

Greater Poland Uprising 1918-1919

<https://pw.ipn.gov.pl/pwe/form/r24382573,WIERZEJEWSKI-Jan.html>
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WIERZEJ EWSKI Jan

Person

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Born

1884

Died

1937

Description

Pseudonym Mleko [Milk], printer, organiser of the scouting movement in Bydgoszcz and member of the intelligence-executive department of the Polish Military Organisation of the Prussian partition which prepared the outbreak of the Greater Poland Uprising. He was born on 4 December 1884 in Poznań, to the family of Franciszek and Michalina née Majewska. He had one brother, Wincenty, a prominent independence activist in the Prussian partition, and one sister, Maria, a teacher and an independence and social activist in Bydgoszcz and in the Kasubia region. He was preparing himself for the profession of a

printer, working in the printing house owned by Marcin Biderman in Poznań. In 1903, he was one of the co-founders of the Self-Education Society "Iskra" [Spark]. He was a collaborator of the "Głos Młodzieży" [Voice of the Youth] magazine published in Poznań. The period between the years 1906 and 1908 was spent by him in Cracow, working for the famous printing house of Anczyc. In Cracow, he was intensively involved in independence activities, being active in the clandestine National Workers' Association, Polish Youth Association ("Zet") and in the organisation called "Przyszłość" [Future] ("Pet"). In these organisations he was entrusted with the function of a liaison operating between the three partitions. During that period, he used the pseudonym "Mleko" [Milk]. In 1907, he was a co-founder of the Jan Kiliński Workers' Reading Room in Cracow as part of the Public School Society. He was an active member of the "Eleusis" Association and as an "els" he took part in "sejmy filareckie" (Philaret's parliamentary sessions). At that time he also studied at the Free Jagiellonian University. During the later period, in the years 1908-1910 he took up a job at the Karol Miarka printing house in Mikołów in the Upper Silesia region, where he continued his patriotic and independence activities, co-founding the Singing Society and developing the local People's Libraries Society. The above-mentioned activities drew the attention of the partitioning country and as a consequence of this, in the years 1910-1914 he lived in Bochum in the Rhineland-Westphalia region, where many Poles were present at that time. He took up the job of a printer for the patriotic magazine "Wiarius Polski" [Polish Veteran]. He continued his activities aimed at regaining independence, organising clandestine educational courses for numerous Polish miners who inhabited the region, and still cooperating with the "Eleusis" Association. In Bochum he

married Pelagia Palińska, the daughter of a well-known writer and editor of independence journals, Piotr Paliński, who lived there at that time. After the war began, in the years 1914-1916, he was conscripted into the Prussian army (of the German Empire). He used that time to acquire military skills with a thought to using them in the planned uprising which was to liberate Greater Poland from the power of the invader. After his return to Poznań, in consultation with his brother Wincenty, a co-creator of the Greater Poland scouting movement and commandant of the Polish Military Organisation of the Prussian Partition, he went to Bydgoszcz, where he took up a job in the Polish journal called "Dziennik Bydgoski", published by the Tesk marriage. This movement was a result of a specific division of roles between the brothers - Jan and Wincenty, the first one was supposed to deal with the organisation of the independence movement in the "Bydgoszcz district" while the other one in the Poznań district, which, together, formed the Prussian partition. In August 1917, Jan Wierzejewski founded the 1st Stanisław Staszic Scout Group in Bydgoszcz. The main purpose and characteristic for the scouting movement in the Prussian partition was the preparation of the youth for fighting with the invader. As he had qualifications as a printer, he prepared various patriotic prints, brochures and legal documents for deserters from the Prussian army. This was an element of the strategy developed by the Wierzejewski brothers, in accordance with which it was necessary to join the Prussian army, and after the acquisition of military skills, desert it and use the skills to fight the invader. During the preparations for the outbreak of the Uprising in Greater Poland and then as the Uprising went on, he was a member of the intelligence-executive department of the Polish Military Organisation of the Prussian

partition. After the liberation of the Greater Poland region and its incorporation into the remaining part of the homeland, he worked for several magazines, and finally became a manager at the printing house of the Publishing Cooperative of the Union of Cooperative Associations in Poznań. He was still involved in intense social activities. In the years 1919-1920, he was chief of the Greater Poland Scout Groups as well as an activist of the Polish Graphic Association. Together with his brother Wincenty, he was the originator of the idea of the construction of a monument to the scouts by the Malta lake in Poznań, as a homage paid to scouts fallen when fighting for independence in the Greater Poland Uprising, in the battles for Lviv and in the war with the Bolsheviks. Also, together with his brother, they were the initiators of the Scout-Citizen Movement in the 1930s, a pro-state organisation. The movement was supposed to use the potential of professionally and socially active former scouts for the strengthening of the power and economy of the Polish state. He died suddenly on 14 October 1937 in Poznań. He had three sons: Edmund, Bogdan and Zbigniew. He was awarded the Medal of Independence and, posthumously, the Greater Poland Insurgent Cross, the scout Badge for Merit, the Badge of 25 years of the Greater Poland Scouting Movement and other honorary badges.

Bibliography

W. Wierzejewski, Wierzejewski Jan (1884-1937) Powstańcy wielkopolscy. Biogramy uczestników powstania wielkopolskiego 1918-1919, v. XII, ed. B. Polak, Poznań 2015, pp.173-175.

Author of the entry

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