

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw
Institute of Philosophy
Center for Ecology and Ecophilosophy

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Cultural Heritage in the Field of the Idea of Nature Protection in the Second Polish Republic (1918-1939) as an Antecedent of Ecological Education in Poland at the Turn of the 21st Century

Dziedzictwo kultury w zakresie idei ochrony przyrody w II Rzeczypospolitej (1918-1939) jako antecedenca edukacji ekologicznej w Polsce na przełomie XX/XXI wieku

Edyta Wolter

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9895-6462> • e.wolter@uksw.edu.pl

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Abstract: The aim of the article is to present the heritage of Polish culture on the example of the co-creators of the idea of nature protection, the "spiritual fathers" of ecological education in the Second Polish Republic (1918-1939) who developed normative acts of nature protection, such as the Act of 10 March 1934 on nature protection. They contributed to the establishment of the Temporary Commission for Nature Conservation (1919) / State Council for Nature Conservation (1925), the League for Nature Conservation (1928). They were advocates of nature reserves, national parks, as well as broadly understood education of Polish society aimed at raising ecological awareness (environmental education). The research problem is set in the interpretative paradigm of humanistic, social sciences. Consequently, a qualitative method of research was applied (qualitative text analysis /qualitative analysis of documents), in which hermeneutic understanding and text interpretation is relevant. The source basis includes printed texts and scientific research directly and indirectly connected with the subject issue. Shaping environmental awareness in the process of environmental education in the Second Polish Republic has a timeless value. It is a valuable heritage of national culture and an antecedent of ecological education implemented in the general tendency of postmodern culture, which evokes the ideals of the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century.

Keywords: the heritage of Polish culture, Second Republic of Poland (1918-1939), nature conservation, ecological education, Act of 10 March 1934 on nature conservation, spiritual "fathers" of nature conservation/ecological education

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie dziedzictwa kultury polskiej na przykładzie współtwórców idei ochrony przyrody, „duchowych ojców” edukacji ekologicznej w II Rzeczypospolitej (1918-1939), którzy opracowali akty normatywne ochrony przyrody, takie jak np. „Ustawa z dnia 10 marca 1934 r. o ochronie przyrody”. Przyczynili się do założenia Tymczasowej Komisji Ochrony Przyrody (1919) / Państwowej Rady Ochrony Przyrody (1925), Ligi Ochrony Przyrody (1928). Byli postulatorami rezerwatów przyrody, parków narodowych, a także szeroko pojętego wychowania społeczeństwa polskiego do świadomości ekologicznej (edukacja ekologiczna). Problem badań jest osadzony w paradygmacie interpretatywnym nauk humanistycznych, społecznych. W związku z tym zastosowano metodę badań jakościowych (jakościowa analiza tekstu/analiza jakościowa dokumentów), w której istotne jest hermeneutyczne rozumienie oraz interpretacja tekstu. Podstawę źródłową stanowią źródła drukowane oraz opracowania naukowe bezpośrednio i pośrednio związane z tytułową problematyką. Kształtowanie świadomości ekologicznej w procesie edukacji ekologicznej w II Rzeczypospolitej ma war-

tość ponadczasową. Stanowi cenne dziedzictwo kultury narodowej oraz antecedencję edukacji ekologicznej realizowanej w ogólnej tendencji kultury ponowoczesnej, która ideacyjnie ewokuje w drugiej połowie XX i na początku XXI wieku.

Słowa kluczowe: dziedzictwo kultury polskiej, II Rzeczypospolita (1918-1939), ochrona przyrody, edukacja ekologiczna, „Ustawa z dnia 10 marca 1934 r. o ochronie przyrody”, duchowi „ojcowie” ochrony przyrody/edukacji ekologicznej

Introduction

The cultural heritage as a sum of creations of a given community, which are passed down from generation to generation, constitutes the heritage of lasting ideas and encompasses everything that is related to cultural goods, human behavior as well as tangible and intangible artefacts that are the results of these behaviors.

According to Edmund Kotarski, heritage is “everything that contemporary generations find as the legacy of the previous generations” (Kotarski 1990, 5). Cultural heritage becomes a collection of sacred values, symbols, which evoke reverence and solemnity (cf. Nikitorowicz 2003, 900). Historical memory makes it possible to understand various aspects of contemporary culture, because almost all social phenomena have their reference in the past (Bieś, Chrost and Topij-Stempińska 2011, 9).

The first legal regulations on the Polish lands regarding protection of nature were created in the 11th century during the reign of Bolesław Chrobry (Malec 2001, 141). They had a utilitarian purpose resulting from the royal right of exclusive use of natural resources (*ius regale*). The reigning rulers (Bolesław Chrobry, Casimir the Great, Władysław Jagiełło, Sigismundus I, Sigismundus II Augustus, Stefan Batory, Sigismundus III Vasa), noticing the decrease in the number of hunting animals and forest resources, announced laws prohibiting hunting in order to secure the hunting trophies for themselves. The royal regalia were the first nature protection regulations in Poland (see Wolter 2006, 42).

During the partitions, when the Polish culture was developing for 123 years in very difficult conditions of national captivity, on

the initiative of Maksymilian Siła-Nowicki, a professor of zoology at the Jagiellonian University, on October 8, 1868, the National Parliament in Lviv passed a law, which was innovative on the international scale, i.e., the Act of July 19, 1869 Regarding the ban on catching, exterminating and selling alpine animals typical of the Tatra Mountains, marmot and wild goats (Wolter 2016, 22). At the same time, the National Parliament (Sejm) also passed the Act on the Protection of Beneficial Birds and Other Animals (Malec 2001, 143).

1. Selected antecedents of the latest normative acts in the field of nature protection in Poland, on the example of the interwar period (1918-1939)

After regaining independence in 1918, the Decree of the Regency Council of the Kingdom of Poland on the care of monuments of art and culture was announced, in which it was written that all monuments of art and culture that are within the borders of the Republic of Poland and are entered in the inventory of monuments are under the care of the state. Caves, fortified settlements, boulders and buildings with an associated garden, ornamental gardens, old roadside alleys and grand old trees surrounding castles, churches and chapels were also considered immovable monuments (Decree 1918, item 2).

From 1919, the Temporary Commission for Nature Conservation operated at the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, and from 1925, the State Council for Nature Conservation, headed by prof. Władysław Szafer. Since the protection of nature in the Second Polish Republic was assigned to the competence

of the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, Jan Łukasiewicz signed a regulation on nature protection on September 4, 1919, which stipulated that in order to protect natural monuments, it was forbidden to destroy, damage, or remove geological specimens from Poland (e.g. meteorites), landforms (e.g. caves, natural grottoes), plants (such as e.g. yew, Polish larch, Swiss pine, selected specimens of fir and pine, beech, poplar, common ash, maple, linden, juniper, violet and edelweiss in the Tatras), animals (e.g. black stork, elk, beaver, chamois, marmot, bison). The said regulation announced that the list of protected nature monuments would be supplemented in the future, and the starosts of poviats where nature monuments were located were obliged to submit reports on their condition to the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment (cf. Regulation 1919, Item 3).

The Act of March 17, 1921, on the Constitution of the Republic of Poland states that in the Republic of Poland "only a legal act may determine which goods and to what extent, for the sake of public benefit, are to be exclusively owned by the state, and to the extent that the rights of citizens and their legally recognized associations to freely use land, waters, minerals and other natural treasures may be limited for public reasons" (Act 1921, item 267). In the years 1921-1925, protected areas (reserves) were separated in the Białowieża Forest (the future Białowieża National Park), the Pieniny Mountains (the future Pieniny National Park), and the Świętokrzyskie Mountains (later the Świętokrzyski National Park) (cf. Symonides 2008, 340). In the 1920s, other important normative acts were promulgated, such as the Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of December 3, 1927, on hunting law, (Regulation 1927) which prohibited the killing of certain animal species, collecting eggs, selecting chicks, destroying nests of game birds, with the exception of hawks, pigeons, sparrowhawks, magpies, crows. It was forbidden

to use poisons, traps, hunting for females and young animals, such as: elk, deer, and plaice. Closed seasons were established for individual species of animals to ensure their peace during the period of reproduction and raising offspring (Regulation 1927, item 934). Another example is the Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland on the care of monuments of March 6, 1928 (Regulation 1928a) and the Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of March 22, 1928, on the protection of animals, (Regulation 1928b), which prohibited destruction of the landscape and individual species of plants and animals, as well as the abuse of animals (see Regulation 1928b, item 417).

Pursuant to Article 44 of the Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of March 6, 1928, on the care of monuments (Regulation 1928a, item 265), on October 18, 1932, managers of state-owned properties, which are known to have artistic, cultural, historical, archaeological and paleontological value, were obliged to notify the first instance conservation authority of this fact (Regulation 1932, item 750).

On the other hand, pursuant to Article 44 of the Constitution, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland passed the Act of March 10, 1934, on nature conservation (Act 1934) (the first Polish nature conservation act, developed by prof. Jan Gwalbert Pawlikowski and other members of the State Council for Nature Conservation), which referred to earlier concepts of legal regulations born in autonomous Galicia (cf. Malec 2001, 147). It entered into force thirty days after its announcement (Act 1934, item 274). The first article, (Chapter 1. entitled: "Subjects and content of protection, national parks, authorities and the Nature Conservation Fund," introduced protection of the following: land, its shape and formations, stagnant and flowing waters, waterfalls, shores of these waters, animals, plants, minerals, fossils (species, communities, as well as individual specimens), the preservation of which is in the public interest for

scientific, aesthetic, historical, commemorative reasons or due to specific features of the landscape, and which the state authority has recognized as subject to protection.

Depending on the type of items and the purpose of protection under the Act, nature protection may consist of:

- temporary or indefinite prohibitions to make any or significant changes to the object or its surroundings without the permission of the state authority,
- prohibitions on the use of the object, hunting, fishing, cutting down trees, destroying plants, polluting water, changing its course, mining earth, rocks or minerals,
- prohibitions on the sale, purchase, transport and export of protected items,
- bans on placing boards, inscriptions, advertisements and other announcements on given objects or in a given area,
- bans on erecting buildings in general or of a certain height or quality, setting up industrial and commercial establishments, etc.,
- restricting access to a given area, except for its owner, user and holder, their servants and household members,
- performance of works and protective devices by state authorities: construction of embankments, regulation of waterfall, afforestation of the area, planting or sowing plants, placing fences, announcements regarding nature protection.

The restrictions introduced by the Act of March 10, 1934, on nature protection weighed on each owner of the object (and persons having other rights to the object). However, the owner could not be charged against his will with the obligation to carry out works aimed at nature conservation or incur costs, because the costs were (in the absence of provisions to the contrary) charged to funds intended for nature conservation.

The Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, in consultation

with the Minister of Agriculture and Agricultural Reforms and after hearing the opinion of the State Council for Nature Conservation, could introduce protection of individual species of animals and plants by means of a regulation. In areas with a particularly beautiful landscape, rich in natural peculiarities (where nature protection could not be limited to individual objects but should uniformly concern their clusters in the area of at least three hundred hectares), the Council of Ministers could establish a national park by regulation. According to the Act, the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment could issue regulations, and the voivode could issue regulations aimed at more detailed marking or carrying out nature protection, established in the regulation of the Council of Ministers in the area of the national park. In relation to the national park, which included forest areas or areas under the management of the Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reforms, regulations were issued by the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment in consultation with the Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reforms.

Pursuant to the analyzed Act, the management and supervision over the implementation of nature protection remained within the competence of the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment. On the other hand, the organs of administrative authorities were nature conservators appointed by the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment. Their scope of powers was defined by the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment in consultation with the Minister of the Internal Affairs and the Minister of Agriculture and Agricultural Reforms.

As already mentioned above, in order to support nature conservation, the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment established a Temporary Commission for Nature Conservation (since 1925 the State Council for Nature

Conservation), and appointed the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment as its chairman, who, in turn, could appoint nature protection committees for certain areas after hearing the opinion of the State Council for Nature Conservation. For the purposes of nature protection, an innovative provision was also included in the Act on the establishment of a separate Fund for Nature Protection (as a legal entity).

The third chapter of the Act of March 10, 1934, on nature protection also contains penal provisions, according to which a person who deliberately violates the prohibitions and orders of the Act, is subject to imprisonment for up to six weeks and a fine of up to PLN 3,000 (three thousand) or one of these penalties. On the other hand, a person who acquires or accepts an item derived from a crime for any purpose, or assists in its sale or concealment, shall be liable to imprisonment for up to one month and a fine of up to PLN 1,000 (one thousand), or one of these penalties. However, if the perpetrator acts unintentionally, he is liable to a fine of up to PLN 500 (five hundred).

In the light of deliberately selected exceptions from the Act of March 10, 1934, on nature protection, one can understand the scope of civil rights and obligations, as well as criminal provisions for committing crimes against natural environment in the Second Polish Republic. However, it should be added that the discussed innovative Act in many respects remained the so-called dead letter because no voivodeship nature conservation officers or the Nature Protection Fund were appointed. It was also impossible to prevent the concept of building a cableway to Kasprowy Wierch (to protect the Tatra nature), which resulted in protests of members of the State Council for Nature Conservation, scientific societies and other social associations. For this reason, Prof. Władysław Szafer (chairman of the State Council for Nature Conservation) resigned.

2. Spiritual "fathers" of ecological education, creators of normative acts of nature protection in the Second Polish Republic (1918-1939)

The process of shaping the ecological awareness of the Polish society was greatly influenced by the creativity and application activity of prof. Jan Gwałbert Pawlikowski (1860–1939), who was active in the field of nature conservation, especially among Polish artists. Pawlikowski justified the philosophical aspects of nature protection and the importance of shaping ecological awareness as a "cultural trend" addressed to the general Polish society. Prof. Pawlikowski was considered the "spiritual father" of the Polish nature protection movement (Wodziczko 1939, 10), because he explained the philosophical aspects of the relationship between nature and culture and the timeless value of shaping active ecological attitudes in conjunction with patriotic attitudes.

Pawlikowski postulated protection of the "homeland" (Pawlikowski 1932, 3), he became the creator of organizational and legal foundations for nature protection, co-founder of the first social organization in Poland that implemented nature protection: Section for the Protection of the Tatra Mountains of the Polish Tatra Society (1912) (Dołęga 2001, 15). He was a member of the State Council for Nature Conservation and the Nature Conservation League. He translated numerous foreign nature protection laws into Polish. In 1923, he founded an annual "Wierchy" (publishing house of the Tatra Society), of which he was the editor-in-chief in the years 1923-1934. This periodical contained texts about the nature of the Tatra Mountains, the importance of its protection, the formation of ecological awareness, the broadly understood process of educating Polish society to protect nature.

As already mentioned in this article, the subject of ecological awareness, ecological education, nature protection was justified by Pawlikowski in the aspect of the "cultural trend," in connection with the cultivation

of the values of culture (ethnographic features) combined with nature (natural goods of “homeland,”) and promotion of poetic creativity related to the nature of the Tatra Mountains. Pawlikowski assumed that man is a part of nature (Pawlikowski 1913, 64), and should fight for an ecologically conscious “true culture.” He proclaimed that thanks to the proper development of culture, it is possible to reconcile man with nature, the environment, and to spiritually ennoble human attitudes towards nature. He wrote: “culture emerged from nature and bore its features for a long time; then it turned against it” (Pawlikowski 1938, 53). Prof. Pawlikowski concluded that activity for the protection of nature should be voluntary, based on idealistic attitudes (spiritual, humanistic), which include educating the society in intellectual, moral, patriotic, aesthetic, civic and health aspects. Therefore, he was an ambassador of ecological education aimed at raising the ecological awareness of Polish society and serving the protection of nature. It should also be emphasized that Jan Gwalbert Pawlikowski, together with other members of the State Council for Nature Conservation, developed the Act of March 10, 1934, on nature conservation (mentioned above).

Numerous merits in the field of nature conservation, shaping the ecological awareness of Polish society also belong to prof. Władysław Szafer (1886-1970), botanist, author of many scientific works on nature conservation. Thanks to his involvement, Chapter V (Article 99) of the Act of March 17, 1921, of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland included a provision allowing for restrictions on ownership with regard to the free use of land, waters, minerals and other natural assets. On his initiative, several regulations of the President of the Republic of Poland were announced, covering protection of mountain pine, European bison, beaver, marmot, chamois, black stork, forests and game animals, and a nature reserve in the Białowieża Forest was established in 1921 (cf. Pieczyńska and Spodniewska 1979, 12).

Władysław Szafer claimed that preservation of the reserves (without human intervention) would allow nature to return to its original state (cf. Grębecka 2010, 251). Thanks to the involvement of prof. Szafer, the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment established the Temporary Commission for Nature Protection in December 1919 (Pawlikowski 1938, 122), later transformed into the State Council for Nature Protection. Prof. Władysław Szafer contributed to the establishment of the International Office for Nature Conservation in Brussels in 1924 (Makuch 1995, 6). In the years 1925-1937 he was the Delegate of the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment for Nature Protection (a position corresponding to the later position of the Chief Nature Conservator). He chaired the State Council for Nature Conservation (Krakow), which was an advisory body to the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment. He participated in the establishment of the Nature Conservation League in 1928, which popularized the idea of nature protection, and participated in the establishment of protected areas, e.g., in the creation of an underground nature reserve in Wieliczka (cf. Symonides 2008, 339). In 1932, under the scientific editorship of prof. Szafer, an extensive collective work on nature conservation was published, titled “Treasures of nature and their protection. News in the field of nature protection for naturalists, teachers, foresters, farmers, miners, hunters, fishermen, students and all nature lovers,” published by the State Council for Nature Conservation.

Among the significant postulators of shaping the ecological awareness of Polish society, one should mention prof. Stanisław Sokołowski (1865-1942), professor of forestry, author of scientific works in the field of nature conservation (cf. Szafer 1948, 2), the value of primeval forest (Sokołowski S. 1932, 218), as well as his son, Marian Sokołowski (1894-1939), also a professor of forestry, an engaged activist in the field

of nature conservation, member of the State Council for Nature Conservation and the Mountain Protection Section of the Polish Tatra Society. Marian Sokołowski noticed the urgent need to shape the ecological awareness of pupils in the process of ecological education in the Second Polish Republic (1918-1939) introduced within the following subjects: nature, geography, history, Polish language. He justified the need to introduce a separate subject in environmental education/nature protection (cf. Sokołowski M., 1925, 4) and to develop a handbook that would serve as didactic and educational help in the process of shaping the ecological awareness of Polish society in the interwar period (cf. Sokołowski M. 1927, 20).

Another active figure in the field of nature protection in the discussed historical period, was Prof. Bolesław Hryniewiecki (1875-1963), who wrote about the importance of creating a national park in the Tatra Mountains (Hryniewiecki 1934, 3). He contributed to the creation of the Tatra National Park and the Świętokrzyski National Park claiming that nature reserves should be created to protect nature, the natural landscapes disappearing (Hryniewiecki 1924, 3) in the process of economic development and with the increase in population.

The co-founder of the Polish theory of nature protection was also Adam Wodziczko (1887-1948), a botanist, professor at the University of Poznań, spokesman for reconciling man with nature, and for shaping ecological awareness. He called his concept of landscape protection *physiotactics*, landscape cultivation – not only on the scale of the reserve and national park, but on the scale of the entire environment. He advocated the creation of that landscapes (ecosystems) having the functional features of a natural landscape and characterized by permanent homeostasis (cf. Grębecka 1991, 70). Prof. Wodziczko, when explaining the importance of the idea of nature conservation, emphasized the educational value of the natural environment. He assumed that nature is a teacher of life, an educator

of future generations as “the beloved face of our homeland” (Wodziczko 1927, 56). Adam Wodziczko wrote about the need to develop the idea of nature protection, also for humanistic reasons, in close connection with patriotic education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the initiators of nature conservation, shaping the ecological awareness of Polish society, have a huge contribution to the creation of a systemic approach to ecological education after Poland regained independence in 1918, as well as normative acts of nature protection (on the basis of which the provisions of nature protection law in Poland in the second half of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century were shaped). At that time, nature protection was assigned to the competence of the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, and environmental awareness was shaped in the didactic and educational process in primary and general secondary schools. In the Second Polish Republic, the subject of nature conservation was included in curricula and teaching schedules. Environmental education was carried out by means of various organizational forms of education as well as didactic and educational methods.

It should also be noted that shaping environmental awareness in the process of environmental education in the Second Polish Republic has a timeless value. It is a valuable heritage of national culture and an antecedent of ecological education implemented in the general tendency of postmodern culture, which evokes ideals in the second half of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century. As a side note, it can be added that during World War II, activities in the field of nature protection were discontinued, natural resources suffered huge losses. However, the office of the State Council for Nature Conservation in Krakow survived, with documents, publications, as well as the work of the spiritual “fathers” of nature

conservation, which helped organize nature conservation in Poland after the end of hostilities.

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