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STATE SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS AS THE PART OF NATIONAL POLICY OF INTERWAR POLAND IN WESTERN UKRAINIAN LANDS: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNION OF LVIV DEFENDERS

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This article examines the mechanisms and importance of state support for public organizations as an integrated component of the national policy of interwar Poland in Western Ukrainian lands, using the Union of Lviv Defenders as a representative example. By analyzing archival materials from the State Archives of Lviv Region and the Union's regulatory documents from 1918–1939, the author demonstrates how the Second Polish Republic strategically used veterans' organizations to achieve certain political and ideological goals in an ethnically diverse region.

The annexation of Western Ukrainian lands to Poland after the Ukrainian-Polish War of 1918–1919 brought great challenges to the newly restored Polish state. The Union of Lviv Defenders was founded as an association of veterans who participated in the battles in Lviv in November 1918 when Lviv residents of Polish origin, both military and civilians, staged an uprising against the Ukrainian authorities who proclaimed Lviv the capital of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic.

The Union acted as an organization dedicated to preserving the memory of these events through memorial work, assistance to veterans, celebrations of the anniversaries of those events, and much more. The founders of the Union believed that its task extended much further than traditional support for veterans or social activities; the Union took on broader goals of ensuring the unity of Polish citizens through the idea of spreading the national memory of the struggle for Lviv and fostering loyalty to the state, both among citizens of Polish origin and national minorities. Another goal of the Union's activities was to legitimize the sovereignty of Polish authorities in the territories that served as a theater of military operations during the Ukrainian-Polish war of 1918–1919.

This article demonstrates that state support for the Union of Lviv Defenders was comprehensive and multifaceted, including financial, legal, cultural and symbolic aspects. Financial assistance was most tangible and included regular subsidies provided by various state institutions of both central and local nature, including the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Local city budgets, especially in Lviv, provided the Union with material support throughout the interwar years. Such funding enabled the organization to rent offices, hire employees and carry out numerous commemorative and propaganda events.

In addition to direct financial support, the state provided significant assistance to memorial projects that served as a method of imprinting the memory of the battles in Lviv into the national discourse. The inclusion of various activities of the Union in educational policy demonstrated the strategic nature of state support. The Union also received tax exemptions and various additional payments for public services, and at the same time, local officials and administrations gave priority to its applications for various permits to organize public events, erect monuments, hold parades, and other memorial events.

The cooperation between the Union of Lviv Defenders and the state authorities was mutually beneficial, as the Union, in turn, provided support to the state authorities and helped spread its narrative concerning loyalty, patriotism, and the unity of Polish citizens in the face of external threats.

Keywords: Galicia, Lviv, interwar Poland, national minorities, veterans' organizations, Western Ukrainian lands, state policy, Lviv, memory, the Union of Lviv Defenders.

Contextual Background

As of the onset of life for the restored Polish state, there had been numerous public organizations, including those established by national minorities, present on its land. Polish public organizations are found to have been offered varying degrees of assistance from the state. It would not be right to assert, however, that government assistance only went to organizations formed by the state itself, or by the state's citizens, who were ethnically Poles. Public organizations that came to represent minorities also received such support, albeit to a limited extent. Furthermore, interwar Polish governments sought to utilize their support for public organizations in order to gain specific political objectives, e.g., the application of ideological aims.

In the context of interethnic relations on Western Ukrainian lands and national policies of Polish states it is significant to find out how and to what extent the Polish state sponsored public organizations operating on these lands, primarily the Union of Lviv Defenders during interwar years, and in what way the patronage was a part of the general national policy of the Second Republic of Poland towards national minorities.

It is necessary to consider the mechanisms and forms and role of state support for the Union of Lviv Defenders in the context of the national policy of the interwar Poland on the territory of Western Ukraine. Besides, there is a need to demonstrate how activities of such an organization were employed for the

accomplishment of official objectives, particularly within the sphere of assimilating these regions into the Polish state as well as creating patriotic feelings among the Polish and region's local population.

Political and military developments that accompanied the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the establishment of new sovereign states in Central and Eastern Europe led to the Second Polish Republic's 1918–1923 annexation of Western Ukrainian territory. Both the newly established Western Ukrainian People's Republic, which declared independence on November 1, 1918, and the restored Polish state made conflicting claims to Ukrainian Galicia, which was primarily inhabited by Ukrainians.

Ukrainian forces although being outnumbered took control of the city. The Polish-Ukrainian War began when the ethnic Poles in Lviv rebelled against the Ukrainian government. A common front gradually developed, and the conflict, which lasted until July 16, 1919, encompassed all of Galicia as well as portions of Volhynia, Transcarpathia, and Bukovyna. General Józef Haller's troops' offensive, which led to the expulsion of Ukrainian troops across the Zbruch River, was a pivotal moment in this conflict¹. Following the end of hostilities, Poland began the process of integrating these territories, including the administrative dissolution of Ukrainian structures and the internment of political opponents. Despite the absence of unequivocal international recognition, Poland consistently pursued a policy of *faits accomplis*.

Only on March 15, 1923, Entente's Council of Ambassadors recognized Polish sovereignty over Galicia on the condition of granting it autonomous status². The incorporation of these lands, although it concluded with formal recognition, left a enduring impact on Polish-Ukrainian relations, intensifying interethnic tensions in the Second Polish Republic.

National minorities in interwar Poland constituted a significant and complex element of the social and political structure of the state. Their presence was the result of both the historical legacy of the Polish state and the geopolitical consequences of the Great War and the Treaty of Riga of 1921, which established Poland's eastern border. The following provides brief description of national minorities in the Second Polish Republic.

Ethnopolitical dynamics

The Second Republic of Poland was a multinational state. Poles made up about 68% of the population, and the remaining 32% were representatives of numerous national minorities: Ukrainians (15%), Jews (8.5%), Belorussians and the so-called "locals" (over 3%), Germans (over 2%), as well as smaller groups: Russians, Lithuanians, Czechs, Roma, Karaites, Armenians and Tatars.³ The spatial distribution of minorities was peripheral – their largest concentrations were located in the eastern and northeastern regions.

The Ukrainians were mainly peasants, Greek Catholics or Orthodox. They were very active in political, cultural, and educational terms. Their aspirations for independence, represented by many political parties and militarised Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, led to tensions and acts of terror, to which the Polish authorities responded with a repressive reaction (for example, the "Pacification of Eastern Lesser Poland"⁴ in 1930).

Jews lived mainly in the cities of central and eastern parts of the country, where their share often exceeded 30%. They were an important component of economic and cultural life, but lived to a large extent in social isolation. The political diversity of this community ranged from Orthodox to socialist and Zionist parties⁵. Despite constitutional guarantees, Jews were often victims of prejudice and violence and anti-Semitic activity was particularly intense in the 1930s.

The Belarusians were also predominantly rural, their community was characterized by the highest level of people who identified themselves as "locals"⁶. Although they took steps to develop their own culture, their political activity was limited and the level of social organization was low. However, till early 1930s they had

¹ Michał Klimecki, "Polsko-ukraińska wojna o wschodnią Galicję 1918–1919 r. Polskie spojrzenie", *Україна: культурна спадщина, національна свідомість, державність*, no. 18 (2009): 373–784.

² Ibid.

³ Marek Gałęzowski, "Społeczeństwo II Rzeczypospolitej. Okres historyczny," *Przystanek Historia*, February 21, 2022, <https://przystanekhistoria.pl/pa2/tematy/mniejszosci-narodowe/89741,Spolczenstwo-II-Rzeczypospolitej.html> (accessed April 23, 2025).

⁴ Магдалена Гібец, "Акція пацифікації 1930 р. в Східній Галичині у світлі львівської періодики," *Науковий вісник Східноєвропейського національного університету імені Лесі Українки*, 6 (2018): 57–62.

⁵ Karen Auerbach, "Polish Jewry Between the Wars," *My Jewish Learning*, <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/polish-jewry-between-the-wars/> (accessed July 23, 2025)

⁶ Aleksandra Hachula, "Białorusini w Polsce jako mniejszość narodowa," *Zeszyty naukowe richu studenckiego* 1 (2011): 130–32.

a developed political system, which could be described as moderately active both in confrontation with the authorities and in cooperation.

The Germans were distinguished by a high level of organization and education. The largest group was wealthy peasants⁷. They professed Protestantism or Catholicism. Unlike other minorities, their numbers in Poland decreased due to migration to Germany.

Other minorities, such as Lithuanians, Czechs, Roma, Armenians and Tatars, had rather limited social and political influence, but cultivated their cultural and religious identity⁸. In particular, Tatars and Armenians were considered communities loyal to the Polish state.

In the interwar period, the policy of the Second Polish Republic towards national minorities was complex and often inconsistent⁹. On the one hand, the constitution guaranteed equal rights to all citizens, regardless of nationality and religion. Minorities were allowed to conduct cultural, educational and political activities. On the other hand, in practice, relations between the Polish majority and minorities were often tense and conflictual.

After the restoration of independence, there was no coherent concept of national policy. Initially, attempts were made to carry out a moderate national assimilation of Slavic minorities, but these actions ended in failure. During the Sanation era, attempts were made to carry out the so-called state assimilation, which was supposed to build a civil community while preserving cultural differences¹⁰. After the death of Piłsudski, a more restrictive national assimilation was returned, sometimes with the use of coercion (for example, the destruction of Orthodox churches in the Kholm region).

The most tense were relations with Ukrainians who sought independence. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) used terrorist methods that were met with a brutal response from the authorities. Educational policy and the absence of Ukrainian universities also fueled conflicts.

Relations with Jews were tense for economic and social reasons. Anti-Semitism grew as a result of the 1930s economic crisis, and while nationalist measures like university ghettos were officially denounced, the government frequently responded with inaction. Although the Polish authorities did not introduce anti-democratic laws against minorities, real policies and public sentiment often led to marginalization and conflict. As a result, minorities rarely identified with the Polish state, treating it more as a foreign entity.

Examples of Public Organizations in Interwar Poland

Interwar Poland went through enormous political, social, ethnic and economic changes from the beginning of its existence until the Second World War. At this time, the establishment of public organizations played an important role in consolidating society by supporting the development of the state in all spheres of its life. The diversity of such organizations was dictated by the needs of the newly revived state and was of key importance for domestic policy, primarily in the social sphere.

The National Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, created by the government in 1918 as a public and research organization, was one of the historic establishments. Its efforts were crucial to enhancing the health and sanitation of the society, which suffered from numerous epidemics and limited access to contemporary medical care following years of partition. This organization helped to stop the spread of infectious diseases and improve society's overall health because of the state's strong support for scientific research, educational initiatives, and preventative measures¹¹. Thanks to very strong state support for scientific research, educational campaigns and preventive measures, this organization contributed to limiting the spread of infectious diseases and improving the general health of society in it.

In the field of defense security and cooperation with the armed forces, the Rifle Union stood out, it conducted initial military training among young people and spread patriotic sentiments with the support of high-ranking state and army officials and with the help of governmental funding. In the newly restored independent Poland, which was often under the threat of armed conflicts and in conditions of an uncertain international situation, the Rifle Union played an important preparatory function for future military personnel

⁷ Tomasz Jurek, "Physical Education and School Sport of the German Minority in Poland in the Interwar Period of the 20th Century," *DOAJ*, accessed July 23, 2025, <https://doaj.org/article/f04e709ce3c24810a5cc55e345195172>, (accessed July 25, 2025)

⁸ Adam Balcer, "More than Independence," *Eurozine*, January 7, 2019, <https://www.eurozine.com/more-than-independence/> (accessed July 23, 2025).

⁹ Геннадій Дедурін, "Виникнення незалежної польської держави та проблема національних меншин," *Вісник ХНУВС*, no. 2 (101) (2023): 12–17.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ 100 Lat Troski o Zdrowie Polakow. *Narodowy Instytut Zdrowia Publicznego*. April 10, 2018. <https://www.pzh.gov.pl/o-instytucie>. (Accessed July 23, 2025).

and united society around the idea of defense and support for the defense capability of the state¹². The Union enjoyed unlimited assistance from the state, which contributed to the effectiveness of its work among young people and military personnel.

Similar work was carried out by another organization of this type, but among women, it was the Polish Women's Rifle Union, which not only promoted the participation of women in public life and assistance to the army, but also provided an opportunity to participate in military training and patriotic activities. The Union was a significant breakthrough in traditional social roles, changed and strengthened the idea of equal rights in society and popularized the importance of women's assistance to the army and even women's service in the army. The most frequent example of the heroism of female rifle soldiers was the participation in women's battalions in the uprising against Ukrainian authorities in Lviv in November 1918¹³. The Polish Women's Rifle Union enjoyed the same support from the authorities of the state as the Rifle Union itself.

In the agricultural sector, it is worth highlighting the important role of the Polish Farmers' Association, which provided support for agricultural regions through education, technical advice, agricultural community organizations and financial support for farmers. The Association contributed to increasing the efficiency of agriculture and improving the economic situation in rural areas, and also counteracted the migration of the population to the cities¹⁴. The Polish Farmers' Association received generous assistance and subsidies from the state.

In the field of social work and economic development, the Polish Union of Shipbuilders and Emigration Institutions stood out. It provided social, legal and economic needs of shipbuilders and people who planned to emigrate with the help of the civilian fleet¹⁵. The Union also organized consultations, legal assistance and promoted organizational changes, which was of great importance in the conditions of dynamic development of the labor market and large-scale migration processes, especially during the global economic crisis.

This is only a small part of the public organizations conglomerate that operated in interwar Poland. The diversity of such groups demonstrates how multifaceted were the challenges of the Polish state in the interwar period. The activities of these institutions had not only practical but also symbolic significance, they shaped national identity, changed social cohesion and improved the quality of life of citizens. In addition, most of these organizations formed a new vision of the attitude towards the Polish state, mainly based on deep patriotism, and this was one of the reasons for the broad financial and political support from the government. Investing in these organizations was not only a manifestation of concern for society but also a strategic element of the state's domestic policy.

The Union of Lviv Defenders: Origins and Mission

The Union of Lviv Defenders was one of the most influential veterans' organizations in Poland between the wars. It was established as a result of the Battle of Lviv in the Ukrainian-Polish War of 1918–1919. The Union was created by the veterans of the Polish army who fought in November 1918 against the Ukrainian government. The principal mission of the Union of Lviv Defenders was to maintain the memory of the events of those days and create respect for the image of a veteran of the Ukrainian-Polish war. The fight that raged on the streets of Lviv was not just a way to take as much territory as they could for reborn Poland, but also to provide it with a symbolic foundation and heroic mythology so generations to come could look up to, which the Union of Lviv Defenders partly did.

It is necessary to note here that both Ukrainians and Poles believed that they were defending the city from the enemy. From the Ukrainian point of view, the troops were defending the capital of their state from Polish aggression, while the Polish side believes that they were defending the city from attempts to take it away from the Poles. Therefore, we see the term "Defenders" in the name of the organization.

When the fighting ceased and Lviv remained part of the reborn Republic of Poland, the defenders decided that the story of their struggle had to be passed on. Initially, the veterans' meetings were informal, but in subsequent years they led to the establishment of the Union of Lviv Defenders, a veteran and social

¹² Historia. *Związek Strzelecki*. <https://związek-strzelecki.pl/historia/>. (Accessed July 23, 2025).

¹³ "Справа про реєстрацію польської жіночої стрілецької спілки в Перемишлі." *Державний архів Львівської області (ДАЛО)*, ф. 1, оп. 53, спр. 6764, арк. 6–23.

¹⁴ "Справа про реєстрацію окружного польського добровільного товариства землеробів, повітової спілки "Кулка рольничого" в Ярославі Ярославського повіту." *Державний архів Львівської області (ДАЛО)*, ф. 1, оп. 53, спр. 5372, арк. 3–12, 24–41.

¹⁵ "Справа про реєстрацію Львівського відділення польської спілки працівників корабельних заводів та еміграційних установ у Варшаві." *Державний архів Львівської області (ДАЛО)*, ф. 1, оп. 53, спр. 6977, арк. 2–5.

organization. The Union took on the mission of cultivating the memory of the fallen, supporting the living fighters and their families, and spreading patriotic education among the general public¹⁶. From the first statutory provisions, the Union's mission was clearly expressed in terms of loyalty to the ideals of Polish independence, patriotism and unity. In the Report on the Activities of the Union of Lviv Defenders from November 1918 for the year 1938–1939 we read: “*We must tune the strings of our psyche to a harmonious sound and subordinate everything to the most important slogan – the slogan of consolidating independence*”¹⁷.

The Union saw itself not only as an organization of veterans but as a spiritual and patriotic movement that had as its goal to maintain respect and love for Polish statehood in future generations. Among the honorary members of the Union were important people for Polish statehood such as Józef Piłsudski, Marshal Edward Rydz-Smigły, Marshal Ferdinand Foch¹⁸, which indicates the place of this organization in the public life of the Second Republic of Poland.

Despite the fact that the main points of the Union's mission were to cherish the memory of the battles with the Ukrainian army and honor veterans, the organization was also engaged in caring for military graves, holding anniversary celebrations, erecting monuments, providing social support to the families of the deceased and the veterans themselves, popularizing the study of the history of the Ukrainian-Polish war of 1918–1919¹⁹, especially among schoolchildren and academic youth, and cooperating with local authorities to strengthen Polish culture and attitude to military events.

In the political climate of Poland in the interwar period, the Union perceived itself as a moral barrier against anti-state ideologies; most of its events emphasized the need for national unity, readiness to defend the homeland, and the continuity of the spirit of the Polish state. Most often, the Union of Defenders of Lviv bypassed the issue of legitimizing Polish power in Western Ukrainian lands or the attitude towards Ukrainian statehood or the state aspirations of the Ukrainian minority living in the Second Polish Republic.

The documents of the Union demonstrate a wide range of events held by it during the Republic's twentieth anniversary, among which the annual solemn commemoration at the cemetery of the defenders of Lviv stands out, holding statehood celebrations in the city and supporting such celebrations in other cities, organizing religious services, among which the Mass during the gift of the medallion of Our Lady of the Gate of Dawn, in the church on Lychakiv as a sign of gratitude for the work in favor of Polish patriotism stands out²⁰. The Union also actively looked after places of remembrance; it renovated, among other things, the cross on the hill in Lychakiv Park, where fallen troops rest²¹. Despite a certain religious orientation, all the acts organized by the Union had a political dimension and their main goal was to remind Lviv residents, both Poles and Ukrainians, of the necessity (from Polish point of view) of recognizing the legitimization of Poland's power over Western Ukrainian lands.

Another important area of activity of the Union was cooperation with the city authorities in the field of street naming policy. In 1938, many streets were named in honor of commanders and soldiers who participated in the Ukrainian-Polish war of 1918-1919. The annual ceremonies organized by the Union at the burial sites of the participants in the battles was a special event in the city's calendar of events. Collaboration with urban authorities was combined with cooperation with the army. For example, in 1938, the Union took part in the celebration of the anniversary of the Fifth infantry regiment of legionnaires, which arrived in the city on November 20, 1918²². The commemorative signs with which the regiment was awarded were transferred to the historical museum in Lviv.

¹⁶ *Sprawozdanie z Działalności Związku Obrońców Lwowa z Listopada 1918 za rok 1938–39*. Lwów: Pierwsza drukarnia związkowa Związku Obrońców Lwowa od listopada 1918 r., 1939. 11–14. <https://polona.pl/item-view/7dd42100-3afe-4f06-9b2a-c4958fb95b9f?> (Accessed January 14, 2025).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3–5.

¹⁹ *Statut Związku Obrońców Lwowa z listopada 1918 r.* Lwów: Drukarnia Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, 1921. 3–4. <https://polona.pl/item-view/7dd42100-3afe-4f06-9b2a-c4958fb95b9f?page=3>. (Accessed January 14, 2025).

²⁰ *Sprawozdanie z Działalności Związku Obrońców Lwowa z Listopada 1918 za rok 1938–39*. Lwów: Pierwsza drukarnia związkowa Związku Obrońców Lwowa od listopada 1918 r., 1939. 33–36. <https://polona.pl/item-view/7dd42100-3afe-4f06-9b2a-c4958fb95b9f?page=3>. (Accessed January 14, 2025)

²¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

²² *Ibid.*, 13–15.

State Support

From the very beginning, the government and local authorities became deeply involved in the activities of the Union of Lviv Defenders, not only because its members fought in this city, but also because the Battle of Lviv had a very powerful resonance in the Polish collective historical memory. The activities of the Union consistently received assistance and support from the state powers, both central and regional, as well as local. This support extended to many domains: direct financial subsidies, legal privileges, participation of state representatives in the Union's ceremonies, raising resources for memorial reconstructions, integration of the Union's message into educational and cultural policies, provision of social benefits for Union members, etc. Taken together, this system of support shows both the authority of the Union among the authorities and its perception as an instrument of patriotic mobilization. It also demonstrates the Union's dependence on the state, especially with regard to commemorative tasks and social activities.

Financial support from the state was the most noticeable and basic form of assistance. The Union received regular subsidies from the ministries responsible for veterans' policy from the military administration and cultural institutions. This assistance enabled the organization to maintain offices, provide funding for the secretariat and staff, and organize daily activities that would otherwise be impossible if the Union relied solely on membership fees or volunteer donations. In particular, the Ministry of Military Affairs and later the Ministry of Social Policy played an important role in providing annual grants for the union. Such financial support was often provided by special items in local municipal budgets, especially in the city of Lviv from 1923 to 1939²³.

However, it cannot be said that only the city of Lviv provided strong support for the Union. Many magistrates including that of Kraków also had a separate list to support the Union. City council members often joined the ceremonies organized by the Union, covering the costs of decorations, transportation, and accommodation for veterans, thus recognizing the importance of the Union's activities and their resonance among local communities. Also, many other cities and regions took part in the commemorating activities of the Union. For example, the organizing committee for the celebration of statehood anniversaries included many other representatives of regional communities including Wojciech Goluchovskiy, the Chairman of the Federation of South-Eastern Voivodeships²⁴.

In addition, to subsidies for operations, the Union had serious funds for the purpose of preserving historical memory. The government recognized the battles for Lviv as an integral part of national history and national memory and thus supported the preservation of this memory in the form of various ceremonial and commemorative events. Local authorities also generously supported the construction of monuments, the maintenance of cemeteries, and the installation of memorial signs in honor of veterans and the event itself.

Thus, the Union received massive financial support from the state to organize its commemorating actions. For instance, it had a full support from the authorities in the promotions of projects dedicated to the the Battle of Lviv, such as the construction of the Memorial to the fallen Polish fighters who fought in Lviv in November 1918, called "Ńmentarz Orłąt" at the Lychakiv Cemetery, a monument to the legionnaires who were buried at the Yaniv Cemetery, the Glory Monument at the Defenders' Cemetery in Lviv in Persenkivka district, and the creation of the Lviv Defense Museum in Black Building on Rynok Square in Lviv city centre and a lot more²⁵.

Every year, the celebrations held at "Ńmentarz Orłąt" included the attraction of the aforementioned funds. The Union of Lviv Defenders, which was responsible for organizing various events, received funds from various government organizations as well as from high-ranking officials, including general ministers and sometimes representatives of the presidential office. The support of officials also included their presence at events. Moreover, the Union's actions were held under the patronage of the President of Poland Ignatius Moscicki and then the Speaker of the Sejm Józef Piłsudski, and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Janusz Jędrzejewicz²⁶. The constant participation of the statesmen in events organized by the Union not only gave it prestige but also brought the battles for Lviv into the official patriotic calendar of the Polish state.

²³ *Sprawozdanie z Działalności Związku Obrońców Lwowa z Listopada 1918 za rok 1938–39*. Lwów: Pierwsza drukarnia związkowa Związku Obrońców Lwowa od listopada 1918 r., 1939. 93–35. <https://polona.pl/item-view/7dd42100-3afe-4f06-9b2a-c4958fb95b9f?page=3>. (Accessed January 14, 2025).

²⁴ Списки керівного складу Комітету святкування 15-річчя незалежності Польщі та оборони Львова, *Державний архів Львівської області (ДАЛО)*, ф. 266, оп. 1, спр. 3, арк. 1–3.

²⁵ *Sprawozdanie z Działalności Związku Obrońców Lwowa z Listopada 1918 za rok 1938–39*. Lwów: Pierwsza drukarnia związkowa Związku Obrońców Lwowa od listopada 1918 r., 1939. 40–42. <https://polona.pl/item-view/7dd42100-3afe-4f06-9b2a-c4958fb95b9f?page=3>. (Accessed January 14, 2025).

²⁶ Списки керівного складу Комітету святкування 15-річчя незалежності Польщі та оборони Львова, *Державний архів Львівської області (ДАЛО)*, ф. 266, оп. 1, спр. 3, арк. 1.

State support for the Union also extended to the field of culture and education. The union devoted a large amount of its work to publishing memoirs, brochures, textbooks, manuals, memoirs, and questionnaires and all these journalistic activities were subsidized by state cultural budgets. The Ministry of Education encouraged schools to use materials published by the Union of Lviv Defenders, believing that the next generation of young Poles should know about the battles for Lviv and perceive it as a heroic narrative. Teachers were sometimes ordered to include events organized by the Union of Lviv Defenders in school life, this included lectures dedicated to the events of November 1918, which were often included in the school schedule, joint prayers, visits to cemeteries and monuments, historical excursions.²⁷ Very often, school administrations obliged students to participate in the memorial events of the Union. The state also provided premises for film exhibitions, demonstrations, and public lectures held by the Union with the aim of informing the population more deeply about the events in Lviv in 1918. For example, commemorative exhibitions of the Union were often organized by museums, city councils, and military clubs, with the rent for this paid by the government²⁸. Such state support demonstrates how the ideological work of the Union of Lviv Defenders was integrated into the broader cultural policy of the Second Republic of Poland.

Social support for veterans formed another article of state aid. The veterans themselves who were members of the Union of Lviv Defenders received special pensions, medical care, and assistance with housing maintenance. The state authorities created a legal framework that recognized the rights of veterans and provided them with appropriate benefits. Very often, the Union acted as a mediator between veterans and state institutions, helping its members secure appropriate pensions, obtain a place in military hospitals, or receive reduced travel or accommodation fees. In turn, the state relied on the Union for its support of the ideological and social aspects of government policy. The Union enjoyed the full trust of central and local state institutions, especially in the system of membership approval, legal issues, bureaucratic processes, and the like²⁹. Such mutual support was not only ceremonial; it provided the Union with an important place in society and gave it public visibility.

In addition, the cooperation between the Union of Lviv Defenders and state institutions had a certain political basis. The interwar governments of Poland publicly recognized the importance of veteran and patriotic organisations in the consolidation and legitimization of the young state. The support of the Union thus coincided with the broader policy of cultivating a patriotic narrative in society. Official financial documents always contain at least 7–8 items dedicated to various types of ideological work and activities related to public relations³⁰. Although other veteran organizations received no less active assistance, the Union of Lviv Defenders enjoyed a special approach due to the symbolic significance of the city of Lviv in the revival of Polish statehood. Based on the struggle for Lviv, the government created a national myth aimed at ensuring the unity of society and the sacrifice of future generations of Poles in supporting their statehood.

Such close relations turned into legal and administrative privileges: the Union often received exemptions from taxation or payment for various state services, including postal, journalistic, and transportation services. Local officials often put the Union ahead in granting permits for marches, gatherings, commemorative actions, the installation of monuments, or religious events, bypassing bureaucratic obstacles. In very many cases, the Union's offices were located in state buildings and exempted from rent. This was very significant support, although less noticeable than the financing of events or the presence of officials at those events³¹. It is interesting that educational institutions sometimes provided support to the Union, bypassing obtaining permits from the government. This especially applies to institutions of higher education³². And this once again further emphasizes the authority of both veteran organizations in general and the Union of Lviv Defenders in particular in the society of the Second Republic of Poland.

²⁷ Звіти Ревізійної комісії Спілки оборонців Львова у листопаді 1918 р. за 1935–1938 рр. *Державний архів Львівської області (ДАЛО)*, ф. 266, оп. 1, спр. 56, арк. 6–8.

²⁸ Фінансові звіти Цивільного комітету зі святкування 20-річчя незалежності Польщі та оборони Львова. *Державний архів Львівської області (ДАЛО)*, ф. 266, оп. 1, спр. 80, арк. 2–9.

²⁹ *Statut Związku Obrońców Lwowa z listopada 1918 r.* Lwów: Drukarnia Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, 1921. 3–6. <https://polona.pl/item-view/7dd42100-3afe-4f06-9b2a-c4958fb95b9f?page=3>. (Accessed January 14, 2025).

³⁰ Звіт про діяльність Спілки оборонців Львова у листопаді 1918 р. за 1932–1933 рр. *Державний архів Львівської області (ДАЛО)*, ф. 266, оп. 1, спр. 29, арк. 12–14.

³¹ *Sprawozdanie z Działalności Związku Obrońców Lwowa z Listopada 1918 za rok 1938–39.* Lwów: Pierwsza drukarnia związkowa Związku Obrońców Lwowa od listopada 1918 r., 1939. 73–75. <https://polona.pl/item-view/7dd42100-3afe-4f06-9b2a-c4958fb95b9f?page=3>. (Accessed January 14, 2025).

³² *Ibid.*, 85–87.

A separate item of assistance to the Union was the support from the army and military personnel. At most events organized by the Union, the army provided a guard of honor, logistical assistance, and sometimes physical support in the form of soldiers who helped install stands, build monuments, and ensure order at large events. Sometimes the Union's commemorative actions included military parades³³. Almost always, military bands provided musical accompaniment to the events. In addition, the military participated in the maintenance of cemeteries and monuments.

Thus, state support for the Union of Lviv Defenders as part of the framework of Polish society and the Polish ideological narrative covered the material, political, symbolic, cultural and legal aspects. The state financed the operations, actions, events and the material part of the Union's activities, provided subsidies for veterans of the Union's participants, provided funding for the Union's journalistic activities, social support for its members, helped integrate the Union's work into the educational process, turning the existence of the Union of Lviv Defenders into an integrated part of the ideological basis of the state. In turn, the Union strengthened the patriotic agenda of the government, educated the youth and helped create the basis of a national patriotic myth that contributed to the unity of the state and public understanding of this side of the work of governments. Such symbiotic cooperation ensured the Union's prosperity in Polish society throughout the interwar twenty years.

ДЕРЖАВНА ПІДТРИМКА ГРОМАДСЬКИХ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙ ЯК СКЛАДОВА НАЦІОНАЛЬНОЇ ПОЛІТИКИ МІЖВОЄННОЇ ПОЛЬЩІ НА ЗАХІДНОУКРАЇНСЬКИХ ЗЕМЛЯХ: НА ПРИКЛАДІ СПІЛКИ ОБОРОНЦІВ ЛЬВОВА

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Автор аналізує механізми державної підтримки громадських організацій як частину національної політики міжвоєнної Польщі на Західноукраїнських землях, узявши Спілку оборонців Львова за приклад. Опрацювавши матеріали із Державного архіву Львівської області та нормативні документи Спілки 1918–1939 років автор описує, як Друга Польська Республіка використовувала ветеранські організації такого типу, щоб досягнути певних політичних та ідеологічних цілей у етнічно неоднорідному регіоні.

Наслідки Українсько-польської війни та анексія Західноукраїнських земель принесли нововідновленій Польській державі багато викликів. Населення шойно приєднаних територій не сприймало II РП як свою країну, а вбачало в ній ліквідатора своєї незалежності та окупанта своїх земель. У таких умовах уряд намагався посилити ідеологічні підходи до інтеграції Західноукраїнських земель у загальнодержавний організм. Одним із успішних сторін розвитку міжвоєнної Польщі було заснування цілої низки громадських організацій, які працювали у всіх сферах тогочасного суспільного життя. Уряд активно допомагав цим організаціям, особливо, якщо вони були утворені громадянами польського походження. Це не означає, що уряд не сприяв і ГО національних меншин, однак рівні цієї підтримки були різними.

Спілка оборонців Львова, яка постала як об'єднання ветеранів, що брали участь у боях у Львові під час Українсько-польської війни 1918–1919 років, була одним із середовищ, яке було покликане довести місцевому населенню, що приєднання Львова та Західноукраїнських земель до Польської держави було закономірним історичним процесом. Щоправда, такий підхід категорично не сприймався на згаданих теренах.

Спілка була багатогранною громадською організацією, яка займалася не лише підтримкою ветеранів та ветеранського руху, а й також соціальною допомогою сім'ям загиблих, організацією пам'ятних подій, встановленням пам'ятників та меморіальних таблиць, проведенням парадів, церковних служб, мітингів та демонстрацій, щоб вкарбувати пам'ять про бої у Львові у національний історичний дискурс Польської держави. Водночас, спілка не вважала за потрібне враховувати інтереси ветеранів та учасників цих подій з українського боку, незважаючи на те, що тепер вони також були громадянами Польської держави.

Спілка оборонців Львова отримувала підтримку і місцевих адміністрацій, і уряду, у тому числі міністерства оборони та міністерства внутрішніх справ. Особливо відчутною допомогою було фінансування акцій спілки з боку державних установ. Крім того, офіційні особи локального, і загальнодержавного рівня, включаючи президентів, прем'єр-міністрів та маршалків сейму, вшановували заходи спілки власною присутністю. Водночас, СОЛ користувалася активним сприянням з боку Війська польського, яке забезпечувало частину фінансування, брало участь у заходах і постачало людей для організації акцій. Особливо знаковими є заходи, влаштовані під час святкувань річниць Незалежності Другої Польської Республіки.

Співпраця із Спілкою оборонців Львова була також вигідна і державним структурам, оскільки СОЛ забезпечувала ідеологічну підтримку урядам, поширювала ідеї єдності громадян та спільної праці на користь розбудови відновленої

³³ Програма відзначення 20-річчя незалежності Польщі та оборони Львова, списки членів Цивільного комітету та секцій. *Державний архів Львівської області (ДАЛО)*, ф. 266, оп. 1, спр. 82, арк. 6.

Польщі. Оскільки офіційний наратив Спілки оборонців Львова і державної системи міжвоєнної Польщі співпадав у більшості пунктів, співпраця СОЛ та офіційних структур була взаємовигідною.

Ключові слова: Галичина, Львів, міжвоєнна Польща, національні меншини, ветеранські організації, західноукраїнські землі, державна політика, Львів, пам'ять, Спілка оборонців Львова.

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