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Aviation education in the Second Polish Republic - summary of the doctoral dissertation

This dissertation characterizes the process of aviation education conducted in Poland in the years 1918-1939.

One of the distinctive phenomena of the first decades of the 20th century was the fashion for aviation. It also reached Poland, where it gained in importance after the regaining of independence in 1918. Despite numerous external and internal problems, the Second Polish Republic had the ambition to be a modern state, and aviation was an epitome of modernity at the time. Its military and economic importance was steadily growing. Aerial sports and tourism, gliding, parachuting, and aeromodelling were flourishing. Pilots were heroes of the collective imagination. The theme of the flight inspired the literary and artistic community. More and more people were acquiring aviation licenses.

Such an atmosphere affected children and young people. All the more so as the aviation enthusiasts were soon joined in their efforts aimed at promoting aviation by social organization and state authorities—noticing its military, modernizing, intentional, patriotic and consolidation potential. This resulted in planned activities of a popularizing, propaganda, and pedagogical nature, aimed at attracting children and youth to the aviation and encouraging them to engage in its development. This engagement could include financial support, participation in the popularization of aviation among the wider public, as well as undertaking aviation training - civil or military, technical education, or aviation law education.

The underlying principle of aviation education were the ideas of patriotic and pro-state activity. Young people were considered the group most predisposed to achieve achievements in the field of aviation and to promote it in society. Acquiring knowledge about aviation and participation in training and sports were supposed to foster the individual development of a human being, but also to strengthen the sense of collective responsibility for the development and security of the state.

The educational potential of aviation was noticed by the educational authorities and teachers. Aviation-related content was included in the teaching of such school subjects as

physics, chemistry, geography, mathematics, history, Polish, and manual works, where model making was employed (there were even special model making instructors courses for teachers).

Aviation topics appeared in school textbooks. They were also present in youth literature, poetry, magazines, film, theater, and radio broadcasts.

Aviation-oriented activity was undertaken by organizations of schoolchildren and academic youth. It was targeted at four areas: broadening theoretical knowledge about aviation, model making, engaging in local aviation events, and promoting aviation in the school and out-of-school environment.

In the process of aviation education, a wide range of educational and training methods, forms and means was employed.

The period of the Second Polish Republic resulted in a positive attitude of the society towards aviation. The ethos of the aviator was strengthened, and the achievements of contemporary technical thought were disseminated. Young people were shaping a number of moral, patriotic and civic attitudes, enriching their knowledge and acquiring qualifications to work as pilots, instructors, engineers, as well as aviation industry or administration workers. Undeniably, this period contributed greatly to development of Polish aviation and preparing staff for Polish aviation industry and air forces.

Keywords: aviation education, state education, civic education, Second Republic of Poland, history of aviation, LOPP, technical education, aviation training, aeromodelling, gliding

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