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## Polish military formations of the First World War in documents preserved at the State Archive in Łódź

**Abstract:** Presentation of source material found in the State Archive in Łódź and related to a number of Polish military formations engaged in the Great War. The author discusses formations affiliated both to the Central Powers and to the Entente, as well as the Blue Army, a Polish military unit established in France.

The efforts of Poland to rebuild the state during the First World War were active on two stages: diplomacy and armed combat. In the military sphere, the struggle for independence depended on creating and maintaining Polish military formations. Depending on their organisers' political affiliation, these formations were allied to the Central Powers or the Entente countries. The enlisting volunteers wished to participate in armed combat for an independent Poland. Ready to shed their blood and willing to make the highest sacrifice, they ascertained the Polish nation's inalienable right to their own homeland.

The goal of this paper is to present source material found in the State Archive in Łódź concerning a number of Polish military formations of the First World War. Firstly, the information presented below refers to archival material related to military formations emerging by the side of Central Powers: the Polish Legions (*Legiony Polskie*), the Polish Auxiliary Corps (*Polski Korpus Posiłkowy*) and the Polish Armed Force (*Polska Siła Zbrojna*), also called *Polnische Wehrmacht*. Further descriptions refer to archival material on the secret Polish Military Organisation (*Polska Organizacja Wojskowa*<sup>1</sup>). The subsequent sections describe source material associated with military formations created by the Russian forces: the Puławy Legion (*Legion Puławski*) and the I Polish Corps (*I Korpus Polski*). Finally, archival material is described referring to the Polish military in France, the Blue Army (*Błękitna Armia*), serving alongside the allied forces and seen as an allied force.

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1 Subsequently referred to as POW.

The source material for each particular military formation is presented within its home fonds. Due to its limited scope, this paper does not include the characteristics of each military formation. Information about their organisational history and combat specifics can be found in related literature<sup>2</sup>.

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- 2 The history of the creation, organisation and activities of the military formations described in this article may be found in the following publications: Bagiński, Henryk: *Wojsko polskie na Wschodzie 1914–1920*. Wojskowy Instytut Naukowo-Wydawniczy: Warszawa 1921; Gąsiorowski, Waclaw: *Historia Armii Polskiej we Francji 1915–1916*. Stowarzyszenie Weteranów Armii Polskiej w Ameryce Placówka w Bydgoszczy: Łódź 1939; Klimecki, Michał, Krzysztof Filipow: *Legiony Polskie. Dzieje bojowe i organizacyjne*. Bellona Spółka Akcyjna: Warszawa 2014; Kozłowski, Eligiusz, Mieczysław Wrzosek: *Historia oręża polskiego 1795–1939*. Państwowe Wydawnictwo Wiedza Powszechna: Warszawa 1984; Sienkiewicz, Witold (ed.): *Legenda Legionów. Opowieść o legionach oraz ludziach Józefa Piłsudskiego*. Wydawnictwo Demart S. A.: Warszawa 2010; Lipiński, Waclaw: *Bajończycy i Armia Polska we Francji*. Bellona 1929, Vol. 33, Issue 1.: Warszawa 1929; *id.*, *Walka zbrojna o niepodległość Polski w latach 1905–1918*. Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen: Warszawa 1990 (1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1931); Nałęcz, Tomasz: *Polska Organizacja Wojskowa 1914–1918*. Ossolineum: Wrocław 1984; Wawrzyński, Tadeusz: “Polski Korpus Posiłkowy (1917–1918)”. In: *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości* 1986, vol. 29; Wojciechowski, Zbigniew: “Polski czyn zbrojny w pierwszej wojnie światowej”. In: *Colloquium Wydziału Nauk Humanistycznych i Społecznych Akademii Marynarki Wojennej* 2009, vol. 1; Wrzosek, Mieczysław: *Polski czyn zbrojny podczas pierwszej wojny światowej 1914–1918*. Instytut Wydawniczy PAX: Warszawa 1990; *id.*, *Polskie formacje wojskowe podczas pierwszej wojny światowej*. Sekcja Wydawnicza Filii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego: Białystok 1977; *id.*, *Polskie korpusy wojskowe w Rosji w latach 1917–1918*. Książka i Wiedza: Warszawa 1969; *id.*, “Polskie ochotnicze formacje wojskowe podczas pierwszej wojny światowej i w okresie następných dwóch lat (1914–1920)”. In: *Białostockie Teki Historyczne* 2012, Vol. 10; Wysocki, Wiesław, Wiktor Cygan and Jan Kasprzyk: *Legiony Polskie 1914–1918*. Volumen: Warszawa 2014; Stawiecki, Piotr (ed.): *Zarys dziejów wojskowości polskiej w latach 1864–1939*. Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej: Warszawa 1990. Most of the archive material represented in this paper is related to Łódź, for information on military units active in the city during the Great War cf. Czernielewski, Konrad A.: “Polskie formacje zbrojne w Łodzi. Od przybycia Legionów w październiku 1914 r. do powstania garnizonu Wojska Polskiego w listopadzie 1918 r.” *Piotrkowskie Zeszyty Historyczne* 2011, Vol. 12, part 2. Polish Legions’ stay in Łódź is also described by: Ajnenkiel, Eugeniusz: *Pierwsze oddziały Legionów Polskich w Łodzi 12–29 października 1914 r.* Księgarnia S. Seipelt: Łódź 1934; Bogalecki, Tadeusz Z.: *Tradycje legionowe w regionie łódzkim 1914–2014*. Drukarnia WIST. Antoni Wierzbowski: Łódź, Zgierz 2014; Jarno, Witold: “Legiony Polskie w Łodzi w okresie I wojny światowej”. W: Daszyńska, Jolanta (ed.): *Łódź w drodze do niepodległości*.

## On the side of the Central Powers – Polish Legions, Polish Auxiliary Corps, Polish Armed Force

The main fonds for Polish military formations on the side of the Central Powers is the Chief Enrolment Office for the Polish Army in Piotrków. Regrettably, its archive has barely survived and is composed of only 48 units. The individual files contain circulars and commands of the Military Department of the Supreme National Committee (*Departament Wojskowy Naczelnego Komitetu Narodowego*, DW NKN) from 1915 to 1917<sup>3</sup>; briefings and instructions by the Command of Polish Legions from 1915 to 1917<sup>4</sup>; orders by the Command of the Polish Legions' Group from 1915 to 1917<sup>5</sup>; officer orders issued by Polish Auxiliary Corps Command from 1917 to 1918<sup>6</sup>; memorials and projects concerning the formation of the Polish Armed Forces<sup>7</sup>; officer orders, communiques and instructions by the Polish Armed Forces Enrolment Inspectorate from 1917 to 1918<sup>8</sup>; orders by the Enrolment Inspectorate in Radomsko from 1917<sup>9</sup>; correspondence related to enlisting volunteers to Polish Legions and Polish Armed Force<sup>10</sup>; reports (daily, weekly and annual) of enlistment procedures conducted in the period 1915 to 1918 in the following counties (*powiat*<sup>11</sup>): Noworadomsk, Piotrków, Koneck and Opoczno<sup>12</sup>; registers of Legion soldiers employed at the enlistment offices<sup>13</sup>; identity cards of Noworadomsk county enlistment emissaries<sup>14</sup>; files concerning the

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Księży Młyn Dom Wydawniczy: Łódź 2013; Klimek, Jan: "Park amunicyjny Legionów Polskich w Łodzi (Retkinia – Brus – Srebrna)". *Niepodległość* 1934, Vol. 9.

3 State Archive in Łódź (Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, subsequently referred to as APŁ), Główny Urząd Zaciągu do Wojska Polskiego w Piotrkowie (subsequently referred to as GUZWP), 1–2. Duplicates of varying orders of the Military Department of the Supreme National Committee from 1915–1917 may be found in the collection *Zbiór Druków i Pism Ulotnych* (subsequently referred to as ZDiPU), 290.

4 APŁ, GUZWP, 4–7, 11.

5 *Ibid.*, 12–15.

6 *Ibid.*, 8–9.

7 *Ibid.*, 27.

8 *Ibid.*, 9, 19, 25.

9 *Ibid.*, 10.

10 *Ibid.*, 37, 40.

11 *Powiat* is the second-level unit of local government and administration in Poland. The term "*powiat*" is most often translated into English as "county" (trans.).

12 *Ibid.*, 32, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39.

13 *Ibid.*, 29, 30.

14 *Ibid.*, 43.

living conditions of Legion officers<sup>15</sup> and correspondence concerning organising Christmas celebrations for Polish Legion soldiers<sup>16</sup>.

These reports contain a considerable amount of interesting information, which sheds light not only on the outcomes of enlistment actions, but sometimes also regarding the attitudes of local town and village dwellers to the occupants and the new Polish armed forces formed under their auspices. The documents seem to suggest that the activities of enlistment emissaries were frequently met with indifference or outright hostility. This prevailing attitude was probably the result of ruthless requisitions of food and wheat, poor treatment of people and common pro-Russian sympathies. A report written by an enlistment emissary at the Enlistment Post in Gorzkowice on 9 February 1917, states:

Whilst visiting the above towns and villages, we have noticed low spirits caused by diverse requisitions. The peasantry is full of bitterness. Requisitions were conducted in an appalling manner; acts such as hitting women with rifle butts were common. The requisitioning officers have no concern for public opinion. As a result, the peasantry declare that they do not intend to break their vows of loyalty to the Emperor. They are undermining whatever good work we do here. [...] No one volunteered [to enlist – T.W.]<sup>17,18</sup>.

In their reports the emissaries also describe the attitude of the local elites (represented by the town mayor, local clerk, vicar, organist, and landowners) to the idea of forming a Polish army, and the likelihood of their cooperation.

The second fonds containing extensive material associated with Polish military formations allied with Austria-Hungary and Germany is the Ephemeral Print Collection<sup>19</sup>. Numerous affiches and flyers calling Poles to join the ranks of the Polish Legions have been preserved. One of the earliest examples is Ignacy Daszyński's proclamation from 22 August, 1914, in which Daszyński appeals to workers from the Kingdom of Poland: "Whoever considers himself a Pole, hurries to join the ranks of Polish soldiers!"<sup>20</sup>. Another address, published in 1915 by the Chief Enrolment Office for the Polish Army in Piotrków, appeals ardently:

15 Ibid., 44.

16 Ibid., 45.

17 Ibid., 36, sheet. 80.

18 Unless stated otherwise, all translations in the text have been provided by the translator.

19 The collection are currently being completed. In future, the files will be marked with new reference numbers, replacing the ones currently in use. Reaching the items referenced in the article will be possible through the use of concordance, as prepared by the archivist responsible for the collection.

20 APŁ, ZDiPU, 288, p. 4.

“Do not wait! If you can carry arms, go, enlist in the Polish Legions! [...] There is no time to hesitate, when the Motherland calls. Hurry – fight for the Polish cause, and take the others with you!”<sup>21</sup>. Not all appeals have been written in this stately tone, however; examples of humorous publications include a dialogue titled “A Conversation between the Brave Maciek and the Cowardly Walek” (*Rozmowa dzielnego Maćka z tchórzliwym Walkiem*) printed in a circular published by the Propaganda Circle for the Polish Army (*Koło Propagandy na rzecz Wojska Polskiego*) in Piotrków<sup>22</sup>. Appeals directed to men convincing them to join the ranks of the emerging Polish military can also be found in the address published by the Polish National Organisation (*Polska Organizacja Narodowa*, PON)<sup>23</sup>, Polish Legion Enlistment Commission (*Komisja Werbunkowa Legionów Polskich*)<sup>24</sup> and legionnaires from Zgierz<sup>25</sup> and the Piotrków district<sup>26</sup>. Ephemeral propaganda prints and leaflets were also directed at Polish women. In the proclamation by the Łódź War Alert Women’s League (*Liga Kobiet Pogotowia Wojennego Okręgu Łódzkiego*) from 1915, the following message is aimed at female landowners: “It is your duty, too, to aid in the effort to free our homeland [...] you must advocate the cause, call others to join the ranks of the Legions and free our Country! Call your husbands, brothers and sons to fight for the sacred cause!”<sup>27</sup>. Women were expected to provide moral support, as well as material help. One example of this is the proclamation by the Women’s Humanitarian and Educational Association (*Humanitarno-Oświatowe Stowarzyszenie Kobiet*) in Opatów, published in November 1915. It calls to contribute to the Christmas gift fund for Legion soldiers<sup>28</sup>. The Central Christmas Fund Committee (*Centralny Komitet Gwiazdkowy dla Legionistów*) also asked Poles for generosity in an appeal dated 1916<sup>29</sup>. Other preserved appeals concern the Polish Legions entering several cities in the

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21 Ibid., 291, p. 16.

22 Ibid., 291, p. 23.

23 Ibid., 200, pp. 3–6.

24 Ibid., 291, p. 79.

25 Ibid., 288, p. 55.

26 Ibid., 291, p. 14.

27 Ibid., 299, pp. 10, 35 (duplicate).

28 Ibid., 288, p. 228.

29 Ibid., 288, p. 244.

Kingdom of Poland, such as Radomsk in 1915<sup>30</sup> or Warsaw in 1916<sup>31</sup>, and the matter of commemorating fallen soldiers<sup>32</sup>.

This fonds also includes several proclamations related to the Polish Auxiliary Corps. This group includes a paper issued to the Legions by several dozen Polish political activists, officials and intellectuals, mainly from Warsaw, published after Józef Piłsudski's dismissal from the Polish Legions. The signatories called the soldiers to keep the faith in armed combat for Polish independence, as well as to see the imminent creation of the Polish Auxiliary Corps as a sign of progress<sup>33</sup>. The creation of a large formation of Legions is also the subject of the proclamation titled "To the Officers and Soldiers of the Polish Army" (*Do oficerów i żołnierzy Wojska Polskiego*), published on 2 October 1916 by Colonels Marian Żegota Januszajtis, Zygmunt Zieliński and Józef Haller. In the proclamation, they informed the soldiers that "after two years of hard, arduous fighting, full of bloodshed and sacrifice" the first "seed of the Polish Army – the first Polish Corps" had been established. They assured their soldiers of their own unwavering will to continue on the chosen course and stay true to their duty<sup>34</sup>. Another important proclamation was written by Józef Haller, entitled "To the Polish Nation!" (*Do narodu Polskiego!*), which was published in 1918 after the Polish Auxiliary Corps troops had broken through the Austro-Hungarian front to join the Polish forces in the East<sup>35</sup>.

An address from 9 November 1916, written by Colonel General Hans von Beseler and Governor General Karl Kuk, concerns the Polish Armed Forces formed alongside Germany. In this address they appealed to the population of Lublin and Warsaw to enlist in the ranks of the emerging Polish armed forces<sup>36</sup>.

The Ephemeral Prints Collection features also diverse announcements and proclamations related to the Polish Auxiliary Corps. Notable among these are Regulations Concerning Voluntary Enlistment into the Polish Army (*Przepisy dotyczące dobrowolnego wstępowania do wojska polskiego*) issued by Gen. Beseler on 12 November 1916, specifying, among other things, the time and place for volunteers to enlist, the required minimum age, personal documents, available

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30 Ibid., 288, p. 52.

31 Ibid., 352, p. 29 (reproduction of the address in the source publication: *Pamiętki wojenne*. Wydawnictwo Pamiętek Wojennych: Warszawa 1918).

32 Ibid., 288, p. 238.

33 Ibid., 288, p. 248.

34 Ibid., 288, p. 239.

35 Ibid., 288, p. 314.

36 Ibid., 293, sheet 7.

weapons and appropriate uniforms<sup>37</sup>, and “An Instruction for Volunteers Enlisting into the Polish Army” (*Pouczenie dla ochotników do Wojska Polskiego*) published by the Polish Armed Force Enrollment Inspectorate<sup>38</sup> featuring, among others, the locations of enlistment posts in Łódź and Piotrków<sup>39</sup>.

This fonds also contains ephemeral material such as songs and poems related to the Legions. A postcard print from 1915 is devoted to the memory of Rittmeister Zbigniew Dunin-Wąsowicz and a dozen other cavalry soldiers who had fallen in the Charge of Rokitna. The document is accompanied by a poem written by Stanisław Stwora, entitled “Of the Polish Soldier” (*Strofy o żołnierzu polskim*)<sup>40</sup>. Military humour is present in an anonymous work titled “A Letter to a Girl from a Polish Legionary” (*List Legionisty do dziewczyny*)<sup>41</sup>. Among other preserved works there are two letters written in verse addressed to Józef Piłsudski, written by Zdzisław Kleszczyński<sup>42</sup> and Roman Musialik<sup>43</sup> and a flyer with an “Oath of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment” (*Rota 4 p.p. W.P.*) by an unknown author<sup>44</sup>. Another interesting ephemeral print, dated 1915 and published in Kraków, contains a poem by Mieczysław Smolarski entitled “To Arms” (*Pod broń*) with musical notations for a male choir, composed by Aleksander Orłowski (the title page of this print is illustrated with a drawing depicting Brigadier Józef Piłsudski)<sup>45</sup>. Among other notable prints is the series of “Riflemen’s Songs” (*Pieśni strzeleckie*), published by the Military Department of the Supreme National Committee in Piotrków, containing two songbooks and musical notations for such songs as “Hey there near Warsaw” (*Hej tam pod Warszawą*)<sup>46</sup> and “The Rifleman’s March” (*Marsz Strzelców*)<sup>47</sup>.

Furthermore, this collection contains a variety of other ephemeral material, including speeches by Bishop Władysław Bandurski (honorary Chaplain of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the Polish Legions)<sup>48</sup>, an open letter from Władysław Studnicki to the writer Henryk Sienkiewicz, calling the latter to use his authority to publicly

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37 Ibid., 293, sheet 19.

38 Ibid., 293, sheet 1.

39 Ibid., 293, sheet 9.

40 Ibid., 288, sheet 359.

41 Ibid., 324, sheet 75.

42 Ibid., 324, pp. 207–210, also 495, pp. 60–63.

43 Ibid., 495, p. 2.

44 Ibid., 495, p. 110.

45 Ibid., 288, pp. 214–217.

46 Ibid., 288, p. 211–213, also 495, p. 114–117.

47 Ibid., 288, pp. 218–221.

48 Ibid., 288, pp. 3, 226, 231–232.

support the Polish Legions<sup>49</sup>, an officer's letter describing the oath crisis in the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment of the Polish Legions<sup>50</sup>, a postcard-image of a Legion officer given to financial contributors to the Independence Monument in Pabianice<sup>51</sup> and a text document containing information on the reorganisation of the enlistment system in 1917 following the creation of the Polish Armed Forces alongside Germany<sup>52</sup>.

A separate category of materials in this fonds is formed by multi-page documents concerning the Polish Legions. Several of these are worth mentioning. A valuable publication entitled "Polish Legions 16 August 1914–16 August 1915. Documents" (*Legiony Polskie 16 sierpnia 1914–16 sierpnia 1915. Dokumenty*) was issued in Piotrków in 1915<sup>53</sup>. Also preserved are six volumes of "Lists of Losses" (*Listy strat Legionów Polskich*), containing diverse data on sick, wounded or missing soldiers in 1915–1916<sup>54</sup>. Rich iconographic material can be found in the "Album of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the Polish Legions" (*Album I. Pułku I. Brygady Legionów Polskich*), published in Kraków in 1915<sup>55</sup>. Also in 1915, a small publication was issued: "The European War. Stories by Polish Soldiers" (*Wojna europejska. Krótkie opowieści żołnierzy polskich*)<sup>56</sup>. Texts written by Polish Legion fighters are also included in "The wounded soldier: An ephemeral collection" (*O rannym żołnierzu. Ulotne pismo zbiorowe*), printed in Warsaw in 1917<sup>57</sup>. Also noteworthy are two illustrated *leporella* folders from 1914 presenting the infantry, cavalry and artillery uniforms, headgear and military rank emblems of the Polish Legions<sup>58</sup>. An accompanying instruction booklet "Allowances for Polish Legion families" (*Zasiłki dla rodzin Legionistów–Królewaków*), published by Military Department of the Supreme National Committee in Piotrków details the regulations concerning granting monetary allowances to families of underprivileged Legion soldiers living in the Kingdom of Poland<sup>59</sup>. Political issues are at the core of "The Tragedy of the Polish Legions" (*Tragedia Legionów*), published in

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49 Ibid., 291, sheet. 55.

50 Ibid., 288, p. 280.

51 Ibid., 495, p. 90.

52 Ibid., 293, sheet 10.

53 Ibid., 288, pp. 86–206.

54 Ibid., 292.

55 Ibid., 289.

56 Ibid., 288, sheet 229.

57 Ibid., 288, sheet 222.

58 Ibid., 495, pp. 74–78, 81–87.

59 Ibid., 288, sheet 250.

Warsaw in 1916<sup>60</sup> and the anonymous, and not dated, “Polish Legions: the Truth and the Gossip” (*Prawda i plotka o Legionach Polskich*)<sup>61</sup>.

The Ephemeral Prints Collection also contains several titles of newspapers and periodicals which feature information about Polish military formations by the side of the Central Powers. These are, among others: “Dekada: pismo żołnierza polskiego” (issues 1–3, 5, 10/1917)<sup>62</sup>, “Goniec Polowy Legionów. Dziennik rozporządzeń Komendy Legionów Polskich” (issues: 9/1915 and 13/1916)<sup>63</sup>, “Ilustrowany Kurier Wojenny” (1/1914)<sup>64</sup>, “Ilustrowany Tygodnik Polski” (issue 5/1915)<sup>65</sup>, “Kronika Polska” (volumes: 1–3/1916)<sup>66</sup>, “Legion Młodych” (issue 5–6–7/1934)<sup>67</sup>, “Legionista Polski: redagowany przez Legionistów z r. 1914–1918” (issues: 3–7/1938)<sup>68</sup>, “Legiony. Jednodniówka ilustrowana” (published in Warsaw in June 1917)<sup>69</sup>, “Na posterunku” (a special edition published on 6 August, 1916 and the 5/1917 issue)<sup>70</sup>, “Piłsudzczy” (3 issues from 1933–1937)<sup>71</sup>, “Polen. Wochenschrift für Polnische Interessen” (issues: 1–14, 16, 19/1915)<sup>72</sup>, “Polnische Legionen 1914–1915” (a single-issue publication printed in Vienna)<sup>73</sup>, “Polska” (issue 6/1918)<sup>74</sup>, “Rząd i Wojsko” (diverse issues from 1916–1919)<sup>75</sup>, “Wiadomości Polskie” (several dozen issues from 1914–1917)<sup>76</sup>, “Żołnierz legionów i POW” (seven issues from 1937–1939)<sup>77</sup>. Furthermore, the collection contains press cuttings related to the events in Kielce from 6 August, 1914, from the periodicals: “Dzień” and “Łowiczanie”<sup>78</sup>,

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60 *Ibid.*, 288, pp. 56–71.

61 *Ibid.*, 288, sheet 353.

62 *Ibid.*, 303.

63 *Ibid.*, 302.

64 *Ibid.*, 418.

65 *Ibid.*, 335, pp. 119–138.

66 *Ibid.*, 298.

67 *Ibid.*, 330.

68 *Ibid.*, 331.

69 *Ibid.*, 335, pp. 24–39.

70 *Ibid.*, 300.

71 *Ibid.*, 332.

72 *Ibid.*, 428.

73 *Ibid.*, 335, pp. 1–11.

74 *Ibid.*, 335, pp. 177–188.

75 *Ibid.*, 296.

76 *Ibid.*, 294–295.

77 *Ibid.*, 333.

78 *Ibid.*, 442, pp. 52, 57.

and an article entitled “The arrival of Polish Legions soldiers to Łódź” (*Przybycie legionistów do Łodzi*) printed in “Gazeta Łódzka” (no. 327/1916)<sup>79</sup>.

As regards the archival material grouped in this fonds, it is also worthwhile mentioning the documents which concern veterans’ organisations, such as the Association of Polish Legionaries (Związek Legionistów Polskich), the Association of War Veterans of the Republic of Poland (Związek Inwalidów Wojennych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej) or the “Legions Family” (Rodzina Legionowa). Several files contain the statutes and regulations for these veterans’ and families’ organisations, association activity reports, proclamations, bulletins and other material<sup>80</sup>.

The Iconographic Collections of the State Archive in Łódź feature several publications, postcards and photographic material related to Polish Legion formations. Among these, notable are the “Polish Legions Album” (*Album Legionów Polskich*), printed in Kraków in 1916<sup>81</sup>; an album featuring photographs of bridges built in Wołyń by the soldiers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of Polish Legions<sup>82</sup>; several postcards adorned by satirical drawings depicting Polish Legion fighters<sup>83</sup>; a postcard issued by the Supreme National Committee in 1915 with a photograph of trenches near Dzierzkowice<sup>84</sup>; a postcard with a portrait of Józef Piłsudski by Leonard Stroynowski<sup>85</sup> and wartime photographs of the Brigadier<sup>86</sup>.

Materials concerning the Polish Legions can be also found in some private archive fonds. The archives of the Potocki and Ostrowski families from Maluszyn contain a manuscript of landowner Ludwika Ostrowska, in which she describes the daily life of her family in the first year of the Great War. Ostrowska mentions the Polish Legions (who had been stationed in the Małuszyn, near Noworadomsko) on two occasions. Both fragments of her journal are revealing and illustrate the attitude of the clergy, landowners and peasantry from the Russian partition toward the Polish Legions in the first year of the war. Hence, it is worth quoting them in full. On 23 August 1914, Ostrowska wrote:

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79 Ibid., 288, p. 31.

80 Ibid., 323–325, 328.

81 APL, Zbiór albumów ikonograficznych, A-LXXII (Volume 1), A-LXXIII (Volume 2).

82 Ibid., A-XXX.

83 APL, Zbiór ikonograficzny Archiwum Państwowego w Łodzi (subsequently referred to as ZiAPŁ), (e.g.: R/17 (*My piechota* – We, the infantry), R/20a (*A ja z N.K.N.* – I am from NKN), R/21 (*!Kawalerya!* – !Cavalry!)).

84 Ibid., W-I 5–103.

85 Ibid., O-I P/7.

86 Ibid., O-I P/21, O-I P/22.

[...] on Sunday, we have encountered the most painful instance of the condition affecting our miserable Country. Our politicians in Petersburg declare a brotherly alliance with Russia against a common enemy; and at the same time, our politicians in Kraków claim solidarity with the Riflemen<sup>87</sup>. Following meeting in three fighting armies, the volunteers are to meet on the battlefields. It is the most painful chaos. On Sunday morning, 5 armed Riflemen arrived from Kurzelów to confiscate 5 draught horses – there were no saddle horses. The mobilisation took 24 [horses – T.W.] from Maluszyn and the surroundings – that is now a total of 29. What is going to happen next? They left before the Mass – I haven't laid eyes on them. People here do not trust nor think well of them; the Russian side is who they support here<sup>88</sup>.

The Legions entered Maluszyn for the second time on Sunday, April 25, 1915, with the aim of enlisting new volunteers. Once again the local community approached the Polish soldiers with deep mistrust. Ostrowska notes:

Three Legions fighters from Radomsko arrived in the evening. They paid a visit to the Vicar, asking him to use the pulpit for the purpose of calling the community to arms, which he refused to do, just like all other clergymen here. After the Mass had concluded, one of the soldiers spoke to the congregation, without much success; reportedly people were leaving and paying little attention. They proceeded to visit the surrounding villages and spread the propaganda door-to-door. Apparently not many people were interested – not in the village, not in the estates. I have read the leaflets they distribute; they exude patriotism and a near-mystical religious fervour, but the feeling is of artifice and of – as they say – a cover-up, obfuscating less noble goals. It is sad to think how many young people sacrifice all, in the best of faith – and that sacrifice mostly results in an even greater sorrow for the Country.

28 [April – T.W.]: the Legions' campaigning seems to have ended. Tuesday [April 27<sup>th</sup> – T.W.] has been designated as the enlistment day. Several more officers arrived, but their effort was futile. No one volunteered, and the officers finally left for Radomsko. There had been fears of forced enlistment and the local youth have reportedly hid in the woods<sup>89</sup>.

The archives of the Potocki and Ostrowski families from Maluszyn also contain a proclamation entitled “National Government to the People of the Kielce District (*Rząd Narodowy do ogółu Obywateli Ziemi Kieleckiej*), issued in August 1914 and signed by the General Command of the Polish Armed Forces. It contains a summons to young men to “join the ranks of the Riflemen”, as well as an appeal to the general public to make contributions for the Polish army<sup>90</sup>. Information

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87 In the first of the quoted memoir sections, Ludwika Ostrowska still calls the Piłsudski Legionists commonly as “shooters” – T.W.

88 APŁ, Archiwum Potockich i Ostrowskich z Maluszyna subsequently referred to as APiOM), II/87 item 2, pp. 98–99.

89 Ibid., II/87 item 2, pp. 210–212.

90 Ibid., I/25 pp. 5–6.

about Polish Legions is also present in the files connected to the activities of the Supreme National Committee in 1915 and collected by Count Józef Ostrowski from Maluszyn<sup>91</sup>. These files also contain copies of two memorials submitted by the NKN to the Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in July 1915, and sent to Count Ostrowski by the Commander of the Military Department of the Supreme National Committee, Władysław Sikorski. Another interesting document from the fonds is an invitation sent to Count Ostrowski asking him to attend “A celebration of the second anniversary of the formation of Polish Legions” (*Uroczysty obchód 2-letniej rocznicy utworzenia Legionów Polskich*), organised on 15 August in Kamieńsk by the command of a local Veterans’ Hospital and Women’s League<sup>92</sup>.

Documents have been found concerning the activities of Countess Maria Jehanne Wielopolska, the leader of the Legion Division in the Supreme National Committee Women’s League in Lviv, in another fonds originating from the estate archive of the Walewski family from Tubądzin. These contain permission to collect money and gifts for the Polish Legions in 1915<sup>93</sup> and a diploma awarded to the Countess by other Women’s League members in 1916<sup>94</sup>. The latter is decorated by a painting of a 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade soldier in a characteristic “maciejówka” cap and an eagle emblem.

A considerable amount of archival material concerning Legion formations can be found in the Bartoszewicz family archive. Among these materials are a Supreme National Committee communique dated September 1914 on moving the Eastern Legions from Lviv to Sanok and then Jasło (in order to train and equip the troops)<sup>95</sup>; ephemera addressed to the Polish population asking for material support<sup>96</sup>, Legion-themed postcards<sup>97</sup>, a memorial by Władysław Studnicki submitted to the German authorities, entitled “A Complete Solution to the Matter of Polish Armed Forces” (*Całkowite rozwiązanie sprawy polskiej siły zbrojnej*)<sup>98</sup>; “An Open Letter. To Brigadier Piłsudski, a Former Member of the State Council” (*Do brygadiera Piłsudskiego, byłego członka Rady Stanu*) written by Iza Moszczeńska

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91 Ibid., II/30.

92 Ibid., II/82, pp. 328.

93 APL, Archiwum Kazimierza Walewskiego z Tubądzina (Archiwum rodziny Walewskich), 32, p. 501.

94 Ibid., 32, pp. 502–503.

95 APL, Archiwum rodziny Bartoszewiczów (subsequently referred to as ArB), 582, pp. 1–2.

96 Ibid., 580, sheet 1, also 583, p. 1–3.

97 Ibid., 3651, pp. 220, also 3695, sheet 4.

98 Ibid., 581, sheet not numbered.

after the oath crisis in June 1917<sup>99</sup>, documents concerning the soldiers of the Polish Auxiliary Corps<sup>100</sup> and materials on the internment of Polish soldiers by the Central Powers in 1917 and 1918. The last of these is perhaps worth a closer look: The first document is a typescript entitled “The truth about Szczypiorno” (*Prawda o Szczypiornie*), written in October 1917 by an unnamed officer. The author explains the moral rationale behind the refusal of Polish soldiers to swear an oath of allegiance to Germany and Austria-Hungary and sheds light on the relationships and attitudes at the Szczypiorno camp<sup>101</sup>. The second document is a handwritten letter penned by an anonymous Polish Auxiliary Corps soldier in March 1918 after the Battle of Rarańcza (February 15–16, 1918). Alongside his brothers-in-arms, the letter’s author had been interned by the Austrian military in a prisoner camp in Bustyahaza, Hungary. He characterised the camp as follows: “the living conditions are disgraceful – dirt, filth, hunger and chaos everywhere. We are being treated not as prisoners, but as the worst sort of criminals. [...] The barracks commander – a vicious dog”<sup>102</sup>. This fonds also contains an album of poetry and song from 1914 to 1920, collected after the war had ended. Most of these relate to the Polish Legions. Among their authors are Kornel Makuszyński, Józef Mieczysław Mączka and Edward Słoński<sup>103</sup>. Two poems devoted to the Legions have also been found in a separate file containing soldiers’ poems from 1918<sup>104</sup>.

An interesting item in the fonds of the Archive of Włodzimierz Pfeiffer, a well-known Łódź photographer and bookseller, is a listing of books banned by German censorship within the Government General of Warsaw from 1916 to 1918. The list encompasses several hundred titles, many revolving around the theme of the Polish Legions<sup>105</sup>.

The next fonds of a private archive contains material related to the life and scientific achievements of Eugeniusz Ajnenkiel, including a typescript of his work entitled “What I’ve heard, seen and experienced. Memories of my life and the lives of others” (*Słyszałem, widziałem, przeżyłem. Wspomnienia z mojego i nie mojego życia*).

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99 Ibid., 589, pp. 1–4.

100 Ibid., 583, pp. 4–5.

101 Ibid., 591, pp. 1–3.

102 Ibid., 4–5. The text of the letter was also printed on a leaflet titled To the Polish nation! Victimisation of the Legionaries (Do społeczeństwa polskiego! Znęcanie się nad Legionistami) cf. APŁ, ZDiPU, ref. 288, p. 292.

103 APŁ, ArB, 3859. The album contains a loose, unsigned photograph of a Legion soldier.

104 Ibid., 3862, pp. 4–11.

105 APŁ, Archiwum Włodzimierza Pfeiffera (subsequently referred to as AWP), 3, pp. 19–71.

Ajnenkiel began work on this around late 1948 with his daughter, Zofia Krystyna, in mind. The second volume focuses on the time of the Polish Legions in Łódź in October 1914. Ajnenkiel describes the Polish Legions entering the city in October, a cold reception from Łódź citizens, the pro-Russian attitudes of factory owners and their aversion towards both the Polish Legions and the idea of independence; a reserved approach demonstrated by Łódź workers towards the soldiers; impressions made by the soldiers on the author, who was 14 years old at the time; making a personal acquaintance with some of the officers, including the writer Andrzej Strug; a rally at the Grand Theatre in Łódź organised on 25 October; the author's failed attempt to enlist due to being underage and the Legions leaving the city on 28 October<sup>106</sup>. Information presented in this narrative is further enriched by another publication by the same author, entitled "The First Polish Legion Divisions in Łódź" (*Pierwsze oddziały Legionów Polskich w Łodzi*) published in the interwar period<sup>107</sup>. The motif of the Polish Legions' fight for independence is present in Ajnenkiel's work in the wider context of the Łódź workers' movement: for example, he relates a teahouse discussion conducted in 1915 by members of the local Polish Socialist Party, Revolutionary Faction, and the members of Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania<sup>108</sup>.

Researchers wishing to find valuable and practically unknown resources on the Polish Legions might be interested in the files of the Municipal Assessment Committee in Łódź. This fonds contains over a dozen estimates concerning material losses suffered by Łódź citizens due to requisitions enforced by the Legions. Most of these refer to requisitioning horses and carts<sup>109</sup>. The case of Ludwik Wagner, living in Łódź at ul Leszno 46, may serve as an example. Wagner lost the horses he had previously rented to the Konrad Reinhard's brewery at Ogrodowa St. Feliks Rosner, a brewery administrator, told the Commission:

In the early days of the war, in accordance with an earlier arrangement with Mr. Kluchow – Mr. Wagner's business partner – Mr. Wagner's horses had been at the brewery. I had been feeding them and paying the carter's wages. In September 1914, I sent these horses – the cart was loaded with beer – to Pabianice. On the way there, Polish Legion soldiers threw the beer off the cart and onto the side of the road, and took the horses,

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106 APŁ, Archiwum Eugeniusza Ajnenkiela (subsequently referred to as AEA), 127, pp. 105–115.

107 Ajnenkiel, Eugeniusz: op. cit.

108 APŁ, AEA, 127, pp. 134–139.

109 APŁ, Komisja Szacunkowa Miejscowa w Łodzi (Local Assessment Committee in Łódź, subsequently referred to as KSMŁ), 971, 1738, 1867, 2688, 4120, 5257, 5804.

cart and driver. The carter let me know about the incident through someone I'd never seen before; all I could do was to send another cart to pick up the beer<sup>110</sup>.

Among the goods requisitioned by the Legions were foods such as pearl barley from Dawida Toporek's shop at Nowy Rynek 12<sup>111</sup>. Polish soldiers were also equipped with firearms requisitioned from Łódź citizens based on the orders of German occupying forces<sup>112</sup>. Other documents concern the occupation of apartments in a building at ul Kościuszki 1 for the use of Polish Legions. Between 12 February 1915 and 1 April 1918, this space served as both enlistment office and temporary quarters for officers: names and ranks are given in the document<sup>113</sup>.

Material related to military formations acting alongside Austria-Hungary and Germany is also present in the fonds of the German Imperial Military Governorship Court in Łódź. Several case files have been found against persons accused of conducting illegal enlistment activities aimed at acquiring volunteers for the Polish Legions, mainly through distributing publications censored by the German authorities. The case of Stanisław Gilowski is perhaps particularly interesting. This soldier of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade of the Polish Legions, born in Piotrków, had in his possession several dozen publications about the Legions (*Piosenki Legionistów*, *Muza Legionów Polskich*, *Szlakiem bojowym Legionów*, a 1916 calendar *Legionista Polski*), 50 issues of "Dziennik Narodowy", 20 issues of "Wiadomości Polskie" and several issues of "Zwierciadło Polskie". Gilowski was detained in early 1916 in Łódź and questioned at an investigation penitentiary at ul Olgińska. From there he had been sent to a prison cell on ul Długa, and later to a German camp *Kriegsgefangen Lager Bütow – Pommern – Deutschland*. From that camp, Gilowski had sent a postcard and a letter addressed to the General Austro-Hungarian Consulate in Wrocław: both are preserved in the case file. Attached also are three confiscated letters from soldiers to their families, some correspondence between the Women's League in Piotrków to the War Alert Women's League in Łęczycza, a brochure entitled "The Struggles of the Polish Legions No. 2: Fighting in Podhale" (*Boje legionów Polskich. No 2: Walki na Podhalu*), printed in Piotrków in 1915, correspondence concerning financial matters between Gilowski and the publishing administrators of Military Department of the Supreme National Committee in Piotrków, as well as a photograph of a Legion soldier, perhaps depicting Gilowski

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110 Ibid., 5257, sheet not numbered.

111 Ibid., 5114, sheet not numbered.

112 Ibid., 3407, sheet not numbered; 5180, sheet not numbered.

113 Ibid., 1152, sheet not numbered.

himself<sup>114</sup>. Other cases from 1916 include one against Kazimierz Pogodziński, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lancers Regiment of the Polish Legions, for smuggling the “Znicz” magazine<sup>115</sup> and against Edmund Szafrąński and several other people, for illegal enlistment activities and distributing the censored “Wiadomości Polskie” magazine<sup>116</sup>. One of the files in this fonds also contains a postcard send from a soldier of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, Emil Kaliński, to his family in Łódź<sup>117</sup>.

Another interesting case in the one brought against two women living in Łęczycza – Józefa Sienkiewicz (aged 70) and her daughter Waleria Sienkiewicz (aged 40), investigated in August 1917 by the German Imperial Military Governorship Court. Józefa Sienkiewicz had given shelter to her grandson, Edward Raniecki, a deserter from the Polish Armed Forces. After the German police authorities had found Raniecki, Józefa Sienkiewicz and her two daughters interfered with Raniecki’s arrest. The incident is described in detail by *Feldpolizeikommissar* Bergemann. Bergemann testified that the three women had attacked him, knocked his weapon off, bit him and then pushed out into the courtyard, allowing the deserter and one of Sienkiewicz’s daughters to escape. The case files also contain two prints related to the oath crisis: an anonymous brochure entitled “The Oath” (*Przysięga*), published in Warsaw in June 1917, criticising the Central Powers’ Polish policy and the resulting policy of the Legions command; and a 1917 leaflet printed by the War Alert Women’s League in Piotrków, confirming the League’s support for Piłsudski’s decision<sup>118</sup>.

Information about the Polish Legions and Polish Auxiliary Corps are also present in some fonds of municipal institutions. A very valuable mention about the arrival of the first Polish Legions soldiers to Łódź was found in the files of the Main Citizen Committee of city of Łódź. A protocol from the Committee’s session on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 1914, in a section devoted to Leon Grohman’s report on Militia activities, states that on that day the Militia office had been visited by “several riflemen squads from Galicia” who arrived there to organise lodgings for a larger group of fighters. The report details the meeting between Polish Legion fighters and Tadeusz Sułowski, a Militia representative<sup>119</sup>.

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114 APŁ, Sąd Cesarsko-Niemieckiego Gubernatorstwa Wojskowego w Łodzi (subsequently referred to as SCNGWŁ), 1841, sheet not numbered.

115 Ibid., 1841, sheet not numbered.

116 Ibid., 1841, sheet not numbered.

117 Ibid., 1838, sheet 413.

118 Ibid., 1604, sheet not numbered.

119 APŁ, Główny Komitet Obywatelski m. Łodzi, 1, p. 64.

Several interesting archival units are found in the municipal fonds of Łódź from 1915–1939. The Presidential Department of the City Council files contain correspondence related to enlisting volunteers to the Polish Auxiliary Corps<sup>120</sup>; a petition to the City Council from November 1917 written by Łódź citizens and concerning an intervention to free imprisoned Legion soldiers (and Józef Piłsudski) from prisoner camps<sup>121</sup>; an act of the City Council from 28 November 1917 concerning assigning a sum of 5,000 Marks as financial aid for the prisoners of Szczypiorno, born or living in Łódź<sup>122</sup>; a protocol of the official City Council meeting on 6 August 1919, on the fifth anniversary of Piłsudski's troops entering the former Kingdom of Poland<sup>123</sup>; finally, letters by members of the Polish Legion Association to the Mayor of Łódź concerning the promotion of former Legion officers working in municipal structures and featuring a list of names and other personal data<sup>124</sup>.

Additionally, singular materials related to the Polish Armed Forces can be found in a number of folders in the fonds of the municipal districts (gminas<sup>125</sup>) of Chojny, Radogoszcz and Widzew, as well as the fonds of the city of Pabianice. These were created between November 1916 and May 1918 and are related to the issues of accommodation and provisioning of Legion soldiers who had arrived with the intention of enlisting volunteers into the Polish Armed Forces, benefits paid to the families of the Legionnaires after they had been transferred to German command, and the organization of enlistment<sup>126</sup>. The final group of archival materials contains an interesting item, namely copies of letters by the Department of Polish Affairs of the Armed Forces (*Abteilung Polnische Wehrmacht*) at the Imperial-German General Governorship of Warsaw, copied to the Magistrate of the City of Pabianice by the German Imperial Police, Łódź.

In the fonds of the Association of War Veterans of the Republic of Poland, Area Board in Łódź and local offices, one may find a member registry of the Association of War Veterans of the Republic of Poland in Piotrków Trybunalski

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120 APŁ, Akta miasta Łodzi (subsequently referred to as AMŁ), 13857.

121 Ibid., 13197.

122 Ibid., 13196.

123 Ibid., 12223.

124 Ibid., 14266, pp. 175–180 also 14267, p. 482.

125 *Gmina* is the principal unit of administrative division of Poland as “community” or “municipality.”

126 APŁ, Akta gminy Chojny, 1385; APŁ, Akta gminy Radogoszcz, 910a; APŁ, Akta gminy Widzew z siedzibą w Ksawerowie, 1425; APŁ, Akta miasta Pabianic, 47.

from 1919 to 1939. It contains personal data of the First World War veterans, including the Legion soldiers<sup>127</sup>.

The correspondence of the Voivodeship Office of Łódź has been preserved in the files of the interwar Prefect Office of Łódź; the letters concern the graves of soldiers who fought for the independence of Poland in Łódź and its surrounding area. It describes the discovery of eleven graves of Legion soldiers at the Roman Catholic graveyard in Zarzewie, Chojny district. The names of the soldiers, their ranks and membership in individual regiments are listed in the attachment to the correspondence<sup>128</sup>.

Minor references and materials related to Polish military formations, including the Polish legions, have also been found in the archives of interwar schools of Łódź. The fonds of the A. Zimowski Private Secondary School for Boys, Łódź contains a report which states that on November, “in the Dowbor, Legions, and Polish Military Organisation sections in the scouts’ quarters at ul Wólczańska 27, a session started with the intention of disarming the German troops in Łódź.” In this context, several Legion soldiers are named: Lieutenant Alfred Biłyk (City Commander) and Sergeant Frankowski, as well as a member of Dowbor’s troops: Warrant Officer Franciszek Bereszka<sup>129</sup>. A few fonds additionally contain materials from Second Republic school ceremonies honouring Józef Piłsudski. Event programmes inform the reader that during such occasions, Legion songs were sung, and art and music teachers organised Legion-themed writing, arts and musical competitions<sup>130</sup>. During the interwar period, it was also common to adorn school buildings with bronze cast bar reliefs bearing Piłsudski’s image and biography. As an example, a plaque of this type was ordered in 1934 by the Father I. Skorupka Private Secondary School for Boys, Łódź “in order to properly celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the Legions by Marshal J. Piłsudski.”<sup>131</sup>

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127 APŁ, Związek Inwalidów Wojennych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej Zarząd Okręgu w Łodzi i oddziały terenowe, 122.

128 APŁ, Starostwo Powiatowe Łódzkie, 350, pp. 117–119.

129 APŁ, Prywatne Gimnazjum Męskie A. Zimowskiego w Łodzi 1909–1939, 24, sheet 78.

130 APŁ, Publiczna Szkoła Powszechna nr 25 Łódź ul. Drewnowska 88, 69, sheet not numbered.

131 APŁ, Prywatne Gimnazjum Męskie im. ks. I. Skorupki w Łodzi (subsequently referred to as PGMIS), 227, sheet not numbered.

## Conspired – Polish Military Organisation

The archives of the Piotrków Main Draft Office contain some documents issued by the Chief Command Office of the Polish Military Organisation. The fonds of the Piotrków Polish Army Main Enlistment Office contain a number of documents issued by the Chief Command of the POW. These are: “Zasady organizacji POW” (*POW Rules*) presenting the goal behind the creation of the Polish Military Organisation, its organisational tasks, structure and membership rules<sup>132</sup>; “Przyrzeczenie wstępującego do Polskiej Organizacji Wojskowej” (*The Oath of a POW Initiate*)<sup>133</sup>; “Raport w sprawie zwalczania Polskiej Organizacji Wojskowej przez Departament Wojskowy N.K.N – tzw. Krajowy Inspektorat Zaciągu”, (*The Report on fighting POW by the Supreme National Committee – the so-called National Enlistment Inspectorate*), issued in Warsaw on 26 March, 1917<sup>134</sup>, and a message titled “Zamach Stanu na Radę Regencyjną na rzecz domu Hohenzollernów” (*Coup d'état on the Regency Council, Inspired by the Hohenzollern Family*) issued on 26 June 1918<sup>135</sup>.

The Ephemeral Prints Collection contains some POW leaflets and posters. In an example proclamation of February 1918, the organisation called for “each within whom beats the heart of a Pole join its ranks and thus work towards reaching a Poland united, independent and based on democratic rules”.<sup>136</sup> In its proclamations from the last months of the war, the POW calls its former and current members to mobilise in response to the orders of the “Chief of fighting Poland”, Piłsudski, and to “build the fortress of the Republic of Poland”<sup>137</sup>.

The referenced fonds also contains POW brochures, signed by T.H.<sup>138</sup> [Tadeusz Hołówko – T.W.] as well as “Do najdosłójniejszej Rady Regencyjnej Królestwa Polskiego memoriał w sprawie tworzenia wojska” (*A letter on Creating an Army to the Magnificent Regency Council*) which was issued by the General Command of the POW in November 1917<sup>139</sup>. The fonds also contains a few issues of the “Strzelec. Pisma Polskiej Organizacji Wojskowej” (issues: 1, 2/1916 and 3, 4–5/1917)<sup>140</sup>,

132 APŁ, GUZWP, 33, sheet 14.

133 Ibid., sheet 13.

134 Ibid., sheets 2–5.

135 Ibid., sheets 11–12. The text could also be found in ArB, 593, pp. 17–20.

136 APŁ, ZDiPU, 288, p. 38.

137 Ibid., pp. 1, 302, 303.

138 Ibid., pp. 72–83.

139 Ibid., sheet 352.

140 Ibid., 301.

“Przełom” from 1925 describing the events of November 7 to 11, 1918<sup>141</sup>, and five volumes of the “Żołnierz Legionów i P.O.W.” (issues: 1–4/1938 and 1–2/1939), published jointly by the Chief Command of the Legionists’ Association and the Board of Polish Military Organisation Member Association<sup>142</sup>.

As an exception to the rule, ephemera related to POW may be found in private archive fonds. As an example, the archive of the Potocki and Ostrowski families from Małuszyn contains a leaflet issued by the POW and Allied Parties addressed to the citizens of Lublin, referring to the expected intervention of the Polish Legions into Lublin, accompanied by Austrian and German forces in 1915. The signatories called upon Lublin to “create the same sort of support for Piłsudski’s units as the citizens of Kielce exhibited in the West”<sup>143</sup>. The Bartoszewicz family archive fonds contains a brochure “P.O.W. Zadania i metody” (*POW Tasks and Methods*), published in Warsaw in February 1918 and explaining the creation, activities and methods of operation of the organisation<sup>144</sup>.

Ephemera related to the Polish Military Organisation have also been found in theatre-related fonds. Two posters announcing a “Wieczór artystyczny z herbatką” (*An Artistic Evening Over a Cup of Tea*) in Sunday, 11 February 1917 in the Łódź Artisan Club Hall. Tickets to the event could be purchased in the office of the Military Emergency Service Women’s League; the proceeds going to the POW, however, one of the posters refers to the “Piechur” Polish Organisation, a legal front to the conspired POW<sup>145</sup>. The reverse side of the other poster announces an upcoming performance of Stanisław Wyspiański’s play *Wesele* in the Polish Theatre in Łódź, on 2 March 1917, the proceeds also being donated to the POW<sup>146</sup>.

The Iconographic Collection at the State Archive in Łódź contains postcards featuring photographs of POW members, published after the First World War by the Committee for the Restoration of the Monument for Fallen POW Soldiers. They represent the Chief Command Office of the POW in 1914/1915<sup>147</sup>, POW Officer School in 1916<sup>148</sup>, POW Area Commanders in 1917<sup>149</sup>, members of the

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141 Ibid., 288, sheet 225.

142 Ibid., 333.

143 APŁ, APiOM, II/30, p. 38.

144 APŁ, ArB, 593, pp. 1–16.

145 APŁ, Zbiór teatraliów łódzkich, 21/40, sheets 19, 20 (duplicate).

146 Ibid., 21/26, sheet 10.

147 APŁ, ZIAPŁ, W-I 5/113 (duplicate: W-I 5/344).

148 Ibid., W-I 5/106 (duplicate: W-I 5/343).

149 Ibid., W-I 5/104.

Chief POW Command with Józef Piłsudski<sup>150</sup> and a POW battalion<sup>151</sup> during 1917 field manoeuvres in Zielonka near Warsaw, as well as members of the chapter of the Virtuti Militari Cross from the time of their duty at POW in 1921<sup>152</sup>.

Iconographic material at the State Archive in Łódź also includes a POW march, in November 1917, towards the May 3<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Monument in Lutomiersk.<sup>153</sup> A photograph of POW members in Lutomiersk can also be found in the Lutomiersk Photograph Collection; it was taken in 1916 and shows POW fighters in the ruins of a local cloister destroyed during the First World War<sup>154</sup>.

Files from German investigations of individuals suspected of being POW members have been found in the fonds of the German Imperial Military Governorship Court in Łódź. One of the volumes contains a list of suspects, including Peter Arndt from Zgierz, Wenzel [Wacław – T.W.] Sokolewicz from the “Piechur” organisation in Łódź and Leon Dietrich, pseudonym “Polanowicz”, from the “Koło Sportowe” (Sports Club) in Łęczycza. All three individuals were interned in 1917 in the German camp at Szczypiorno, more precisely Skalmierzyce, following the official designation of the unit (*Kriegsgefangenenlager Skalmierschütz*).<sup>155</sup> Another volume refers to an investigation of a 50-year-old Józef Nosek, also accused of activities within the conspired POW and the dissemination of illegal publications. The files mention Nosek’s arrest by German police in Sieradz in March 1918. Police officers approached him wearing a Legion uniform which, as the investigation revealed, was in his illegal possession as early as the summer of 1917. The arrested individual held a rifle and forged documents. At first, he was imprisoned in a facility in Sieradz, and then transported to a prison in Kalisz. The files contain attachments in the form of three photographs of Józef Nosek, as well as orders and official attestations related to the soldiers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment of the Second Brigade of the Polish Legions<sup>156</sup>.

The POW is also referred to in a letter to the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education in Warsaw of 21 November 1918, stored in the fonds

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150 Ibid., W-I 5/107 (duplicate: W-I 5/341), W-I 5/108 (duplicates: W-I 5/347, W-I 5/347 D), W-I 5/110 (duplicates: W-I 5/349, W-I 5/349 D1, W-I 5/349 D2, W-I 5/349 D3).

151 Ibid., W-I 5/109 (duplicate: W-I 5/342), W-I 5/111 (duplicate: W-I 5/345), W-I 5/114 (duplicates: W-I 5/346, W-I 5/346 D).

152 Ibid., W-I 5/105 (duplicates: W-I 5/112, W-I 5/348, W-I 5/348 D1, W-I 5/348 D2, W-I 5/348 D3).

153 Ibid., M-I L/69.

154 APL, Zbiór fotografii miasta Lutomierska, ref. 2.

155 APL, SCNGWŁ, 1850, sheets 125–130.

156 Ibid., 1501.

of the Boys' Secondary School of the Polish "Uczelnia" Association in Łódź. Local education authorities inform the Ministry of the fact that "in the Real School in Pabianice, Polish students and some Jews, counting 30 in all, perform militia duty in the city and its surroundings under orders from the local command of Polish army, more precise, the Polish Military Organisation"<sup>157</sup>. A protocol from a session of a teacher's conference of the "Uczelnia" Knowledge Association in Łódź from 27 November 1918, contains a note on collecting voluntary donations at schools, with the goal of buying a wreath for a student of the school, Stefan Linke<sup>158</sup>: a POW platoon commander, who died from bullet wounds on 11 November 1918 while disarming German troops in Łódź. The Włodzimierz Pfeiffer archive contains pre-war photographs of a plaque commemorating the death of Linke, erected in 1936 on the wall of the National Bank building in Łódź<sup>159</sup>.

Information on some former members of the POW employed in the local authority offices of Łódź in the interwar period may be found in the fonds of the Łódź city files, in the section on 1915–1939 Civic Centre. As an example, The Presidial Department contains a request from The Board of the POW Members' Association to the President of the City of Łódź for a promotion, and awarding a vacant post of a department manager in the Taxation Department to Bolesław Manikowski, who is referred to in the letter as "taking active part in the fight for Independence, currently an active member of our organisation, bearing proper certification from the Military Historical Office and is awarded with Cross for Valour and Cross of Independence"<sup>160</sup>.

## **In agreement with Russia – The Puławski Legion and the First Polish Corps**

The Ephemeral Prints Collection contains a leaflet and a postcard with a memorable address of Nicholas Nocholaevich Romanov from 14 August 1914. It gave rise to the creation of Polish military units allied with Russia. Addressing Poles, the chief commander of Russian military forces hoped "that the sword which had slain the enemies at Grunwald has not rusted" and promised the Reunion of Poland under the Russian sceptre as well as the rebirth of Poland free in religion, language and self-governance<sup>161</sup>.

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157 APŁ, Męskie Gimnazjum Polskiego Towarzystwa "Uczelnia" w Łodzi, 76, p. 30.

158 Ibid., 26, sheet not numbered.

159 APŁ, AWP, 823, 824.

160 APŁ, AML, 14267, p. 220.

161 APŁ, ZDiPU, 287.

The fonds also contains a publication on the Puławski Legion. Unfortunately, it is incomplete; only pages numbered 49 to 86 remain, and the cover and title pages are missing, so the author, title and year of publication are unknown. Despite its fragmentary character, it is an item worth noting. It contains the reminiscences of Witold Ostoja-Gorczyński, a member of the military Organizing Committee, his correspondence (orders, telegrams, letters), photographs of leaders and soldiers, poems, and press quotes<sup>162</sup>.

The collection of ephemera contains singular material on the First Polish Corps. One example is a text of a resolution from mid-June 1917 by the First General Assembly of Polish Military Associations in Petersburg. In the resolution, the Assembly requested that the Russian government build a Polish military force that:

ought to be formed by the way of voluntary migration and enlistment of our fellow countrymen [...], remain under the command of Polish officers and the Superior Russian Commander [...] and ought to comprise all types of weapons, have Polish officer core, own command centre, own spare parts dependent on said command centre; and own support, sanitary and supply units<sup>163</sup>.

An instruction titled “Program i organizacja pracy kulturalno-oświatowej w Polskiej Sile Zbrojnej” (*Programme and Organisation of Cultural and Educational Work in the Polish Military Forces*) prepared in February 1917 in Minsk by ensign Stefan Sołtyk, head of the Cultural-Educational Department in the Chief Polish Military Committee (Wydział Kulturalno-Oświatowy w Naczelnym Polskim Komitecie Wojskowym), was also discovered<sup>164</sup>. Also, a poem titled “*Pieśń Armii generała Muśnickiego*” (*General Muśnicki’s Army Song*) distributed in Warsaw in February 1918 was found<sup>165</sup>. Posters from the first half of 1918 bear the proclamations of military administration bodies established by the command of the First Polish Corps in the occupied Belarus. The group contains the address of the commander of the Babruysk fortress, Lieutenant Colonel Bolesław Jąźwiński<sup>166</sup>; a few orders of the Leader of Civil Governance<sup>167</sup>, Lieutenant Colonel Adam

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162 Ibid., 287.

163 Ibid., 243, sheet 2.

164 Ibid., 288, sheet 281.

165 Ibid., 288, sheet 290.

166 Ibid., 441, sheet not numbered.

167 Based on an agreement signed by General Dowbor-Muśnicki with the Germans on 26 February, 1918, the Polish army was designated a small area in Belarus which was considered neutral. The commander of the First Polish Corps was managing it with the help of two auxiliary bodies: a headquarters and a civil governing body; cf. Lipiński, Waclaw: *Walka zbrojna...*, pp. 265–266.

Aleksandrowicz<sup>168</sup>, and an order issued by the Assistant Corps Leader for Civil Causes, Porębski<sup>169</sup>. Information on General Józef Dowbor-Muśnicki may also be found in newspapers stored in the ephemeral prints group: “Wiadomości Wojskowe” (issue 3–4/1918)<sup>170</sup>, “Żołnierz Polski. Organ urzędowy I-go Polskiego Korpusu” (issues: 50, 51, 56/1918)<sup>171</sup> and “Placówka” (issues: 80 and 82/1918)<sup>172</sup>. Issue 80 of “Placówka” publishes the conditions of an agreement signed by General Dowbor-Muśnicki and German authorities, on the grounds of which Dowbor-Muśnicki’s military formation was disarmed and disbanded.

Additionally, the fonds of the Municipal Assessment Committee in Łódź were found to contain materials related to the I Polish Corps: A report by a citizen of Łódź, Władysław Świącicki, a former captain of the Fifth Regiment of Polish Shooters. In mid-1918, he reported material losses during the battle of Usha on 31 January 1918, of the First Polish Corps against the Bolsheviks to the Committee. The report is supplemented by an account of a witness to the event, Włodzimierz Nikonczow, also a citizen of Łódź, a former clerk in the Fifth Regiment of Polish Shooters, who reported:

during the transit of the Fifth Regiment of Polish Shooters from the governorate of Zubcow in the Twersk area to the Bobrujsk governorate in the Minsk area, the Polish forces came under attack on 31 January, this year, by the Bolsheviks. The consequence of the attack was the disarmament and arrest of the whole regiment. Mr. Świącicki was arrested and sent to Minsk, to appear before a court. The Bolsheviks took all the regiment’s belongings, as well as the private effects of its soldiers and officers. Mr. Świącicki’s belongings as taken by the Bolsheviks are listed in a directory attached to the estimate<sup>173</sup>.

In his account, Świącicki specified that all his property was seized by the soldiers of the First Siberian Army Corps. This seizure comprised mostly items of clothing such as shirts, coats, trousers, shoes, gloves and a maciejówka cap, as well as suitcases, handkerchiefs, a shaving kit, a mattress, pillow, a Browning pistol and a sabre<sup>174</sup>.

Other fonds contain information on the former soldiers of the First Polish Corps in Russia who were related to Łódź by their residence and professional activity. For example, the fonds of the Łódź State Police contain a personal file

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168 APŁ, ZDiPU, 288, pp. 295–299.

169 Ibid., p. 300.

170 Ibid., 335, pp. 145–176.

171 Ibid., 304.

172 Ibid., 305.

173 APŁ, KSMŁ, 5035, sheet not numbered.

174 Ibid.

of a senior headsnam Leon Pabich, who served as a gunner in General Dowbor Muśnicki's army between 1 September 1917 and 31 January 1918, as evidenced by military certificates contained in the file<sup>175</sup>.

An interesting item worthy of a mention in the iconographic fonds of the State Archive in Łódź is a photograph signed "Legiony w wojsku rosyjskim" (Legions in the Russian army)<sup>176</sup>. It depicts peasant partisans armoured with scythes and double-barrel shotguns. This formation, archaic in the standards of the Great War, was created by Bonawentura Snarski, a teacher from Kielce, who enlisted volunteers after requesting that Russian authorities allow the formation of Polish corps with Russian support.

### Among the Western powers – Polish Armed Forces in France

Established in 1917, the Blue Army is described in "Instrukcja służby łączności dla wojsk wszelkiej broni" (Instructions for the Communication Staff for Army Units of All Types) published by the National Printhouse in Paris in January 1919, and stored in the Ephemeral Prints Collection. It was translated from its 1918 French original for the Polish troops<sup>177</sup>. The same collection contains a poster announcing General Haller's troops passing through Łódź Kaliska railway station on 18 April 1919 at 2:40 p.m.<sup>178</sup>.

Another iconographic resource is a photograph depicting General Haller accompanied by General Dowbor-Muśnicki (in the background)<sup>179</sup>.

Some material related to the Polish Army is also present in the files of Łódź schools from the interwar period. The fonds of the First Private Secondary School and High School for Boys of the Łódź Merchants' Association contains a diploma signed "Braciom Polakom Amerykanom w hołdzie VI B" (*To our Brothers, American Poles, a Tribute from Class VI B*). It was written and adorned with painted decorations by the students of the Real High School and had been intended as a sign of gratitude towards the Poles in America, fighting for Poland's independence in Haller's army. The words run as follows:

You, our fellow compatriates, could not be scared by anything. The best of your youth and strength had come to the old lands of Europe. You arrived to fight for Poland's freedom, and the freedom of humanity [...] You shed blood on the fields of France. Poland was

175 APŁ, Komenda Policji Państwowej miasta Łodzi, 28, sheet 13.

176 APŁ, ZIAPŁ, W-I 5/124.

177 APŁ, ZDiPU, 334.

178 Ibid., 395, sheet 30.

179 APŁ, ZIAPŁ, W-I 6–266.

proud to look upon you – Haller’s legions [...]. You haven’t spared any means to help build Our Republic of Poland. The memory of your fallen Eagles at the fields of Meuse and Somme will live in the hearts of Poles [...]<sup>180</sup>

The students placed their signatures on the reverse side. Deeds of Haller’s troops were also honoured by the students of the Ignacy Skorupka School for Boys in Łódź, as evidenced by an entry in the school’s Visitor’s Book on 20 May 1922. It mentions a school ceremony dedicated to the troops and the participation of the institution’s students and teachers in a memorial service to the fallen soldiers in the Stanisław Kostka Cathedral in Łódź<sup>181</sup>.

To summarise the above overview of archival material related to Polish military formations during the First World War: the material is extremely dispersed in the various holdings of the State Archive in Łódź. They have been found in more than twenty fonds, containing files from general and special administration offices, local authority offices on city or district levels, school and court files, private individual archives, and collections of ephemera, theatre publications and iconography. The vast majority of files concern the Polish Legions, some refer to the Polish Armed Force, Polish Military Organisation and Polish Auxiliary Corps. Only a few items refer to the Puławy Legion, I Polish Corps in Russia and the Blue Army. The majority of resources cited in this paper are related to Łódź and its surrounding area. It might be worth adding that some material, such as combat losses appraisal reports or German court files, has been virtually unknown and so far has not been used in scientific research or publications. This makes it attractive and worthy of researchers’ attention.

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180 APŁ, Prywatne Gimnazjum i Liceum Męskie Zgromadzenia Kupców m. Łodzi, 3003, p. 1.

181 APŁ, PGMIS, p. 23.

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