

Original article

Polish military leaders of the interwar period

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ABSTRACT

The authors of the article present the profiles of two outstanding military leaders from the interwar period. Based on the analysis of the subject literature, they interpret various approaches to leadership. In the context of the cited interpretations of leadership and the interwar period conditions, they describe General Tadeusz Jordan Rozwadowski's and General Stefan Rowecki's course of military service and the activity they undertook. In summary, they indicate the characteristic qualities of generals that allow them to be included in the group of military leaders.

KEYWORDS

leadership, power, command, military service, interwar period

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Introduction

The concept of leadership is difficult to define unequivocally. In social and political terms, leadership is interpreted as one of the factors of power [1, p. 265]. Therefore, we can recognize that leadership is the ability to exercise it by exerting the leader's impact on the social community [2, p. 135-136], as well as by influencing the group and adapting his/her policy by one or several people [3, p. 321-323]. Leadership occurs when a leader directs his/her charges towards goals that represent similar values and motivations as goals shared by a group or organization. A leader's essential skill is to see and, at the same time, pursue common objectives using the human potential, talents, abilities, and knowledge of group members. However, the adopted goals should be achieved using authority and personal prestige without coercive measures [4, p. 5].

The leader does not force his/her power but exercises it using instruments that motivate, inspire, and encourage action. One of the most fundamental determinants of leadership is effectiveness. Certainly, an important element of its evaluation is the achievability of group goals; however, in leadership it is not the achievement of goals that is essential. Their pursuit at all costs "for the purpose of, even after over" will not be effective in a long process. Edwin Hollander and James Julian made interesting considerations on efficiency. In their opinion, achieving goals must be a rewarding process for both sides, the leader and his/her charges.

The meeting that condition contributes to raising the level of tasks performed by the group and the satisfaction of its members [5, p. 63-73]. We can also talk about the high effectiveness of the leader, if the whole team celebrates the success as a joint achievement, and the people under his/her care say "we did it ourselves". The achievement of this degree of efficiency is influenced by a high degree of decentralization of power. The more people feel responsible for the tasks performed, the more they care about it [6, p. 331].

According to the *Zeitgeist* theory, or the theory of the spirit of the times, people are able to entrust leadership even to a random person. The chosen leader does not have to have any permanent features, it is enough for him/her to be in the right place and time. It is favored by the emotional climate generated by appropriate historical and cultural conditions [7, p. 91]. Another theory that justifies the rules for the leader emergence is the theory of an outstanding individual according to which people with leadership predispositions are born not formed. However, it turns out that the relationship between personality qualities and leadership is minimal. What distinguishes leaders from non-leaders is that the former is slightly more intelligent than the latter. The theory of an outstanding individual has not found its rightness in the practice of social life, but indicates that in analyzing leadership, both the nature of the leader and the situation in which he/she must act should be taken into account [8, p. 665-668]. Circumstances (difficult situations, threatening situations, cultural conditions) are therefore not determinants that ultimately prove the "greatness" of the leader. Circumstances are only the ground on which leaders grow up, they are an opportunity in a historical census to reveal leadership talents. The thesis is confirmed by the fact that scientists who have been conducting research on leadership for several decades have not been able to draw a coherent catalog of a perfect leader. Characteristics. They were unable to define the fundamental character traits of outstanding leaders or identify the most effective styles of operation of such people [9]. A good example is the activity of Winston Churchill, who was a great leader of Great Britain during the war but not in peacetime, proves the assumption that once achieved success does not guarantee subsequent successes in other circumstances.

The considerations in this study aim to present selected episodes from the activities (military service) of General Tadeusz J. Rozwadowski and General Stefan Rowecki and articulate their ways of building relationships with subordinates in the context of contemporary theories of leadership.

1. Leadership in command

Historical sources indicate strong connections between leadership and command, and their seeds date back to ancient times and are related to the behavior of a leader who skillfully aroused enthusiasm in soldiers and developed an appropriate fighting spirit, guaranteeing victory even in very difficult situations. Command and leadership as social processes are one of the oldest ones and, at the same time, they are a natural human activity. As early as around 600 BC, Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu wrote: "If the commander is wise, he can react to changing conditions. If he is sincere, his soldiers have no trouble understanding his intentions and feel no fear. If he is humanitarian, he loves people, can sympathize with others, cares about their interests and weapons. If he is brave, he achieves victory by breaking the enemy's resistance without hesitation. If he is demanding, his units are disciplined because they respect him" [10, p. 15].

In the conditions of military service, both command and leadership are associated with power, but power exercised differently. Power in command is identified rather with the

commander's forcing his/her will with the use of instruments of this power. Leadership, according to Joanne Ciulla, "is a comprehensive, moral relationship between people, based on trust, commitments, involvement, emotions, and a shared vision of good" [11, p. 15]. Therefore, power in leadership consists in skillful direction and coordination of subordinates' actions and in motivating them. As leadership is a social construct, the leader (his/her rank, greatness) is revealed in the consequence of the social expectations of a given group in a given time, culture, and situation. The leader can build the passion and determination of subordinates through his/her genuine commitment, realism, and faith in what he/she does. Military leaders are aware that the strength of their authority does not depend on the efficient and punitive enforcement of obedience, but on the size of the social acceptance by their subordinates [12, p. 170].

The path from the formally appointed commander to the one recognized by subordinates as the leader is the way of following the common goal for the commander and subordinates, to the constant gaining of mutual trust. Realization of a common goal is a stimulus motivating subordinates to the highest degree, it is a sense of individual contribution to its implementation. In such conditions, the commander is perceived by subordinates not so much as a superior, but as an example to follow and their guide in the implementation of a potential task. When analyzing the way in which commanders exercise power, attention should be paid to the fact that each of them has power adequate to the position held. Besides, he/she has, which is vital in the analyzed context, the formal authority associated with the position. However, the power of the causative influence exerted by the commander on his/her subordinates depends to a small extent on the power resulting from the position as well as the authority associated with this position. Therefore, one can talk about leadership in command in relation to those commanders, who prefer personal emotional relationships between a superior and a subordinate, and who have the liberating, not subjugating authority dominating when exercising power over their subordinates [13].

History knows many great military leaders who "enlisted" into the army with the intention of serving their nation, without any special aspirations in the pursuit of high positions. Only during the service, in the circumstances of armed struggle, did they prove their values, thus becoming full-fledged military leaders. Hence, Napoleon's statement that every soldier carries the Marshal's baton in his knapsack remains valid.

2. Profiles of selected military leaders

2.1. General Tadeusz Jordan Rozwadowski

Tadeusz Jordan Rozwadowski was born on May 19, 1866. in Babin. The Rozwadowski family inherited a rich military tradition. Maciej Rozwadowski fought in the Battle of Vienna in 1683, Wiktor – Tadeusz's grandfather – fought in the November Uprising, for which he was awarded the *Virtuti Militari* Order. His uncle and father fought in the January Uprising. Tadeusz J. Rozwadowski began his education in Lviv, then, in the years 1880-1882, he attended the School of Cavalry Cadets in Hranice in Moravia. The next step was studies at the Military University of Technology in Vienna. Since he was the best student of the year, he could graduate in artillery, because artillery and cavalry were among the most valued military specialties in the whole of Europe. The Military University of Technology at that time was also considered an elite military school. Its students, apart from acquiring specific specialist knowledge, had to demonstrate a high sense of honor and steadfast observance of the binding rules [14, p. 3-4; 15, p. 27-32].

Primus, Sec-Lt. Tadeusz Rozwadowski had the option of choosing a unit and decided to perform military service in Kraków. After a year of service in a field artillery regiment, where he proved to be a talented officer and an excellent horseman, he was transferred to a horse artillery squadron stationed in Jarosław. In 1889, Sec-Lt. Rozwadowski, encouraged by members of the Polish Circle, was admitted to the Kriegsschule War School in Vienna. That military college, unlike the others, was intended for the elite of the officer corps of the Austro-Hungarian Army. Officers studying at this university had to demonstrate not only considerable knowledge and intellectual abilities but also high psychophysical resistance. The future Polish generals, Franciszek Latinik and Józef Pomiankowski, also studied at this university at the same time as Rozwadowski. According to General Latinik, Rozwadowski was distinguished by extraordinary duty and foresight, brilliant creativity, and fortitude. Moreover, he was friendly, polite and with a noble disposition, thanks to which he aroused recognition among the professors and gained the friendship of his colleagues. After completing his studies at the Kriegsschule, in 1891, Lieutenant Rozwadowski was sent to service in the Cavalry Brigade in Marburg. After two years, he was transferred, this time to the Staff of the Infantry Division in Budapest, where he was additionally a personal tutor to Archduke Władysław [15, p. 33-37].

An important episode in Captain Rozwadowski's military career was the appointment to the position of the military attaché at the Austrian legation in Bucharest in October 1896. In 1897, as a military attaché, Major Rozwadowski, on behalf of the Austrian General Staff, participated in the role of an observer of the Greek-Turkish War [15, p. 39-41].

Given the course of Tadeusz Rozwadowski's adult life, it can be stated that he was an intelligent and comprehensively educated man. The following facts: graduation from elite military universities with honors, gaining successive military degrees and responsible positions in short periods confirm that thesis. His intelligence and innate social predispositions are also proven by his good command of five languages, ease of communing with people, and impeccable social manners. Moreover, Rozwadowski, as an artillery specialization graduate, was involved in inventive activity. He constructed aiming device and a new type of artillery shell – grenade-shrapnel. The missile exploded once in the air, hitting the fragments, and for the second time after hitting the ground [14, p. 6-7]. When discussing Tadeusz Rozwadowski's personality and characterological values, it should be emphasized that he was also a very honorable and responsible man. He married his wife, regardless of the disagreement of his relatives and various other obstacles, because her mother on her deathbed asked him to take care of her daughter [15, p. 38].

The outbreak of World War I was a key event for General Tadeusz Rozwadowski. It was then that he showed his tactical sense while commanding the Field Artillery Brigade. His initiative and unconventional way of fighting contributed significantly to the victory of Germany and Austria-Hungary at Gorlice. During the clash near Annopol, he took command of an entire division of Austrian troops that were decimated by the fire of Russian artillery and the panic escape of the Division Command. Rozwadowski ordered a night attack on the confused Russians, which was decisive in the victory of the imperial troops. For the achievements on the battlefield of Borów in 1914, he was awarded the highest Austro-Hungarian decoration, the Order of Maria Theresa. However, General Rozwadowski began to incur the Austrian Command's displeasure as he defended the Polish and Ukrainian people against the cruelty of the soldiers of the imperial troops. Moreover, as one of few supervisors, he tried to reach artillery units deployed even on the most endangered sections of the front, because he was aware that the presence of the commander among soldiers raises their morale and has a positive effect on their psyche. The General Rozwadowski's conduct shows that even though he

was a soldier with military skills, he remained a man extremely sensitive to the reality of the war. In the result of growing disputes with his superiors, he was retired on February 1, 1916. During his service in the Austrian Army, he obtained the rank corresponding to the division general [15, p. 68-96,108-109; 16, p. 32-38].

In 1916, General Rozwadowski established cooperation with the Provisional Council of State, transformed into the Regency Council. Rozwadowski wanted to create the seeds of the Polish Army in Poland. He saw it as an opportunity for Poland to regain independence. He also intervened many times with Emperor Charles on the dignified treatment of imprisoned soldiers of Polish origin and helped in the trial of legionnaires accused of high treason [15, p. 119-125, 133-134]. In 1918. The Regency Council appointed Rozwadowski to the position of the Chief of the General Staff, where he was to organize the central military institutions and units of the Polish Army [17]. Rozwadowski was a supporter of a national army based on the universal obligation of military service. The next step in his activities as the Chief of Staff was an attempt to send relief to Lviv, where the Ukrainians started an uprising. Unfortunately, Rozwadowski did not manage to obtain permission for a long time, it was only Piłsudski's assumption of power that changed the situation. On November 17, Piłsudski appointed him the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces, known as the "East Army", in Eastern Galicia. Rozwadowski organized and sent relief to Lviv under the orders of Lt. Michał Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz. The city was liberated on the night of November 21-22. Despite insufficient strength to defend the city, Rozwadowski decided to prevent the enemy by tying up his main troops with a fight outside the city. At that time, the first sources of discord between Rozwadowski and Piłsudski appeared.

Rozwadowski put pressure on his superiors in Warsaw to send him help, but he did not receive their consent; moreover, he was attacked by Piłsudski, General Szeptycki, and members of the Provisional Ruling Committee [18, p. 186]. Rozwadowski kept Lviv despite the overwhelming forces of the enemy, ignoring the order to withdraw to Przemyśl, which was also against the Warsaw authorities' intentions. After the end of the fighting for Lviv, the general was unexpectedly appointed the Head of the Polish Military Mission in Paris. There, he was again very well assessed for his task performance. He managed to convince the representatives of the Entente to his intention to fight in Eastern Galicia and create a Polish-Romanian military convention, as well as organize the American Legion, which Piłsudski did not like [15, p. 174-202]. Despite the lack of consent of the Command of the Polish Armed Forces he incorporated the Americans into the Polish Armed Forces.

The year 1920 came, when the great Polish-Bolshevik War took place. Rozwadowski returned to Poland on July 22, in a very difficult time of the war. The Bolsheviks scouted Poles deeper into the country, gaining successive victories and the nation's spirits deteriorated. Piłsudski, despite earlier conflicts, appointed Rozwadowski the Chief of the General Staff, arguing his decision as follows: "I chose him as the Chief of Staff not because he was the best for this function, but because he was a happy and honorable exception among moist generals at that time. He never lost his resilience, energy and moral strength, he wanted to believe in our victory when many, many people had already lost their trust and if they worked, it was with a broken character" [19, p. 104-105]. It should be emphasized that the Chief of staff was very loyal to the superior, and he considered any criticism of the Commander-in-Chief as harmful and lowering the morale of the army. The generals who had previously reluctantly obeyed Piłsudski, succumbed to the authority of General Rozwadowski without a word of opposition, and he with inborn politeness but decisively curbed the ambitions of some of them [15, p. 205]. Rozwadowski also had to mediate with the Entente authorities, which

wanted to put General Weygand at the Chief of the Polish Armed Forces. In view of such intentions, he sent a reply that if he, appointed by the Supreme Commander, could not have all the power and responsibility associated with the position he held, he would resign. The French authorities greatly appreciated Rozwadowski, bearing in mind the cooperation with him in the past. Gen. Weygand also supported Rozwadowski's decision and agreed to become his adviser [16, p. 46].

Rozwadowski's first step as the Chief of Staff was to issue the order to organize the battle on the Bug River. This battle was to be the first offensive maneuver in a long time by the Polish Armed Forces. It did not bring success, but its importance was huge for the enemy, who suffered losses during it; it also allowed for regrouping troops for a counteroffensive and significantly influenced the morale of the Polish soldier [20, p. 96; 21, p. 175].

The Bolsheviks were approaching Warsaw, it was necessary to develop a plan to defend the city. Piłsudski called a conference on the night of August 5-6 and Rozwadowski and Weygand developed two counteroffensive plans. Piłsudski agreed to the second option, although Weygand opted for the first solution since he personally wanted to take command of the operation. Tukhachevsky counted that the Poles would take advantage of the loophole in his grouping, so he ordered the troops to be deployed north. Knowing this, Rozwadowski introduced organizational changes to the counteroffensive plan and on the night of August 8-9 he prepared the final order No. 10000. He wrote it by hand, it differed in that the offensive action was to be carried out from both wings, and not from one, as originally planned. Rozwadowski's manuscript was sent via couriers only to interested commanders [22].

During the battle, Rozwadowski tried to be present in the most endangered directions, he personally supervised the fight and solved current problems. His attitude showed faith in victory and cheerfulness. The battle was resolved in favor of Poland and became the turning point of the campaign [15, p. 216-217]. Rozwadowski immediately began planning a counteroffensive in Eastern Lesser Poland and Volhynia. Piłsudski appointed Rozwadowski commander of these operations. After the end of the war, Rozwadowski resigned in March 1921. Piłsudski appointed him the Inspector of the Second Army with a promotion to Lieutenant General and a member of the Strict Military Council. The Commander-in-Chief sent a letter to the General in which he wrote: "[...] with sincere gratitude, General, I recall your responsible work during this period – work full of energy, full of unwavering confidence in the final victory [...] your abilities and lively mind allowed the Lord in the most difficult circumstances find ways out and look for means to improve the situation [...]. Please accept, General, assurance of high esteem and expressions of real appreciation and gratitude" [23, p. 253].

To this day, pointing to the father of the success of the Battle of Warsaw raises a lot of controversy and conflicts between historians. It seems, however, that it was Rozwadowski's attitude that had a key impact on the course of the war. For example, General Weygand mentions that in his letters to Marshal Foch, referring to Piłsudski's nervousness and lack of any idea of waging war [24, p. 24]. He also mentions that Piłsudski shifted the responsibility for the entire operation onto Rozwadowski's shoulders, only commanding a strike group himself. A question should be asked, however, why was Piłsudski supposed to implement Rozwadowski's plan, if Rozwadowski knew and understood this plan best? The best conclusion may be the statement that all three leaders had a huge influence on the course of the Battle of Warsaw and that the only one should not be named, ascribing all the glory to him, even if Piłsudski's only merit was handing over power to Rozwadowski.

Directly before the May Coup, as in previous years, General Rozwadowski tried to avoid politics, he was also an advocate of the apolitical nature of the Armed Forces. Despite increasing

attacks by the supporters of the Marshal's camp, slandering his activities, he did not resign. On the contrary, on April 19, 1926, he presented the President with an extensive report criticizing the quality of the Armed Forces and pointing to the negative impact of politics contributing to the moral decline of the army. He inflicted numerous negligence on Piłsudski and Żeligowski, which led to the poor state of discipline in the army [15, p. 289-294; 25, p. 325-326].

During the May Coup, Rozwadowski sided with the government. Indeed, he condemned, like the assassins, the politicization of various areas of life in Poland. But, being an honorable man and loyal to the President, he did not accept the Coup that was contrary to the rule of law, which was a military coup against legal power. On May 12, 1926, Rozwadowski, in accordance with President Wojciechowski's decision, became the commander of the defense of Warsaw. The most difficult problem was that Rozwadowski did not know which units under his command remained faithful to him and which would support Piłsudski. Despite the uncertainty, on May 13, he ordered a counterattack on Piłsudski's forces, which was successful and brought the government troops closer to victory, as evidenced by the mediation undertaken by Piłsudski [26, p. 47-48]. During the night of the same day, the situation changed after the arrival of reinforcements from Vilnius. Thanks to this, Piłsudski's army forced the defenders to Wilanów, which ultimately led to the surrender of the government. It is difficult to blame Rozwadowski for the defeat as Piłsudski's army had a significant advantage. Moreover, the government did not want to lead to a civil war and acted conservatively as for bringing reinforcements to Warsaw [27, p. 240-274].

After the fighting stopped, Rozwadowski was arrested and on May 26, 1926, and incarcerated in the Military Investigation Prison on Antakalnis in Vilnius. There he was treated very unworthily, placed in a single cell [14, p. 119]. Protests in Poland arose against his arrest. It should be mentioned that General was kept in custody, although he was not convicted [15, p. 322-323; 25, p. 337]. The courts could not prove any guilt to him. On the other hand, the press in Poland, at the request of the government, slandered Rozwadowski's good name, which enraged the protesters even more. That is evidenced by the words of Prof. Marian Zdziechowski, who appealed to the President "not an act of grace – but of justice, which is demanded by the opinion of the best in the nation" [28, p. 5].

In October 1926, the court ruled that the arrest of General Rozwadowski was released. However, the prosecutor disagreed with the court's decision, on the grounds of military reasons, this may prove that Rozwadowski was arrested for political reasons. Public opinion continued to put pressure on the authorities in the Rozwadowski case, which led to the issue of Piłsudski's decision to release the general on May 18, 1927. He was brought to Warsaw and met Piłsudski at the Belweder Palace. As Kazimiera Rozwadowska-Zabłocka recalled, at one point in the conversation the Marshal said in a way typical of him: "but I won the Battle of Warsaw". Hence, Rozwadowski turned back and left [16, p. 70].

In May, Rozwadowski returned to his hometown of Lviv, where he took part in a ceremony in honor of American pilots at the Eaglets' Cemetery on May 31. He was struggling with diseases to which doctors were helpless and died on October 18, 1928 in Warsaw. There were speculations that the cause of death could have been the poisoning of the general when in custody, as evidenced by the refusal to perform an autopsy. The time of the funeral, which took place in Lviv, was set to be early, and officers of the Lviv Garrison were forbidden to attend. In consequence, the commander of the Lviv airport was dismissed from his function after he had allowed the pilots to fly over Rozwadowski's funeral procession [15, p. 336-338; 16, p. 72]. The pilots' behavior, as well as the great interest in the funeral ceremonies of the

Warsaw and Lviv inhabitants, and the participation of numerous civil and military organizations in the procession testified, above all, to the fact that he was a well-known and valued man not only by his subordinates.

Gen. Tadeusz Jordan Rozwadowski was one of the most outstanding leaders in the history of Poland. In his life, he was primarily guided by honor and patriotism. He was a very intelligent and brave man, who was not afraid to express his own opinion, even in the presence of his superiors, and make difficult and decisive decisions. The general inspired his soldiers to fight, in the hardest moments he left his command quarters to cheer the fighters with his presence. Throughout the entire period of World War I, he did not lose any battle, he showed leadership skills, among others, in the Battle of Annopol. He was very devoted to all matters related to Lviv, he refused to withdraw from the city under the Ukrainians' pressure. According to his will, he was buried among the soldiers, who died fighting for the city's freedom. In retrospect, one can only regret that such an outstanding and noble man and undisputed leader of many soldiers, did not receive a worthy commemoration like others of this period.

2.2. General Stefan "Grot" Rowecki

Stefan Paweł Rowecki was born on December 25, 1895, in Piotrków Trybunalski, where he spent his childhood. In 1906, he began his education in a gymnasium, where he met Tadeusz Puszczryński. His independence activity started in 1911, i.e., at the age of 16, when he created the first secret group of scouts in Piotrków. The scouts from Piotrków used repressions against scumbers¹ and propagated slogans of independence [29, p. 9]. Rowecki joined the Polish Rifle Teams in Warsaw in 1913, where he perfected his military skills. In the second half of 1914, he managed to get to Galicia to take part in a shooting camp. His baptism of fire took place on the night of September 19/20, 1914, in Ostrówka, when the superiors of his subunit planned an attack on the enemy artillery subunit. Already in March, Rowecki revealed his tactical sense when, being the commander of the frontal insurance section, he took the initiative and began issuing appropriate orders to the side support and the battalion's staff. Stefan Rowecki was disappointed with the first fire exchange in his life. The missiles flew over his head and hit the nearby trees, which made him completely unimpressed or threatened. The Russians repelled the attack of the shooters, but the Poles, prepared for a counterattack, stopped the Muscovites and safely moved away from them [29, p. 17-29]. Rowecki continued his service among shooters; on May 17, 1915, he was injured, as the only one of his unit, in the hip during a disorderly shooting. Doctors were not able to remove the bullet so it left in his hip for the rest of his life. After convalescence, he returned to service in July 1915. In June 1916, he was shot by a Cossack patrol near Maniewicze and was treated for several months [30, p. 21].

On November 5, 1917, most soldiers from Piłsudski's Legions under the command of the German and Austro-Hungarian Empire rebelled against taking the oath, the words of which read: I will serve honestly that in the present war I will faithfully keep the brotherhood in arms for the troops of Germany and Austria-Hungary and their allies [31, p. 149]. Officers who did not swear were interned in the camp in Beniaminów. Rowecki came there voluntarily, feeling solidarity with his friends. However, he did not support their opposition, which he expressed on January 1, 1918. He was guided by the feeling of the impending military conflict in Poland and was more interested in the unification of the entire Armed Forces, even under

¹ People who, despite the establishment of a Polish gymnasium, attended the public Russian school, were called 'scumbers' (strike-breakers).

the German scepter, than in organizing principled and sterile demonstrations [30, p. 26]. It should be emphasized that Rowecki was not alone in this position since commanders such as Józef Haller, Władysław Sikorski, Marian Januszajtis, Marian Kukiel, Stanisław Szeptycki, Michał Żymierski, and Leon Berbecki made a similar decision.

For the next several months, Rowecki, as a lieutenant, lectured at the School of Warrant Officers in Ostrów Mazowiecka. Jan Gawroński, Rowecki's ward, and later an outstanding Polish diplomat, describes him as a knightly, elegant, tough, cold as steel person and a servant who treats every little detail of the service seriously [32, p. 16]. Jan Rzepecki, in turn, remembers Rowecki as a temperamental and intelligent person, who always makes a nice impression. He also mentions that already at that time Rowecki claimed that the Polish-German border should run along the Odra-Nysa line [33, p. 184-185].

In October 1918, more and more people started talking about regaining independence by Poland. Leon Berbecki and the students of the Cadet School took the oath to the Regency Council. On November 11, 1918, upon the news of robberies committed by German troops in neighboring villages, Major Kukiel, the commander of the Cadet School, sent Rowecki together with one officer and three cadets to solve the problem. Rowecki and his companions disarmed the German patrol and chased the enemy unit, which numbered about two hundred soldiers. In the village he encountered on the way, he organized a militia post and continued the night rally behind the enemy. When he managed to catch up with the enemy, he divided his forces into three groups, which gave the impression of being surrounded by a large unit. The Germans ran away, leaving behind "over forty horses, several dozen carts full of weapons, ammunition and equipment, and a whole herd of cattle stolen from the local population" [34, p. 5]. Rowecki was awarded the Cross of Valor for this act.

Roweckie had the opportunity to take the next steps on the combat trail on May 11, 1920, when he was sent to Kiev. Originally, his task was to organize and organize a brigade of reservists. Rowecki "collected" his soldiers, then sent them by train to Poland for training. When Rowecki was thinking about returning, he was summoned by the Commander of the front, General Rydz-Śmigły, who ordered him to defend Kowel, Dubno, and Łuck against Budyonny's First Cavalry Army. Stefan Rowecki, however, incorrectly predicted the attack of the enemy, who directed the victorious attack on Równe [29, p. 112-114]. In the subsequent episodes of the war with the Bolsheviks, Major Rowecki held posts in the staffs, not taking an active part in the fighting.

After the war, Rowecki continued his military education and took up various positions in the Armed Forces. The period of relative peace in military service was destroyed in May 1926, during a coup. Rowecki was not privy to the plan because his closest associates suspected that he would oppose the attempt on legal power and remain faithful to the military oath. They were right, Stefan Rowecki did not have time to take up arms. His temperament can be seen in the conversation he had with Piłsudski at one of the presidential elections. Marshal appreciated Rowecki and asked him what he was doing during the May fights, to which Rowecki replied "In May I only commanded books in my institute, but if I had commanded another weapon, that time I would have had to go against the Commander". Piłsudski said it with a smile, while in the eyes of his adjutants there was indignation [30, p. 37-38].

Contrary to predictions, Piłsudski, appreciating Rowecki's act of civil courage, promoted him to the rank of lieutenant colonel in 1926. In 1930, Rowecki took command of the 55th Poznań Infantry Regiment in Leszno. His method of command was appreciated by both subordinates and superiors. Stanisław Zakrzewski remembers Rowecki as an elegant and polite person,

very calm, always in balance. He did not show his anger through aggression, rather ironic smiles, his orders were clear, short and firm, but he did not use the imperative *I order, I want*, but politely asked to do his will. Aleksander Pragłowski, the Commander of the 17th Uhlan Regiment, and later a general, spoke about him in a similar vein. According to his account, Rowecki was an ideal colleague, a polite and tactful man, he avoided prestige, he attached regiment officers and uhlans to himself, showing a direct and friendly approach. He had authority among his subordinates, he also bravely struggled with the difficulties of exercises, setting an example for the subcommand [30, p. 42]. Czesław Radomiński, a young officer at that time, wrote down a very interesting opinion about Rowecki. He went to serve in Rowecki's regiment, even though his colleagues said that Rowecki did not let live. "Its principle was to give tasks seemingly beyond strength and possibilities. Today I know that it was educational, that doing them gave me greater satisfaction than doing something banal and simple. [...] He liked modesty, hated blatant slyness, and hated gibberish. He always valued thought – even the simplest one, but his own, he did not like statutory recitation. His attitude towards subordinates cannot be called heartily effusive, but one must put in the first place in his approach to people a deep kindness, masculine, and tough – like everything with him. He hated the poisoning of life by small things – he had always taught that every matter had to be picked out of the essence – the rest had to adapt to this core of the problem. He saw great matters – he did not allow small things to hinder their settlement" [30, p. 42-43].

He was a visionary, he introduced elements of the enemy's motorized groups during the exercises, which was a complete novelty for those times. In 1935, he took command of the "Podole" Border Protection Corps Brigade. Rowecki took care of the basic needs of his soldiers. After taking up the new position, he focused on improving the living conditions of his subordinates, organized special courses for military cooks, eliminated the abuses and changed suppliers, ordered hot coffee to be delivered at the watchtowers, as well as prepare a room for drying uniforms for soldiers soaked in service. In 1938, he became the commander of the division infantry, where he was the Deputy Commander of the 2nd Legions Infantry Division. The then commander of the regiment was Col. Edward Dojan-Surówka, Rowecki got to know him quite quickly. He considered him a lazy man, and he had a similar view of the entire division that, as he claimed, was in a sleepy mood. He predicted the upcoming war, in its context he did not forecast the division command a success, which, as it turned out later, was unfortunately accurate, because Surówka was the only division commander, who abandoned his troops on the battlefield during the defense campaign. Rowecki was so dissatisfied with the assignment that when he was delegated to the course in Torunia, he expressed the hope that during his 8-week absence, he would be transferred or a war, which he did not want to wage in the 2nd Legions Infantry Division, would break out [30, pp. 44-46].

Rowecku was concerned about the condition of the Polish Armed Forces. Already in April 1939, he foresaw that Germany would attack Poland and criticized the disrespectful approach to the Luftwaffe and the enemy's armored weapons. He hoped that after the 3-4 years of war, Poland would emerge victorious as hegemon of Eastern Europe. However, he did not predict aggression from the USSR. On June 8, he wrote in his diary "As it is now, the war will probably break out this year, so in August or September this new, deadly dance of the whole world may begin" [30, p. 51]. Thus, one can see that Rowecki not only foresaw the outbreak of the war but also the scale of the conflict.

After the course in Toruń, on June 10, 1939, Rowecki was given a task that he probably had not expected. The Minister of Military Affairs ordered Rowecki to create an armored-motorized brigade in Warsaw from scratch. Rowecki hesitated for a few days, but finally accepted

the offer under pressure from the Minister. He was angry about this appointment, he wanted to take command of one of the 30 already existing divisions, he knew that the construction of a new brigade, which was unique, would involve many conflicts, pressure from his superiors, and "quarreling with everyone about everything" [29, p. 109-111]. However, Rowecki with the commitment and sense of responsibility known to him, soon began to carry out the entrusted task. Unfortunately, his predictions regarding the difficulties of this undertaking proved true. On August 7, his brigade had 75% of the total number of military posts, he expected reaching 100% of readiness in the second half of September [29, p. 148-149].

In the morning of September 1, 1939, Warsaw was awakened by an air raid and air combat. Stefan Rowecki went to his troops with the belief that France and England would certainly help Poland. With that in mind, on September 2, during his name day, he designed a march to Berlin with his colleagues. The brigade was regrouped away from Warsaw in order not to expose it to losses from bombing. On September 3, Rowecki was tasked with moving with the brigade to the Dęblin–Solec line and organizing defense along the Vistula River. Rowecki's brigade was completely unprepared for this action, literally everything was missing, from people, uniforms, and fuel to artillery. On September 14, there was the first clash of Rowecki's units with the Germans, in the result of which the Poles had to retreat towards Kraśnik. The whole maneuver looked tragic in the eyes of Rowecki, there was no logistical support. The Poles left several hundred cars behind, in which they only emptied the fuel from the tanks. On September 16-20, Rowecki's units unsuccessfully tried to capture Tomaszów Lubelski. After these events, the Commander of the Armed Forces, which included Rowecki's brigade, General Piskor, decided to stop the fight and surrender. It evoked a strong opposition from Colonel Rowecki, but he carried out the will of the superior. He ordered the valuable weapons and vehicles to be burned, the commanding officers to stay with the troops and go captive with the soldiers, while freed the staff officers' hands. He himself, assisted by several subordinates, decided to join the underground [30, p. 53-54].

Rowecki arrived in Warsaw on September 27, and quickly learned about the underground organization Służba Zwycięstwu Polski (Service for the Victory of Poland), established by General Michał Karaszewicz-Tokarzewski. Rowecki's original plan was to go to France. However, Tokarzewski ordered him to stay in the country, to which Rowecki agreed and took the position of the Chief of the Staff of the Service for the Victory of Poland. Rowecki's task was to create the Staff of the Polish Armed Forces and organize its work. On November 13, General Władysław Sikorski established the Union of Armed Struggle and appointed General Kazimierz Sosnkowski as its commander. In the beginning, there was a lot of chaos, many organizations were created at the same time, among them the Polish Armed Forces were assessed negatively as their founders were piłsudskites. Everyone, military and politicians, wanted independence, but the problem lay in the very principle of the underground. Two main currents differed from each other; the first one assumed priority for power in exile, and the second was the opposite, the structures remaining in the country were to have power. Sikorski was a supporter of the second solution and established the AGM to this end. Soon afterwards, it was Stefan Rowecki, who was appointed brigadier general in May 1940 [30, p. 132-135].

The beginnings of his command were based on the unification of all underground organizations. That was not an easy task, due to the difficult communication with the government in exile. After the defeat of France and the evacuation of the government to England at the end of June, Rowecki became the General Commander of the Union of Armed Struggle. Rowecki performed his tasks very well, while maintaining the required degree of conspiracy. It was

appreciated by the Commander-in-Chief, General Władysław Sikorski, who on February 14, 1942, transformed the Union of Armed Struggle into the Home Army and appointed General Rowecki as the commander. Three months later, Rowecki was decorated with the Order of *Virtuti Militari*. It should be noted that Rowecki, like Sikorski, was not a supporter of spontaneous armed struggle. According to his assessment, the political situation in the world was not conducive to that. The Germans fought successfully on all fronts. The plans for the conspiratorial struggle assumed a nationwide uprising, but with the support of the West, which was back at that moment [30, p. 146; 35].

On June 30, 1943. General Stefan "Grot" Rowecki was extradited by Ludwik Kalkstein and Eugeniusz Świerczewski, and thus arrested by the Gestapo. The Germans had been looking for Rowecki from 1940, General himself sensed the threat and planned to leave Warsaw soon, he also planned to undergo a plastic surgery. After his arrest, Grot was treated with officer honors in prison. Fearing his recapture, the Germans transported him to Berlin during the night. After about two weeks of interrogations and the rejection of the German offer of cooperation, he was transferred to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. There, after the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, he was murdered by Himmler's order [30, p. 268; 36].

Gen. Stefan "Grot" Rowecki was without a shadow of a doubt one of the outstanding Polish generals. He was an intelligent and hardworking man, but he did not waste time on unimportant matters. He was a type of a great organizer, he was also excellent at predicting the consequences of his decisions, as well as efficiently analyzing the situation he was in at a given moment. On the battlefield, he did not get a real opportunity to demonstrate the art of commanding and leading his subordinates. During the war with the Bolsheviks, he occupied mainly staff positions, and after the outbreak of World War II, he was able to command a completely unprepared brigade. The brigade that was brought into combat when the war was practically lost – the enemy troops reached the Vistula. Later, organizing the Home Army, he showed both organizational skills and leadership skills. He brought together a whole host of different underground organizations and military groups under his leadership, and led them wisely and responsibly. He did not allow the more excited commanders to outbursts at the most unfavorable moment of the occupation, which resulted in the Operation Tempest, during which the Home Army turned into a real army. Unfortunately, the Army was defeated, under the Soviet attack and the lack of political support from the Allies.

Conclusion

The interwar period was a difficult period in the history of Poland, after regaining independence from the devastating, long-term captivity. But it was also a time for the emergence of noble people, statesmen, and genuine leaders, including military ones. In the pages of our recent history, many of them are written in golden letters. They deserve that, in retrospect, and in the context of the existing leadership theories, they can be called leaders who have succeeded in putting the general good above their own ambitions and interests.

In the described activity of two outstanding military commanders, called leaders (not unfoundedly) by the authors, one can find common, characteristic features, namely, they were advocates of separating the Armed Forces from politics. They also did not engage in political games which, in their opinion, were brutal, ruthless, devoid of honor and decency. In their military service and other activities, they gave first priority to the respect they had for their subordinates, but also enemies. Comprehensive knowledge and experience were their very important qualities. They gained their first military skills during World War I, then took part in

local conflicts that Poland waged in 1919-1923. Stefan Rowecki also served Poland during the Second World War, which, unfortunately, was not allowed to live by Rozwadowski. Despite the fact that they avoided politics, they became victims of political games in the country. They enjoyed unquestionable authority among their subordinates, if only because they were honest people with high personal culture, trustworthy, and devoted to the cause, i.e., the good of the Republic of Poland. They were always ready to defend their subordinates, they were also able to effectively command subordinate units, and did not avoid direct contact with rank-and-file soldiers. Holding high positions, they were in the front line of fire at key moments of the battle, which mobilized the soldiers to fight even more. Such behavior also testified to their courage and willingness to sacrifice their lives. Moreover, as is evident from numerous sources, they were officers of above-average intelligence and excellent ability to predict upcoming events, and prepared comprehensively to make very risky decisions and bear responsibility for their consequences.

The art of command, as already noted in antiquity, consists of two issues, namely correct decision making and influencing subordinates in such a way that they carry out these decisions as if they were made by them. Both Generals, Rozwadowski and Rowecki, had such a power to influence their subordinates. Max Weber called this causative power charisma, while Gustaw Le Bon described it as a "secret force, an almost magnetic spell" [36, p. 121, 134]. The art of leadership, is not only to have such predispositions but use them at the right time and situation. Was the art of leadership successful for the generals whose activities are interpreted in this article? Based on (due to the limited volume of the material) analyzed only a few situations of managing subordinates, we are convinced of the leadership predispositions of our heroes. If we consider Bogdan Szulc's observation that "a commander is appointed by the imposition of his superiors, a leader becomes a leader as a result of the approval of his subordinates" [35, p. 211], General Rozwadowski and General Rowecki were great commanders. Commanders appointed by superiors to various positions during military service. Nevertheless, they were also, and perhaps above all, leaders in the eyes of their subordinates, appreciated for their art in exercising power. To confirm the formulated thesis, we refer only to selected episodes. As for General Tadeusz J. Rozwadowski – to the crowds of his adherents during the funeral ceremonies. In addition, we recall the eloquent words spoken over the grave of the deceased, the Legionnaire, Fr. Col. Józef Panaś "He was a true Christian, great Leader, who knew how to overcome without being proud and without tormenting his defeated enemy, and when he was defeated, he suffered not only without humiliation, but even without the desire for revenge and hatred for momentarily victorious" [After: 15, p. 337]. With regard to General Stefan Rowecki, the confirmation of the formulated thesis should be the obedience of subordinates and the ability to lead the often feuding parties, members of the Home Army in the direction not only of their unification but also reconciliation and leading to a fight against a common enemy. Only a man of deeply entrenched moral values could succeed in that. A man for whom the mission was first to serve, and then to lead others.

The described commanders were an example of devoted patriots, people who were able to sacrifice everything for the good of the Fatherland, relegating their own interests to the background. In the authors' opinion, they should be a model to follow in shaping the profiles of the next generations of Polish Armed Forces officers trained in accordance with the canons of the latest leadership trends. While General Rowecki was commemorated in post-war Poland since apart from many schools and streets, the AGAT Military Unit, the Leszczyński Anti-Aircraft Regiment, the Zielona Góra Anti-Aircraft Regiment in Czerwieńsk, the Central Internal Security Agency Training Center in Emów are named after him. In the case of General

Rozwadowski, it gives the impression of intentional silence on his merits. The conflict with Piłsudski ruined his military career, and consequently had a very bad effect on his health and life. In hindsight, it can be concluded that the Sanacja propaganda successfully erased the figure of General Rozwadowski from the Poles' memory. Only the grass-roots actions for several years have been aimed at commemorating his merits. In April 2019, Gen. Tadeusz Jordan Rozwadowski became the patron of the Silesian Artillery Regiment. The problem still lies in the lack of support from state factors. The cult of Marshal Piłsudski is still proclaimed and the successes of the Second Polish Republic are credited only with him.

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Author contributions

All authors contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

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Polscy przywódcy wojskowi okresu międzywojennego

STRESZCZENIE Autorzy w artykule przedstawiają sylwetki dwóch wybitnych przywódców wojskowych z okresu międzywojennego. Na podstawie analizy literatury przedmiotu interpretują zróżnicowane ujęcia przywództwa. W kontekście przytoczonych interpretacji przywództwa oraz uwarunkowań okresu międzywojennego opisują przebieg służby wojskowej i związaną z tą służbą działalność generałów: Tadeusza Jordana Rozwadowskiego i Stefana Roweckiego. W podsumowaniu wskazują na charakterystyczne przymioty generałów, które pozwalają umieścić ich w gronie przywódców wojskowych.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE przywództwo, władza, dowodzenie, służba wojskowa, okres międzywojenny

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