military forces peace organization in this area at the beginning of 1920. Instead of information agencies of the fronts of Pomerania, Great Poland and Silesia, apart from Grudziądz, the Local Offices in Poznań and Cracow were set up. The Polish Army Commander-in-Chief was their immediate superior¹².

⁶ W. Skóra, *Działalność ekspozytury polskiego wywiadu w Grudziądz w latach 1920 – 1921*, [in:] „Zapiski Historyczne” nr4/2003 s. 91 – 92.

⁷ Secret service posts situated near the German border: in Lubicz, Rypin, Myszyniec, Kolno and Grajewo were subordinate to the Warsaw Local Office. (W. Skóra, *Placówka w Chojnicach. Z działalności wywiadu polskiego na Pomorzu Zachodnim w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym*, Słupsk – Chojnice 2006, s. 20 – 23).

⁸ W. Skóra, *Rozwój polskiej koncepcji działań wywiadowczych wobec Niemiec w latach 1918 – 1922 (wybrane zagadnienia)*, [in:] *Polska myśl wojskowa na przestrzeni dziejów*, pod red. W. Łacha przy współudziale T. Gajownika i D. Radziwiłłowicza, Olsztyn 2008, s. 270.

⁹ Reichswera – armed forces of the Republic of Weimar and the Third German Reich in the years 1919 – 1935.

¹⁰ W. Skóra, *Działalność ekspozytury polskiego wywiadu w Grudziądz*, s. 90 – 98.

¹¹ W. Skóra, *Rozwój polskiej koncepcji działań wywiadowczych wobec Niemiec*, s. 278 -279.

¹² A. Misiuk, *Służby specjalne II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 1998, s. 21.

In the first few years of the Second Polish Republic, intelligence 'covering' East Prussia was carried out also by local offices in Gdańsk and Poznań, which were dealing with secret service activity in the Free City of Gdańsk and Pomerania as well.

The local office in Gdańsk, headed by Lt. Karol Dubicz-Penther¹³, was based on the intelligence department established at the Polish Military Mission in the Free City of Gdańsk. Before the plebiscites in Warmia, Masuria and Powiśle, it was informing Warsaw, among other things, about the deployment and strength of *Reichswehra*, the German plebiscite propaganda, the organization of *Heimatdienst*¹⁴, the attitude of the representatives of the independent socialist German party¹⁵. The local office in Gdańsk launched its first officer post only in 1922 in Królewiec¹⁶.

One of the first and most remarkable (owing to the fact that it was used by the German propaganda) actions taken in East Prussia by the Second Department Intelligence Bureau was an attempt to break into the office of the fourth sector of the German border guard in Pisz. The aim of this action was to seize the lists of personnel and agents, intelligence and counterintelligence secret documents, secret codes used in correspondence between German institutions and Bolsheviks and to steal typewriters. The area was carefully reconnoitered, a detailed action plan was drawn up. Nevertheless, one of the secret agents from the Second Department turned out to be loquacious and the information concerning the planned burglary reached the German counterintelligence. On 9th January 1920, the people taking part in the action were surrounded and arrested in the vicinity of Pisz by the German military police. Despite this, similar attempts would take place a number of times in the following years¹⁷.

In the early 1920s, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also dealing with secret service in East Prussia, mainly through its consular agencies. Already in April 1920, the MFA was informing the Second Department about the plans of the *Reichswehra* troops concentration in the vicinity of the Polish border and about the possibility of supporting the Bolshevik troops by *Reichswehra*, about the political situation in Germany as well as the attitude of local people¹⁸. The consulate in Kwidzyń was keeping track of Ger-

¹³ Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku (APG), Komisarz Generalny RP w Gdańsku, sygn. 1044, Schemat organizacyjny przedstawicielstwa wojskowego w Gdańsku.

¹⁴ Namely Ostpreussische Heimatdienst – (East Prussia Homeland Service) – organization formed in March 1919. Included into the German organization named Ostdeutsche Heimatdienst – (East German Homeland Service) – in which it had great autonomy. It was widely supported by national authorities. Initially, its main task was to prepare the local people for plebiscites. It paid a great deal of attention to underlining the superiority of the German culture. A group of intermediaries belonging to this organization allowed the German authorities to keep a group of informers providing details related to Poles in East Prussia. It was acting against all signs of national activity. It existed till 1933 when it was substituted by Bund Deutsche Osten – (German East Association)

¹⁵ *Plebiscyty...*, op. cit., Meldunek oficera łącznikowego Naczelnego Dowództwa WP przy polskiej Misji Wojskowej w Gdańsku, por. K. Dubicza, o niemieckiej propagandzie przedplebiscytowej na terenie okręgu kwidzyńskiego z 19 IV 1920 r., s. 233; ibidem, Meldunek oficera łącznikowego Naczelnego Dowództwa WP przy polskiej Misji Wojskowej w Gdańsku, por. K. Dubicza, o postawie Heimatdienstu i niezależnych socjalistów, s. 337 – 338.

¹⁶ W. Skóra, *Działalność ekspozytury polskiego wywiadu w Grudziądzu*, s. 277.

¹⁷ A. Peplowski, *Kontrwywiad II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 2002, s. 50.

¹⁸ Ośrodek Badań Naukowych im. Wojciecha Kętrzyńskiego w Olsztynie (OBN), Zbiory Specjalne, OMF, t. 15, Oddział II Sztabu Generalnego Naczelnego Dowództwa Wojska Polskiego, (dalej O II

man paramilitary organizations such as *Deutsche Militarische Kampforganisation* or *Selbstschutz*¹⁹.

The consul of the Polish Republic in Królewiec, Stanisław Srokowski, was informing the Second Department about the development of anti-Polish cooperation between German and Lithuanian secret services²⁰. By the end of 1921, the consulate of the Polish Republic in Królewiec had prepared a few documents concerning the situation in East Prussia which were considered 'not bad'²¹.

In October 1920, at the time of truce with Soviet Russia, military organizations doing their job on the eastern front were gradually moving towards working in a state of peace. This change also referred to secret service activity. Finally, by the end of 1921, in the whole country 6 local offices had been established in the following way: Local Office no. 1 in Vilnius, no. 2 in Gdansk, no. 3 in Poznań, no. 4 in Cracow, no. 5 in Lvov and no. 6 in Brześć. The Local Office no. 1 was carrying on its secret activity on the territory of Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, no. 2 and no. 3 in Germany, no. 4 on the territory of southern and western neighboring countries, nos. 5 and 6 were dealing with secret service in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine²².

In each local office operating in Germany there were 3 or 4 officers employed, and 2 or 3 officers in the local officer posts. Also, at that time a three-level intelligence structure was created. It existed until the end of the Polish Republic. On top of the structure was the Second Department's head office and lower in the structure were local offices and officer posts subordinate to them. Moreover, the range of local offices' activity was limited to the distance of 150 km deep in the neighboring country while the service in the whole country was carried on by agents subordinate directly to the head office²³.

In the first years after regaining independence by Poland, the main effort of intelligence and counterintelligence activity was aimed at operating in the eastern part of the country. It was manifested by a higher number of tasks and people employed there as well as a bigger amount of money at their disposal. This situation was connected with the threat from Bolsheviks and war with them. After all, Bolsheviks were posing not only the 'outside threat'. Inside Poland there were many secret Bolshevik organizations (both civilian and military) equipped with weapons and explosive materials, agitating against Poland in many different environments, for instance in the army²⁴.

However, according to an intelligence report, during the Bolshevik offensive Poland was also threatened by East Prussia. The Junker circles existing there were hostile

Szt. Gen. NDWP), Biuro Plebiscytowe Warmia i Mazury (dalej BP W i M), Pismo MSZ do MSWojsk. Oddz. II Sztabu w sprawie p. von Oldenburga (mikrofilm) z 26 IV 1920 r., s. 173.

¹⁹ Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe w Warszawie (CAW), Oddział II Sztabu Głównego Wojska Polskiego, (dalej: O II), Wydział II A Wywiadowczy, Referat „Zachód”, sygn. I 303.4.2154, Raport Konsulatu RP w Kwidzynie dotyczący rozwoju niemieckich organizacji paramilitarnych z 18 X 1920 r.

²⁰ A. Misiuk..., op. cit., s. 87.

²¹ H. Ćwiąg, *Przeciw Abwehrze*, Warszawa 2001, s. 147.

²² H. Ćwiąg, *Zwalczanie niemieckich służb specjalnych na ziemiach zachodniej i północnej II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 1998, s. 98.

²³ W. Skóra, *Rozwój polskiej koncepcji wywiadowczej wobec Niemiec*, s. 271 – 272.

²⁴ A. Peplowski, *Kontrwywiad II Rzeczypospolitej*, s. 11 – 14.

to Poland and were planning to give support to the Bolshevik troops and to attack the Polish army from the rear.

According to the information from the Polish intelligence, at that time Germans had real and dangerous (despite the restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles) military forces at their disposal. At the end of June 1920, the strength of *Reichswehr* and other voluntary formations was estimated at over 100,000 soldiers. Moreover, the presence of a great number of demobilized soldiers from different formations was also indicated in East Prussia. They were hiding themselves under different disguises – mostly in Junker properties and they were ready to go back to their ranks at any moment²⁵.

The greatest effort of the Second Department in 1920 in the East Prussian direction was made by the Plebiscite Department.

1.2. THE MASURIA GUARD'S HEADQUARTERS

In January 1920, the Plebiscite Department of Warmia and Masuria was set up at the Second Department. Lt. Witold Gołębiowski (nom de guerre *Kraft*)²⁶ was assigned as the head of this department. Its main task was to ensure support to the Polish plebiscite committees. The task of military authorities was to support the Polish plebiscite preparations by creating some military structures in this area and by gaining information related to plebiscite work done by the German side²⁷.

The first organizational work in order to establish the Masuria Guard was embarked upon at the end of December 1919. It became the only Polish military organization to work in the plebiscite areas in East Prussia²⁸. 2nd Lt. Jan Niemierski²⁹, born in Butryny near Olsztyn, was appointed its head.

The Masuria Guard Headquarters (MGHQ) were based in Działdowo and Olsztyn³⁰. The Guard consisted of 3 departments: an organizational department, an information (intelligence) department and a political and press department. The MGHQ were existing independently of the Masuria and Warmia Plebiscite Committees but they cooperated very closely. In general, taking account of its main duties, the MGHQ were immediately dependent on the Staff's Second Department (the Plebiscite Department)³¹.

The Masuria Guard was aiming at forming, in the plebiscite areas, top secret military structures which would be able to defend Polish people against German terror

²⁵ *O niepodległą i granice. Raporty i komunikaty naczelnych władz wojskowych o sytuacji wewnętrznej Polski 1919 – 1920*. Opracowanie, wybór i przygotowanie do druku: M. Jabłonowski, P. Stawecki, T. Wawrzyński, Warszawa – Pułtusk 1999/2000, t. 2, Komunikat Informacyjny (sprawy polityczne) nr 36 (103) dotyczący sytuacji wewnętrznej i zewnętrznej Polski z 30 VI 1920 r., s. 476 – 477.

²⁶ *Plebiscyty...*, op. cit., s. 554.

²⁷ CAW, Oddział II Sztabu Generalnego Naczelnego Dowództwa Wojska Polskiego (dalej O II Szt. Gen. NDWP), Biuro Plebiscytowe Warmia i Mazury (dalej BP W i M), sygn. I.300.76.8, Organizacja Oddziału II Sztabu Ministerstwa Spraw Wojskowych.

²⁸ Ibidem, sygn. I 300.76.438, Raport ppor. Stanisława Zakrzewskiego z 23 IV 1920 r., Stan spraw na Warmii i Mazowszu Pruskim.

²⁹ Ibidem, sygn. I 300. 76.456, Wykaz personelu Straży Mazurskiej z 10 V 1920 r.

³⁰ Ibidem, sygn. I 300.76. 472, Etat NKSM na Warmię i Mazury.

³¹ Ibidem, sygn. I 300.76.438, Raport ppor. Stanisława Zakrzewskiego z 23 IV 1920 r., Stan spraw na Warmji i Mazowszu Pruskim.

and ensure protection over Polish meetings and other plebiscite activities. Moreover, the Guard was responsible for handing plebiscite agitation, organizing athletic and gymnastic clubs as well as other Polish associations and organizations³².

The area of the future election, given its organizational aspect, was divided (by the heads of MGHQ) into two parts: the East group covering Olsztyn, Szczytno, Pisz, Elk, Olecko, Giżycko and Mrągowo districts, and the West group comprising Ostróda, Susy, Kwidzyń, Sztum and Malbork districts³³. The districts were divided into provinces and areas³⁴.

The First Department was responsible for organizing and doing the MGHQ's office work. 2nd Lt. Paweł Wieczorek was appointed the department head. The leaders of the East and West groups – OCdt. Romuald Dramiński and 2nd Lt. Józef Kwiatkowski – were subordinate to him. District heads directly reported to the head of the department, although they were issued instructions by the group leaders, who were also responsible for inspecting the job of organizations in each district.

One of the most crucial tasks for district commandants was to commence their organizational work by establishing the Masuria Guard local unit, which was supposed to serve as a form of self-defence against potential attacks from German armed groups on Polish meetings and rallies and against establishing all kinds of unions and associations: economic, agricultural and artistic. Moreover, district commandants were obliged to supervise the work of agitators and the districts subordinate to them and to gather information on any signs of political or social activity in the area subordinate to them. They were also responsible for writing and sending weekly reports on their operations to MGHQ.

To be a district commandant required a great deal of caution necessary in conspirational work. No lists with forenames, surnames or addresses of the organization members could be stored in districts. A secret instruction prepared by the MGHQ for district commandants was planning to form military structures able to fight against Germany. After Poland had taken over power over the plebiscite areas, the members of the Masuria Guard were supposed to become the cadre of the future Polish police on this territory³⁵.

One of the most significant tasks for the First Department before the plebiscite was to prepare Polish candidates for the service in the plebiscite police (*Sicherheitswehra*), which were being organized at that time. It was formed under the decision of the Interalliance Commission in Kwidzyń. Poles, as well as Germans, were supposed to join the police. *Sicherheitswehra* was a kind of substitute for the German border patrol disbanded by the coalition authorities and the Security Guard. Only those who kept the right to vote in the plebiscite had permission to remain in the plebiscite police. In May

³² Ibidem.

³³ Ibidem, sygn. I 300. 76. 445, Sprawozdanie z działalności.

³⁴ *Plebiscyty...*, op. cit., Komunikat Informacyjny Oddziału II Sztabu Ministerstwa Spraw Wojskowych o sytuacji politycznej na Warmii i Mazurach z 23 IV 1920 r., s. 247.

³⁵ CAW, O II Szt. Gen. NDWP, BP W i M, sygn. I 300.76.472, Instrukcja Oddziału I Naczelnej Komendy Straży Mazurskiej dla komendantów powiatowych, s. 15 – 18.

1920, in the Kwidzyna district over 400 Poles out of 1300 policemen were admitted to the police, including fourteen officers³⁶.

In Olsztyn, the recruitment of the Polish candidates to the plebiscite police took place on 22nd and 23rd June. By that time, the MGHQ had recruited over 1600 candidates, about 80% of which appeared on the recruitment days. The recruitment committee imposed very high demands on Polish candidates and accepted only thirty six of them³⁷. Not even one Polish officer was in this group. The protests of Polish representatives against such a situation brought no results. The Poles who decided to join *Sicherheitswehra* did it on condition that they would be subordinate to Polish officers. When their requirement was not met, all thirty six Polish policemen resigned from the service³⁸.

Intelligence activity in the whole of East Prussia was run by the most secret unit of MGHQ – the Second Department. It was operating paying most attention to the area and matters connected with the plebiscite. The organizational and local structures of the Second Department was identical to those of the First Department. In mid-March 1920, 2nd Lt. Stanisław Zakrzewski (nom de guerre Skiba) was accepted for the position of the Department Commandant, although formally he was working for the General Consulate of the Polish Republic in Olsztyn³⁹.

The functioning of the Second Department depended mostly on the heads of districts. Their job was to encourage new agents and informers to cooperate, to supervise them and to correct them to gain full knowledge on the current situation in the subordinate region. The Second Department of MGHQ had a problem with the number of people working as district heads. It was due to lack of trusted local people who would be familiar with the basics of secret service⁴⁰. In June 1920, there were 15 agents on the Second Department's payroll⁴¹.

Agents and informers of the Second Department were doing intelligence work in German army posts, paramilitary organizations, political parties, as well as in the allied Interalliance Commission. They were collecting information not only about German military preparations near the border, about weapons and ammunition transports, but

³⁶ *Plebiscyty...*, op. cit., Pismo Oddziału I Naczelnej Komendy Straży Mazurskiej do kierowników powiatowych w sprawie werbowania ludzi do *Sicherheitswehra* z 24 V 1920 r., s. 309.

³⁷ The Polish candidates to the service in *Sicherheitswehra* had to meet the following requirements: height – more than 170cm, age – between 21 and 30. Moreover, the candidates aged 21-23 needed to have 4 years of military service, candidates aged 24-25 – three years of military service, while candidates aged 26-30 – two years. Moreover, at least one year of experience on the frontline combat and basic police knowledge were required. Apart from this, candidates could not be married.

³⁸ *Plebiscyty...*, op. cit., Raport Naczelnej Komendy Straży Mazurskiej do por. W. Gołębiowskiego o działalności w okresie od 7 V do 5 VII z 5 VII 1920 r., s. 394 – 395; *tamże*, Pismo Naczelnej Komendy Straży Mazurskiej do por. W. Gołębiowskiego w sprawie oficerów WP do polskiej Straży Bezpieczeństwa z 5 VII 1920 r., s. 395 – 398.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, Sprawozdanie szefa Oddziału II Naczelnej Komendy Straży Mazurskiej, por. St. Zakrzewskiego, z działalności na terenie plebiscytowym z sierpnia (po 26) 1920 r., s. 459 – 462.

⁴⁰ OBN, O II Szt. Gen. NDWP, BP W i M, OMF 395, t. 22, Raport wywiadowczy NKSM z 20 III 1920 r., s. 48 (mikrofilm).

⁴¹ CAW, O II Szt. Gen. NDWP, BP W i M, sygn. I 300.76.450, Zestawienie budżetu wydatków NKS za miesiąc czerwiec.

also about relations between the members of Interalliance Commission, German organizations and plebiscite committees. The information connected with plebiscites was passed on to the Polish plebiscite committees, in which the Second Department had its own informers as well. Józef Czodrowski,⁴² a lawyer from Olsztyn, was one of them. He was an active worker of the Masuria Committee, an editor in the *Gazeta Olsztyńska* newspaper, and at the same time a second lieutenant of the Polish Army discharged from the service and as the MG district head⁴³.

The Masuria Guard was also carrying out deep intelligence. It was organized by Dr. Antoni Łangowski who, at the same time, was heading the Third Department of MGHQ. He was receiving secret information through the members of the East Prussia USPD⁴⁴ sympathizing with Polish people, and through agents working, among other places, in Królewiec⁴⁵. Owing to their job, information concerning the deployment of German troops, their armament, the location of airports, the frequency and direction of flights and methods of hiding aircraft from the Interalliance Commission was being acquired. The reports from the Second Department contained, among other things, appendices in the form of documents belonging to the *Reichswehr* army units⁴⁶. The number and type of documents and information obtained by the MGHQ intelligence proves that its activity was not limited only to the external observation of units and military targets. Poles had certainly paid informers or their own agents working for them.

In 1920, the MGHQ's Second Department was the most important element in the Polish intelligence system in East Prussia. It was acquiring information not only for the Polish plebiscite activities. Its agents, under the pretence of running a plebiscite activity, were moving around the plebiscite area and collecting military information.

The MGHQ's Third Department (political and press) was headed by Stanisław Michalski (nom de guerre Sase), a captain of horse, and subsequently by Dr. Antoni Łangowski. It consisted of 3 offices: press, political and information⁴⁷. Its task was to prepare weekly comprehensive and detailed reports for the Second Department Plebiscite Bureau.

The Third Department's job was to carefully look through the Polish and German press and to find the main subject matter of each daily and to observe how it was changing. Information concerning the dailies, namely their editors and co-workers, circulation and their target environment was of utmost importance.

⁴² *Plebiscyty...*, op. cit., Sprawozdanie szefa Oddziału II Naczelnej Komendy Straży Mazurskiej, por. S. Zakrzewskiego, z działalności na terenie plebiscytowym z sierpnia (po 26) 1920 r., s. 459 – 462.

⁴³ T. Oracki, *Słownik biograficzny Warmii, Mazur i Powiśla XIX i XX wieku (do 1945 roku)*, Warszawa 1983, s. 81.

⁴⁴ German Independent Social Democratic Party - Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, the left wing of German social democracy which separated itself from the German Social Democratic Party in April 1917.

⁴⁵ *Plebiscyty...*, op. cit., Sprawozdanie szefa Oddziału II Naczelnej Komendy Straży Mazurskiej, por. S. Zakrzewskiego, z działalności na terenie plebiscytowym z sierpnia (po 26) 1920 r., s. 459 – 462.

⁴⁶ OBN, O II Szt. Gen. NDWP, BP W i M, OMF 395, t. 17 (mikrofilm), Raport wywiadowczy NKSM do por. W. Gołębiowskiego z 8 VI 1920 r., s. 142 – 145; Ibidem, Raport wywiadowczy NKSM do por. W. Gołębiowskiego z 3 VI 1920 r., s. 34 – 40.

⁴⁷ OBN, O II Szt. Gen. NDWP, BP W i M, OMF 395, t. 13, Schemat organizacyjny Oddziału III Polityczno - prasowego, s. 23.

The Third Department was also gathering information connected with German political parties, administration as well as with the attitudes of local people⁴⁸. MGHQ's reports presented the job of the Polish plebiscite committees and the Masuria People's Union in a bad light. It referred first of all to the conflicts appearing in the Polish camp and to the easy way to infiltrate into it⁴⁹.

1.3. MASURIA GUARD'S FLYING COMBAT SQUADS

Masuria Guard's Flying Combat Squads (FCS) were serving as the protection of Polish rallies. They were often called the Fourth Department of the MGHQ or simply the militia. They were set up at the beginning of March 1920. The indispensability of their existence was justified first of all by the intention to fight against German active armed groups and to protect rallying actions prepared by the Masuria and Warmia Committees. In the beginning, they were commanded by the head of the Masuria Guard in the Olsztyn district – Jan Jabłoński. From 10th April 1920, 2nd Lt. Tadeusz Skinder, the MG General Commandant's aide-de-camp, was in command of FCS. The militia was accepting volunteers seeking advice of the Masuria and Warmia Plebiscite Committees and the Statistical Office at the Consulate of the Polish Republic in Olsztyn⁵⁰. Members of the 'Sokół' (Falcon) Gymnastic Association served for FCS⁵¹.

The strongest FCS unit was located in Olsztyn. At the end of April 1920, it consisted of 19 people. Apart from the Olsztyn-based unit, there were also another 20 FCS members in Biskupiec Reszelski. There is no data concerning the number of people in other FCS units based in other places. Militiamen were paid 900 Deutschmarks a month. The money was paid in advance in two 450-Deutschmark instalments: on the first and the fifteenth day of each month. This amount of money was considered relatively high as for local conditions⁵².

The militia were presented as a sort of self-defence forces created and commanded by local people. Nevertheless, in April 1920, Germans managed to obtain some documents related to the Masuria Guard. Owing to the documents, the German intelligence service was even in possession of the register of names of FCS members. The so-called 'Polish Militia', its activity and connections with Polish military circles, were frequent subjects of the articles in German plebiscite newspapers⁵³.

⁴⁸ CAW, O II Szt. Gen. NDWP, BP W i M, sygn. I 300.76.447, Wzór referatu politycznego NKSM.

⁴⁹ *Plebiscyty...*, op. cit., Referat polityczny kierownika oddziału III Naczelnej Komendy Straży Mazurskiej, rtm. St. Michalskiego, o stanie prasy, nastrojach ludności i działalności Komitetu Mazurskiego oraz Mazurskiego Związku Ludowego, s. 168 – 169.

⁵⁰ CAW, O II Szt. Gen. NDWP, sygn. I 300.76.472, Raport Oddziału I a NKSM do Krafca z 23 IV 1920r.

⁵¹ A. Gańsorowski, *Rola sokolich towarzystw gimnastycznych w walce o polskość Warmii, Mazur i Powiśla (1919 – 1921)*, [in:] „KMW” 1982, nr 2-3, s. 337.

⁵² CAW, O II Szt. Gen. NDWP, BP W i M, sygn. I 300.76.472, Raport Oddziału I a KNSM do Krafca z 23 IV 1920 r.

⁵³ W. Wrzesiński, *Plebiscyty na Warmii, Mazurach i Powiślu w 1920 roku, Olsztyn 1974*, s. 172; *Plebiscyty*, op. cit., List prezesa Warmińskiego Komitetu Plebiscytowego, ks. A. Ludwiczaka, do wiceministra spraw wojskowych, gen. K. Sosnkowskiego, w sprawie działalności polskich bojówek z 28 IV 1920 r., s. 259 - 260; *tamże*, Pismo dowódcy Okręgu Generalnego w Grudziądzu, gen. Roi, do wiceministra spraw wojskowych, gen. K. Sosnkowskiego, dotyczące listu ks. A. Ludwiczaka, s. 260 – 261.

By the end of April, the militia in Olsztyn took part in the defence of Polish rallies in Barczewo, Dajtki, Biskupiec and Giżycko. Most often militiamen would face the perfectly organized German militia equipped with sticks, hand grenades and firearms. Usually FCS armed groups were defeated. They were rendered harmless by Germans and very often seriously beaten up⁵⁴.

The strongest and relatively best organized FCS armed groups in the Masuria territory were acting in the Szczytno district. Władysław Tyjan was both their establisher and commander. The groups were working not only in the area of their own district. According to Tyjan's reports, they were also making sorties to the Nidzica district in cars and on bikes. Their number is not known⁵⁵.

The activity and effectiveness of FCS in Olsztyn were negatively assessed by its commander 2nd Lt. Skinder. He claimed that many militiamen had decided to do this job just because they were attracted by the money they could easily be paid there. He added that the most important thing for them was to collect their money. What is more, also elderly people were joining FCS, although they were absolutely unsuitable for this job. 2nd Lt. Skinder was assessing the job of platoon leaders⁵⁶ with similar scepticism.

The Polish militia developed much better in Powiśle. The Powiśle FCS headquarters were seated in Kwidzyń⁵⁷. Only in the Sztum district in June two hundred people divided into seven 'sotnyas' were subordinate to it. The biggest 'sotnya' was in Sztum and numbered 80 members.

The militiamen from Powiśle were equipped mostly with the so-called 'plebiscite staves': thick sticks. The 'sotnyas' were also armed with hand grenades, pistols, rifles, and even with a few light machine guns⁵⁸.

FCS in Powiśle achieved success a few times, for instance on 24th May during the rally in Kwidzyń when they scattered a German armed group using a twenty-person horse 'squad'⁵⁹. On 3rd July, a German rally in Sztum was dispersed, and after that on 4th July another two rallies – in Sztumska Wieś and Podstolina. The militia from Powiśle were supported by FCS from Olsztyn⁶⁰.

The Masuria Guard Headquarters in Sztum decided to introduce a state of emergency for the local FCS between 7th – 12th July 1920, which was connected with

⁵⁴ CAW, O II Szt. Gen. NDWP, Biuro Plebiscytowe Warmia i Mazury, sygn. I 300.76.472, Raport Oddziału I a KNSM do Krafca z 23 IV 1920 r.

⁵⁵ OBN, Biuro Byłej Sekcji Plebiscytowej, sygn. OMF 396 (mikrofilm), Kwestionariusz Władysława Tijana.

⁵⁶ CAW, O II Szt. Gen. NDWP, Biuro Plebiscytowe Warmia i Mazury, sygn. I 300.76.472, Raport Oddziału I a KNSM do Krafca z 23 IV 1920 r.

⁵⁷ *Plebiscyty...*, op. cit., Pismo komendanta naczelnego Straży Mazurskiej, por. J. Niemierskiego, do Komitetu Warmińskiego w Kwidzynie w sprawach organizowania oddziałów obrony w powiatach nadwiślańskich z 22 V 1920 r., s. 307 – 308.

⁵⁸ CAW, O II Szt. Gen. NDWP, BP W i M, sygn. I 300.76.455, Sprawozdanie z zebrania okręgowych powiatu sztumskiego w dniu 21 VI 1920 r.

⁵⁹ *Plebiscyty...*, op. cit., Raport Naczelnej Komendy Straży Mazurskiej do por. Gołębiowskiego o działalności Komendy i sytuacji na obszarze plebiscytowym z 28 V 1920 r., s. 315 – 316.

⁶⁰ P. Stawecki, op. cit., s. 457.

the plebiscite that was to take place on 11th July. Some armed groups were assigned to protect the Polish offices in Kwidzyń⁶¹.

At night from 11th to 12th July, in Kwidzyń, anti-Polish riots took place. Before midnight German people attempted to launch an assault on 'Cassino' and 'Resursa' – buildings occupied by the Warmia Plebiscite Committee. At that time no coalition forces were deployed in the vicinity, that is why both buildings were guarded by FCS. They were so brave that Germans were forced to withdraw till they were helped by Italians⁶². There is no information concerning the use of armed groups by MGHQ on those days.

CONCLUSION

On 12th July 1920, the process of disbanding the Masuria Guard was initiated. The Masuria Guard theoretically numbered six thousand members⁶³, but practically its force was disproportionately smaller to this number. It was supposed to serve as the protection against German armed groups and paramilitary organizations, which were paralyzing the operations of the Polish plebiscite committees with terror. The German side had approximately 70 thousand at its disposal, relatively well-armed and perfectly organized people – it was much more than the Masuria Guard had at its disposal. That is why, the MG was not able to successfully protect Polish rallies from German armed groups. The Flying Combat Squads, formed especially for this purpose, were responding to the spreading terror to a small extent.

The major organizational centers of the Masuria Guard were located in Warmia and Powiśle. The process of forming the MG in Masuria was very slow but only in its western part. There, the MG became very active a few weeks before the plebiscite. It was connected with the intense operations of plebiscite committees and the gathering of Polish army soldiers discharged from duty.

Participation in intelligence operations should be recognized as one of the greatest successes. Owing to this, the Polish side possessed detailed information related to German preparations for plebiscites, the number of paramilitary organizations, the deployment of soldiers and equipment of *Reichshwera* in East Prussia.

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⁶¹ CAW, O II Szt. Gen. NDWP, BP W i M, sygn. I 300.76.455, Sprawozdanie z zebrania okręgowych powiatu sztumskiego w dniu 21 VI 1920 r.

⁶² *Plebiscyty...* op. cit., Raport kierownika grupy „Zachód”, por. J. Kowalkowskiego, do Naczelnej Komendy Straży Mazurskiej o sytuacji w Kwidzynie w dniach 11 i 12 lipca, s. 411 – 412.

⁶³ Ibidem, Raport Naczelnej Komendy Straży Mazurskiej do por. W. Gołębiowskiego o działalności w okresie od 7 V do 5 VII 1920 r., s. 394.

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POCZĄTKI DZIAŁALNOŚCI WYWIADU WOJSKOWEGO II RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ W PRUSACH WSCHODNICH (DO 1920 ROKU)

Jako pierwsza na terenie prowincji wschodniopruskiej działalność wywiadowczą na rzecz Polski podjęła najprawdopodobniej Polska Organizacja Wojskowa (POW). Od 1919 r. na kierunku Prus Wschodnich działały również podległe Biuru II Dowództwa Frontu Pomorskiego ekspozytury wywiadowcze w Warszawie i w Mławie.

Udział polskiego wywiadu w plebiscytach na Warmii, Mazurach i Powiślu w 1920 r. jest mało znanym zagadnieniem w historii Polski. Przy Oddziale II powstał wówczas Wydział Plebiscytowy Warmii i Mazur. W świadomości przeciętnego Polaka zupełnie nieznanym jest fakt istnienia w czasie plebiscytów, utworzonych przez Oddział II polskich bojówek, uzbrojonych nie tylko w kije, lecz również w broń palną, granaty ręczne, a nawet broń maszynową.

Straż Mazurska była praktycznie nie, jak to sugerowała to strona polska, oddolną inicjatywą miejscowej ludności polskiej, lecz strukturą utworzoną i kierowaną przez oddelegowanych oficerów polskiego wywiadu. Oddział II przyczynił się również do rozwoju niektórych już istniejących, a także do powstania nowych polskich organizacji na terenach plebiscytowych, z których do najważniejszych należy zaliczyć harcerstwo czy sokolnictwo.

Obliczana na około 6 000 członków Straż Mazurska nie miała większych szans w konfrontacji z ponad dziesięciokrotnie liczniejszymi paramilitarnymi bojówkami niemieckimi i nie wpłynęła zasadniczo na wyniki plebiscytów. Odniosła jednak pewne sukcesy w pracach wywiadowczych.

Słowa kluczowe: Prusy Wschodnie 1918 -1939, Polska Organizacja Wojskowa, plebiscyt na Warmii, Mazurach i Powiślu 1920, Straż Mazurska 1920, wywiad wojskowy

Artykuł recenzował: płk dr hab. Dariusz KOZERAWSKI, prof. AON