

Greater Poland Uprising 1918-1919

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The participation of the Catholic clergy in the Greater Poland Uprising and in the preservation of the Polish national identity during the period of partitions (1793-1918)

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When we look at historical sources, we can see that from the 18th century until the time of World

War I, the Prussian government implemented a policy aimed at depriving the Poles of their national identity. Greater Poland society learned to harden itself against this, for instance, during the period of the notorious Kulturkampf: during the dispossession of land and the punishment of children with flogging for using the Polish language in school. Taking into account the determined and programmed actions of the occupant in relation to society, the Catholic Church rose to the challenge and the Polish clergy was one of the most dynamic groups which demonstrated great organisational initiative and devotion, especially during the two last decades of the 19th century until the end of World War I. The anti-German attitude was intensified by the persecutions of Archbishops Marcin Dunin and Mieczysław Ledóchowski, profanations of holy masses and processions and the use of many other forms of retaliation. Under the influence of the Germanisation action, the clergy joined or initiated the fight for the national identity of Poles. The fighting took place in the political, educational-cultural and economic spheres. Patriotic sermons were delivered, catechism in Polish was taught both to children and adults, evenings of patriotic-religious singing were organised, different national symbols were propagated (e.g. the wearing of national and folk garments during the visits of archbishops), rallies and gatherings and various ceremonies were organised. During these ceremonies affinity with the Polish nation was demonstrated and the Germanisation of the Grand Duchy of Poznań was criticised.

1. The situation of the Catholic Church under Prussian rule

In the 18th century there were many events in the international arena which indicated that the fate of Poland was sealed and that the Republic of Poland was slowly going into decline. One of the signs which indicated that the Polish *raison d'état* in the international arena was being ignored and that the partitioning of the country was unofficially under way, was the incident from spring 1740, related to the monastery in Paradyż which was situated on the border of the Republic of Poland. The abbey, located on Polish territory, was attacked by Prussian forces which participated in the beating of the Cistercians and the looting of the abbey's material base. The incident was hushed up and ignored, though the abbey belonged to the Poznań diocese. Such activities were in fact undertaken repeatedly, and Prussia looted the Polish villages situated close to the border and abducted their inhabitants. Ultimately, after the year 1772, more and more new Polish territories were coming under Prussian rule. The respective partitions enlarged the Prussian territorial acquisitions at the expense of the Polish state, which finally in the year 1795 ceased to exist for a period of 123 years, whereby this fact was formally recognised by other European countries. Paradoxically, the only country which did not accept this situation was Turkey, our centuries old enemy, from which we had defended our fictional European allies in the past centuries.

As a consequence of the first partition, the following territories were taken from Poland:

Royal Prussia, except Gdańsk and Toruń, Warmia and the so called Netze District including Bydgoszcz and Inowrocław. The Chełm and Warmian diocese were seized in full while the Gniezno archdiocese was lost only in part. With the exception of Warmia, which was a fief of the Republic of Poland, these were genuinely Polish territories. In terms of denomination, Catholicism was dominant. Protestantism was a diaspora, mainly in the cities. After the second partition Prussia took the whole Greater Poland region, this means the Gniezno archdiocese, except the south-eastern part separated by the Pilica River and the Poznań diocese without the Czersk archdeaconry which included Warsaw. The size of the Polish territories annexed by Prussia increased significantly after the 3rd partition. Ultimate stabilisation in this respect was introduced by the Vienna Congress with the forming of the Grand Duchy of Poznań.

A new administrative division of the Catholic Church in Greater Poland was introduced by the circumscription bull entitled *De salute animarum* of 16 July 1821. It raised the dignity of the Poznań diocese, establishing at the same time a personal union with the Gniezno archdiocese.

Furthermore, there were also the Warmian diocese and Wrocław diocese which were subordinated directly to the Holy See.

The territories, inhabited for the most part by Polish people, were within the boundaries of the Grand Duchy of Poznań, where - in accordance with international agreement- Prussia was supposed to guarantee a certain national autonomy to the Poles. This, however, remained

just a dead letter of the agreement.

King Frederick II, as well as his successors could not stop thinking that a country so diversified in terms of its religious denominations must be made more uniform by striving to increase the number of subjects of the protestant denomination on the newly conquered territories. However, they certainly distanced themselves from the idea of the destruction of the Catholic Church which was supposed to help them in the solidification of Prussian rule in the consciousness of the subjects, whereby, as a tool in the hands of the state, the Church was supposed to be dependent on it. Thus, starting with a bishop and ending with a parish priest, all church beneficiaries had to obtain the approval of the local authorities. In theory, the bishops could perform their pastoral duties independently, but here, even the dean's visits were accompanied by a royal commissar. Communication with Rome was only possible via the government's foreign department and the publication of papal bulls and regulations as well as the regulations of foreign religious authorities depended on consent given by Prussian officials. The church judiciary was limited, effectively leaving only those matters related to Catholic marriages in its competences. The church was severely affected by the secularisation of the estates of bishops and chapters which took place in Greater Poland in the year 1796. Salaries for bishops and canons as well as subsidies for church institutions established by the government, though much smaller than the previous income, nevertheless satisfied the most urgent needs of the Church.

However, the danger of becoming dependent on the government remained. Irreparable damage was incurred by the Church as a result of the secularisation of monastic possessions. Most monasteries were demolished, only those which the Prussian government decided to adapt to its own needs were saved. Foundations for the future protestantisation action started to be built using church money. The tough regime in matters related to the Church in the times of the rule of Frederick William III, for whom it would be ideal to make the Catholic Church as similar to Protestantism as possible, did not allow the Prussian Episcopate to counteract the interference of authorities at every level with the activities of the Church. Royal instructions regarding the Church were, after all, implemented by an Evangelical Consistory and the Ministry of Clerical and Educational Affairs, established in the year 1817. The policy of exerting pressure on the Church on one hand and the search for a compromise by some Prussian bishops, which was dictated by necessity, led to a dispute regarding mixed marriages and the imprisonment of Gniezno-Poznań Archbishop Marcin Dunin in the year 1837. Certain hopes for a thaw in the relations between the Prussian state and the Catholic Church appeared after the year 1840, when Frederick William IV, whose attitude towards religion tended to be more liberal than that of his predecessor, took the throne. But even then, these hopes were not completely fulfilled.

It was only the revolution of 1848 and the resulting constitution, proclaimed on 31 January 1850, which brought significant changes in the

legal situation of the Church. It became completely sovereign, except for its material dependence on the state and cooperation with the authorities in the filling of ecclesiastical posts in connection with patronage rights. The implementation of the constitution, especially on Polish territories, met with significant difficulties created by the government, which was afraid of the excessive independence of the Church, which, to a greater and greater extent was becoming the mainstay of the Polish identity, particularly in Greater Poland.

Church freedoms guaranteed under the constitution never ceased to be a thorn in the side of the Prussian administration; they were equally burdensome to conservative circles concerned about the possessions of Protestantism, and liberals in the case of whom, in addition to ideological reasons, political reasons also had to be taken into account. This was fully evident after Otto von Bismarck had claimed victory over Austria in 1866 and defeated France in the years 1870-1871. The Kulturkampf initiated at that time was a test of strength for the Catholic Church which revealed the great ideological and organisational potential of the Church in Prussia, but at the same time caused it a lot of damage. Many institutions, within several years ceased to exist, above all, one must mention here seminaries and numerous religious facilities. There were conflicts regarding this issue with Gniezno and Poznań Archbishop Mieczysław Halka-Ledóchowski, an ultramontane and a loyalist. During these events Ledóchowski rose in Poland to the role of a national martyr. The

archbishop received support from the clergy and peasant masses. The retaliatory actions taken by the Prussian government led to numerous arrests and expulsions abroad among the clergy. Thus, the number of priests became fewer which, in turn, disorganised the pastoral services.

Recovering from this was particularly difficult on the Polish territories as it was no coincidence that the end of Kulturkampf (1878) came together with an intensification of the anti-Polish policy of the government. Here, the fight was transferred to the ethnic ground and continued ruthlessly by the H-K-T and Settlement Commission.

2. Catholic Church and Polish ethnic issues

Taking into account the systematic elimination of all Polish institutions on the territory annexed by Prussia, and the eradication of the Polish language from the public sphere, in practice, the possibility of the cultivation of old Polish traditions existed only on ecclesiastical ground.

The circumstances which were conducive to this were as follows: the necessity to use Polish during pastoral services among the Polish people and the opposition against the tendency to protestantism combined with Germanisation. The mere fact of belonging to the Catholic Church contributed to the preservation of the Polish identity particularly among the lower classes of society, however, the conscious fight with the deprivation of national identity and even independent thought can be noticed only in those cases where also the clergy, including the highest religious authorities, had some sense of Polish identity. This fact contributed to the situation that the Church did not create an equally effective barrier against

Germanisation in all the districts taken by Prussia, even if it took into account the rights of the Poles to their language.

The most advantageous ethnic situation could be observed in the Grand Duchy of Poznań. A certain separateness of this area in relation to other parts of the partition was provided for in the occupation patent of 15 May 1815, in which Poles were guaranteed far-reaching national freedoms, not to mention the freedom of denomination. From the year 1830, Prussia did not even bother to conceal their Germanisation plans in relation to the Poznań region. The ten-year rule of Eduard Flottwell, a disciple of L. Schön, was characterised by a consequent strengthening of the German element and the establishment of foundations for the subsequent, more and more ruthless discrimination of Poles. The Catholic Church was the only institution which managed to preserve its absolutely Polish characteristics.

The Polish nature of the Church in the Poznań region was fully evident in the year 1848. Archbishop Leon Przyłuski and an even larger portion of the clergy took the side of the Polish movement. The preference of legal measures by the church authorities to fight for national rights with extreme caution with regards to involvement in military action did not, by any means lessen the fault of the clergy in the eyes of the Prussian authorities. The propaganda undertaken by priests with regards to the identification of Polish identity with Catholicism was a particularly sensitive issue. The ground for these types of slogans was particularly fertile in the Poznań region, they were used by all kinds of non-

ecclesiastic centres of Polish political and social life. By connecting religious issues with national ones, the pulpit became a tool of effective agitation. Priests taught writing and reading on their own and also supplied Polish handbooks and books (in the year 1896, several clergymen were accused of the illegal teaching of the Polish language during religion classes). In the area of education, the clergy made efforts, both on its own and also by contributing to the work "on educating the common people and maintaining the national spirit" inspired by lay activists. Priests actively cooperated with the Pedagogical Society, the People's Education Society and the People's Libraries Society established in 1878 by Priest Antoni Ludwiczak. They organised agricultural circles in their parishes to raise the professional and intellectual level of the Polish farmers. They popularised and established the Polish Workers Society in the year 1892, which set religious, educational, professional-economic and self-assistance goals for itself.

As a result of this, they left themselves open to the repressions of the Prussian authorities, but this did not prevent them from further efforts in this direction which gained unobtrusive support from Archbishop Florian Stablewski. In the year 1901, a childrens' strike, where they refused to pray and attend religion classes in German, broke out in Września, The strict sanctions applied to them by the Prussian authorities were widely discussed in many European countries, and served as an inspiration for Maria Konopnicką to write "Rota".[Oath]. The spirit and the driving force behind these events was a vicar from

Września, Priest Jan Laskowski (previously punished for giving private Polish lessons).

The administrators of dioceses got directly involved in the Polish movement, depending on their political affiliations and the conditions in which they were able to act. However, what was important was the fact that the parish clergy, which had the closest contact with society, was able to find support in archbishops (except in certain sporadic situations) for its patriotic activity. It was an accomplishment of the clergy that the Poznań Church remained Polish, which continuously reminded everyone who the original host of this land was. A very significant role was played by clergymen in the excellent development of cooperatives in the Prussian partition. They worked in the administration of credit unions, often occupying managerial positions. One of the specialists in this field wrote that "it is only due to the selfless and dedicated work of the clergy that the activity of rural cooperatives which had started to crumble under the influence of the agricultural crisis in 1870s did not end in failure, but rather developed excellently, overcoming all economic difficulties." The most prominent activists included: Priest Piotr Wawrzyniak (+1910) - a parish priest in Mogilno and the actual leader of Polish society in the Prussian partition, and the lesser known Priest Józef Duczmal, a parish priest in Chojno.

Because the Church in Poznań remained Polish, not only could it play the role of the centre of national awareness, but it was also a visible symbol of the survival of the compact and organised Polish society. Obviously the Church

could not be entrusted with such a task by any German bishops, hence, in other districts of the partition, the church authorities limited themselves to leaving the Polish language to Poles in pastoral services. Polish priests were together with their Polish believers. These two groups provided each other with mutual support. This was their strength and, at the same time, the implementation of the idea of a "Catholic Pole". This also had an effect on the economic and social sphere. In general Poles got married maintaining the principles of the Catholic faith and fighting against the various methods of Germanisation.

Obviously, there was some significance to the work in the national field, performed by priests active in the German environment and their efforts similarly deserve to be especially highlighted, even though their results were frequently much less prominent than in the cases of the Poznań clergymen. Also there should be no grudge against the German priests who did not involve themselves in the activities of the Polish movement. However, a few of them did approve of, and actively supported, the Germanisation programme of the government.

3. The Participation of the clergy in political life

In the political life of Greater Poland in the 19th century, the conservative landed gentry was a dominant force. Political differences which concerned society were suppressed by the pressure of Germanisation. However, it did not eliminate them completely. In the third quarter of the 19th century, the following trends competed with each other - ultramontane and liberal.

According to the more conservative, ultramontane trend represented by Ledóchowski, there was a certain space for the achievement of a certain compromise with the government for the price of subordination of national matters to the Church. During the Kulturkampf, both groups found themselves in opposition to the occupant.

The activity of the clergy made its mark from the middle of the 1860s. This was the time, when the first priest-parliament members became part of the Polish representation of the Prussian partition, that is, the so called Polish Circle in the Prussian parliament, next to burghers and peasants. As time passed by, the clergymen started to be perceived as a serious and influential group there, especially due to the fact that the number of priest-parliament members increased during the consecutive terms of the parliament. For several years, the leader of the Polish Circle and a prominent figure in the parliament's chamber was the parish priest of Września - Florian Stablewski - the subsequent Gniezno and Poznań archbishop. Also, one of the most influential figures in the Prussian parliament was Priest Piotr Wawrzyniak. In the years 1848-1918, there were as many as 48 parliament members who represented the clergy. For many years, Polish society in the Prussian partition could observe and positively evaluate the prominent social activist, parish priest of Grodzisk Wlkp. and member of the Reich's Parliament, Tadeusz Styczyński. He emphasised in his speeches, on many occasions, that the establishment of the Kingdom of Poland is a partial fulfilment of Polish postulates. Equally

strong emotions among the Greater Poland patriots were elicited by the speeches delivered by Priest Antoni Stychla in the German parliament. Those speeches, which demonstrated great civil courage were often agreed upon with other Greater Poland activists. Here, it is necessary to mention the following priests: Adamski, Kłos, Lisiecki and Dymek. The following priests also cooperated with the activists from Greater Poland: Wolszlegier, a prominent priest from the Chełm diocese and founder of strong centres of Polish identity in the region of Pomerania, similar activities were also performed by Priest Bolt. Priest Józef Kłos, an editor of "Przewodnik Katolicki", as well as a parliament member and treasurer of the Parliamentary Circle in Berlin, participated actively in the political life of Greater Poland. He made his name as an excellent speaker and defender of the Polish language.

Another key person in the group of the Polish clergy was Priest Canon Stanisław Adamski, one of the main advisers to Archbishop Edmund Dalbor. He was very involved in the activities of social, economic and cultural associations. He was the patron of the Union of Earning and Economic Associations, the greatest financial power in the Prussian partition, which had a huge amount of money capital at its disposal along with appropriately educated collaborators and specialists in many spheres of life. The management of the Union made it possible for Priest Adamski to exert some influence on improvements of the food supply for people during the wartime. In this important period for

Greater Poland, he exerted such an important influence on public life that after the outbreak of the Uprising in the year 1918, the German press acclaimed Priest Adamski as the uncrowned king of Polish society on the territory of the Prussian partition. He managed to accomplish his goal of convening the Partition Sejm of Poznań on 3-5 December, that is, a congress of elected delegates of Polish society from the entire Reich. This was an undoubtedly huge success for the Polish patriotic centres. This political representation was composed of 75 Polish clergymen who represented many poviats, also Warmia, Masuria, Silesia and Western Pomerania. Priest Adamski led the Polish delegation who arrived in Berlin for talks with the German delegation, but in the course of the discussions, he demanded the consideration of the postulates of the Polish population. His proposals were as follows: "to not limit the civic freedoms and control of offices in all places inhabited by Poles, to Polish schools to the greatest possible extent; to remove the Heimatschutz.". This was undoubtedly a demand for the complete autonomy of the Prussian partition. By playing politics aimed at gaining time for the strengthening of the Polish administration, he sent a letter to Ignacy Jan Paderewski with a request for his arrival to Poznań, to manifest the ties between Greater Poland and the reborn Polish state as the prime minister of the future government. No wonder then, that when the Uprising broke out, he supported the military effort of the general society wholeheartedly.

4. The participation of clergy in the Greater Poland

Uprising

The active participation of the clergy from the Gniezno Archdiocese in the Greater Poland Uprising is a fact that is worth observing. Although data regarding the participation of the clergy in the Uprising cover only several dozen parishes, in reality, there was no parish within the Poznań archdiocese which would not join this independence action. At the end of the year 1918, when the uprising broke out, numerous clergymen from two archdioceses: the Gniezno archdiocese with 270 priests, and the Poznań archdiocese with 564 priests, clearly marked their support for the regaining of independence on these territories and their incorporation into the reborn Poland. The Uprising found support particularly among the younger and middle-aged generation of priests. As they often originated "from the masses", were familiar with Polish tradition and owed their education to scholarships received from the Karol Marcinkowski's Scientific Help Society and the archbishop boarding schools established by Archbishop Florian Stablewski and they had already resisted Germanisation before. It was often the conspiracies in gymnasiums and the experience acquired at the Tomasz Zan Society and the People's Libraries Society which were the true schools of resistance for them. Priest-social activists shared their acquired experience in Youth Societies. Based on the Learning Youth Society, Younger Youth Society, or the scout groups popping up even in the year 1912, Priest Walerian Adamski established the "Youth Emergency". It played an important role during

the Uprising as the auxiliary military service in communication, sanitary and rescue units.

Significant support for independence efforts was also granted by Primate Archbishop Edmund Dalbor. He took part in the welcoming of Ignacy Jan Paderewski, then received the oath from the commander-in-chief of the insurgent armies, General Józef Dowbor-Muśnicki and also blessed the insurgent standards. When instructing the clergy to take part in the activities of the Polish Red Cross and the scouting movement, to organise help for the Polish soldiers of the former German Army returning from the front, to care for fugitives from areas threatened with war, to join people's councils and also to cooperate with the Supreme People's Council, he issued a number of proclamations regarding the collection of donations for the new Polish authorities. He himself also got involved in charity support. Archbishop Dalbor took special care of priests who were forced to leave their parishes and intervened on many occasions in the international arena in matters related to persecuted priests.

Priests took an active part in secret organisations that prepared the Uprising and organised demonstrations and people's councils; they were their members and often also leaders. They collected weapons, money, medicines, encouraged the faithful to participate in the uprising, called Polish soldiers to switch sides and join the insurgent army, sometimes, they themselves organised the insurgent units, and even, in several cases, commanded them, and last but not least they held the functions of insurgent chaplains. In the Strzelin powiat alone, at the

moment of the outbreak of the Greater Poland Uprising, there were 15 parishes organised and strongly linked to the Secret Citizen's Committee in Poznań on the initiative of clergymen. The most prominent participants of the Greater Poland Uprising were: in the Poznań district - Priest Mateusz Zabłocki, the Witkowo district - Priest Tadeusz Skarbek - Malczewski, the Inowrocław district - Priest Prelate Antoni Laubitz, the Pakość district - priest and parliament member Józef Kurzawski, and in the Szubin district - Priest Ludwik Sołtysiński. The clergy, in general, were characterised by generosity, civil courage and a highly patriotic attitude.

The military chaplaincy was also organised among the units which fought in the Greater Poland Uprising. The first priests started to work as early as during the first days of the Uprising. In the middle of January 1919, as part of the quartermaster department, the Chaplaincy Division II, with the Armed Forces Chaplain in the former Prussian Partition as its head, was established. This position was then renamed as the General Dean of Polish Armies in the Prussian Partition. Priest Tadeusz Dykier was appointed first General Dean, soon after he was replaced by Priest Józef Prądyński. His subordinates included district deans, division and garrison parish priests, chaplains of regiments, hospitals and military plants. Archbishop Dalbor officially appointed several chaplains, including Józef Prądyński, Szczepan Janosik, Stanisław Małecki, Józef Piotrowicz, Walenty Trzebiński, Józef Wierlt and Mieczysław Strahl.

Some priests fulfilled the duties of military

chaplains without being officially appointed, but with permission from the bishop. One of the prominent independence and insurgent activists was Priest Mateusz Zabłocki from Gniezno. He took an active part in the battles of Zdziechowa, Mączniki and Szubin – there he took upon himself the role of a liaison delivering the orders of the command on the most dangerous frontline section. This is what Wojciech Jedlina-Jacobson had to say about him in his memoirs: “The figure of priest Zabłocki, our staff chaplain really got stuck in my memory, a very likeable person on the entire front, and this, as a result of his great commitment and immense personal courage”. During negotiations with the Germans, Priest Zabłocki was deceitfully arrested and sentenced to death from which he was saved by one of the Evangelical pastors. The collaborators of priest Zabłocki were as follows: Priest Zygmunt Wierzbicki from Kłecko in the Gniezno powiat and priests Józef Tomiak and Wincenty Teodor Taczak.

The chief chaplain of the insurgent units led by General Dowbor-Muśnicki was Priest Zygmunt Dykiert, previously the chief of the People's Council in Piła, who left his parish in fear for his life and went to Greater Poland. Among the chaplains in the Szubin powiat, Priest Antoni Ludwiczak and Priest Bolesław Kaźmierski who cooperated with him were the most outstanding figures. They organised the Polish elementary education and raised awareness among the Polish people. Priest Ludwiczak also proposed the displacement of the Germans who had settled in the entire powiat as a result of the activities of the

Settlement Commission. He also encouraged other priests to work in the military chaplaincy: Ludwik Reszelski, Wincenty Miśkiewicz, Jan Kąkolewski, Ludwik Sołtysiński, Teofil Kłos, Maksymilian Arndt and Mieczysław Buławski. Priest Ignacy Czechowski also cooperated with the Polish resistance movement. He was a parish priest from Chodzież, and initiator of numerous organisations which gathered Poles from the surrounding poviats. These were: the Society of Polish Industrialists, the Catholic Association of Polish Workers and the Association of the Polish Youth (males). Separately from the German association, he brought into existence an independent Polish Association of Working Women headed by his sister Kazimiera Czechowska. To popularise education among the Polish youth, he established a division of the Karol Marcinkowski Scientific Help Society in Chodzież and enlivened the activities of the People's Libraries Society. The crowning glory of his social activities was the foundation of the People's Bank where he became its first director. He was also the chairperson of the insurgent People's Council in Chodzież and the initiator of organisation of defence in the region of the Noteć River. Priest Kazimierz Stachowiak participated in armed resistance in the powiat of Chodzież and during the defence, he tried to make every effort to prevent the insurgents from retreating and he also organised the defence of the Budzyń frontline section which was at risk. A collaborator of his was Priest Mikołaj Świrski, the initiator of the establishment of an insurgent unit in Czarnków, which subsequently joined the units of the Northern Front. On 8 January 1919, together with

a small group of insurgents, he took part in a bloody battle with prevailing German forces. He was accompanied by Priest Witold Paulus, who took care of the insurgents and supplied them with weapons, ammunitions and medicine under life-threatening conditions.

The insurgent chaplains were often helped by local parish priests. Priest Paweł Steinmetz from Osieczna in the Leszno powiat reactivated a Sokół [Falcon] group in his parish in December 1918 and prepared the youth for participation in the uprising, providing support to it as an insurgent chaplain. It is also worth remembering the figure of Priest Alfons Graczyński, a parish priest and an organiser of a troop in Gościeszyn, he was also the leader of the armed movement in the Wolsztyn powiat. In the middle of December 1918, he set up a unit, consisting of Polish men, former soldiers of the Prussian army, for the purpose of defending Gościeszyn against the Germans. He made a speech at the meeting of the Worker and Soldier Council in Wolsztyn on 31 December 1918, during which, with full determination, he proclaimed the defence of Gościeszyn by insurgent units. His personal attitude caused the German delegates to abandon their intention to introduce their own military crews into several towns of the Wolsztyn powiat. He brought the necessary weapons from Poznań. This troop manned Gościeszyn and Rostarzewo and participated in the capture of Rakoniewice. The insurgents also fought for the liberation of Wolsztyn on 5 January 1919. During this period Priest Graczyński demonstrated inexhaustible vitality and military-organisational abilities.

Priests who participated in the Uprising did not limit themselves to providing religious care, but were also involved in the supply of food and medicines to the insurgents. All these chaplains were given the highest rating by the commanders of the Uprising, and the soldiers appreciated their courage and devotion at the most difficult moments along with their presence on the first line of the front and among the injured. The courage and devotion of many of them were honoured with high military distinctions.

The chaplains also granted help to educational officers, by, among other things, giving talks to soldiers. In order No. 1 of 21 August 1919, the General Dean emphasised, however, that the educational work should not absorb the priests so much that they have less time for their purely priestly work. "Let me bring the attention of chaplains to one very important issue, namely, that they should put our priesthood always and everywhere in the first place. We will benefit greatly from this personally, and above all, our pastoral work will benefit, if soldiers will treat us, above all as chaplains and not as officers.

However, I should like to emphasise with all my soul that your attitude to the officer corps should be as friendly and open as possible. I think that we should never refer to an officer as 'my colleague'. We are priests and not officers". He banned chaplains from taking managerial posts in the educational department, they were supposed to support the officers responsible for the educational work with guidelines rather than with active help. Preserved documents show that the tasks of the garrison chaplains included matters

related to religious services in garrison churches, schedules of services in the respective hospitals, organisation of military burials, custody of military prisons and administration of garrison cemeteries. Garrison chaplains were subjected to district deans, to whom they reported on the 5th day of every month. The deans, on the other hand, were obliged to send reports to the Bishop Curia of the Polish Army regarding the moral state of soldiers on the front by the 10th day of each month. Every regiment, frontline and garrison chaplain was obliged to run the parish office.

In consultation with the Bishop's Curia of the Polish Army and General Dowbor-Muśnicki, St. Adalbert was chosen as the patron of the insurgent units. Furthermore, the General Dean issued a regulation for frontline chaplains regarding the choice of patrons for the respective units. The work of chaplains during the Greater Poland uprising was not in any way hindered owing to the goodwill and support of the Commander-in-Chief, General Dowbor-Muśnicki. The General Dowbór-Muśnicki Greater Poland Army Foundation was even established to collect funds for insurgents and disabled soldiers returning from the war. The District Dean of the Poznań Garrison, Priest Kazimierz Stanowski, writing a letter with a request for support of the Foundation, argued: "by making contributions to the fund we will, thus express our gratitude and respect which we have for General Dowbór-Muśnicki for standing on truly religious ground while forming the Greater Poland Armies."

The work of the chaplains was also appreciated by Field Bishop Stanisław Gall, who wrote, in his

letter to the General Dean of the Polish Army in the former Prussian Partition: "The letter sent by Priest Canon on behalf of the military clergy of the former Prussian partition, with words of reverence and obedience, fills me with joy, as I see that the chaplains of the Greater Poland formations, enlivened by the spirit of ecclesiastic discipline work effectively for the good of our soldiers". In the difficult conditions in which the Polish statehood was reborn, the military chaplaincy was present wherever Polish units were formed. The organisational patterns were initially derived from the armies where the units were formed, however the chaplains in their activity referred to Polish military and national traditions, they were also involved in educational activity. Among the priests, volunteers prevailed and they performed their tasks with passion, without trying to avoid, if necessary, standing in line with the fighting soldiers. These priests created the foundations for the organisation and functioning of the pastoral work in the reborn Polish Army.

Their work often went beyond their official duties to ensure religious service to soldiers; they also played a huge role in the process of raising soldiers, popularising education, fighting with illiteracy and stimulating patriotic feelings. Owing to their attitude, they gained great respect and authority both among commanders and ordinary soldiers.

To a great extent, the whole attitude of the Polish clergy affected the moral rebirth of the Polish nation. For the Greater Poland insurgents, a chaplain was a paragon of patriotic and civic

virtues. It must be emphasised that during World War II, many participants of the Uprising became victims of German extermination, including its leaders and their families. Persecutions also affected the entire clergy, and above all, priest-insurgents became the victims of that revenge.



