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LEVEL OF SERVICE DISCIPLINE OF MILITIAMEN ILLUSTRATED BY THE EXAMPLE OF OLSZTYN VOIVODESHIP

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ABSTRACT

The article reveals militia work from Olsztyn voivodeship. It shows the first years of the command and the problems handled by the officers, the state of professional discipline, the level of education and training.

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After the takeover of power in the so-called Recovered Territories [taken from Germany after II World War – editors] Polish administration started the work on establishing state institutions. Among numerous offices of state administration that started from scratch, an important role was played by the organs of law enforcement and public safety. Service discipline is an important factor affecting the functioning of the whole organisation and the proper implementation of tasks by the officers. The aim of this work is an attempt to approximate the level of discipline of the Militia (hereinafter MO – acronym of Polish name Milicja Obywa-

telska) of the provincial garrison command in Olsztyn. It will present examples of activities of officers in the first period of the creation and work of MO units in Warmia and Mazury and indicate possible reasons for their behaviour.

The source of knowledge about the activities of MO bodies, attitudes of officers, their discipline and preparation for service comes from, apart from the information coming from representatives of central and local government, the reports of judicial employees of Olsztyn appeal. They are important because they are an external evaluation of the work and behaviour of MO officers. However, very critical judgements also flowed from militiamen themselves. First of all, negative opinions were expressed by provincial commanders responsible for discipline.

The article presents the cases that are exemplification of the general situation which developed in the second half of the forties of the twentieth century the ranks of the militia garrison of Olsztyn, the regional capital. Basing on the description of the conditions in which the first officers worked, the way they operated, their attitude to the society and the problems that occurred on and off duty one can conclude about the state of the morale of the then law enforcement officers. The analysed period are the first years of functioning of the Militia in the province of Olsztyn from 1945 to 1949. It was the time of militia units establishing and the formation of their structures. The history of MO does not enjoy as much interest as the history of the Office of Public Security¹. An important work is the one by Piotr Majer, describing the past of the formation from its inception to 1957. There one can find information about the work of the militia of Warmia and Mazuria². The subject of the work of MO units has been discussed in books by Bohdan Łukaszewicz³, Marcin Płotek⁴, Ryszard Tomkiewicz⁵. Older ones include first and foremost the work by

¹ J. Dworzecki, *Police in Poland. Selected Issues*, Kraków 2011, p. 241.

² P. Majer, *Civic Militia 1944–1957, Genesis, organization, work, place in the power apparatus*, Olsztyn 2004.

³ E. Łukaszewicz, *Military District Court in Olsztyn 1946–1955, Outlines of the Monograph*, Olsztyn 2000.

⁴ M. Płotek, *Difficult Beginnings. The Mazury District 1945–1946*, Dąbrówno 2011; Idem, *Officers of Civic Militia from the Perspective of Judges of Olsztyn Appeal*, [in:] *95 Years of Police Forces in Poland*, E. Ura, S. Pieprzny (eds.), Rzeszów 2015.

⁵ R. Tomkiewicz, *Everyday Life of Inhabitants of Post-war Olsztyn 1945–1956*, Olsztyn 2003.

B. Łukaszewicz⁶ and the commemorative book published for the 25th anniversary of MO and political secret police⁷.

Archival materials used in this article are stored in the Archives of the State in Olsztyn. They include a team of the Court of Appeal in Olsztyn and the Institute of National Remembrance in Białystok.

On 14 March 1945 four administrative districts were formed. They were led by the government's plenipotentiaries. They were to supervise the institutions and bodies other than the military and judiciary. On 23 May 1945 Jakub Prawin, the plenipotentiary in charge of the Mazurian District symbolically took civil power from the hands of the representatives of the Soviet troops⁸. The coercive apparatus in post-war Poland played an important role in gaining and strengthening the hegemony of the Communists. The management of Polish Workers' Party were aware that the assumption of power and its maintenance ought to be done, among others, with the help of the so-called people's oppression apparatus which included the Militia, the Office of the Security and the Army⁹. The staffing structure of the MO Provincial Headquarters was created from the officers of the "Lublin" operational group who arrived on 7 April. Its director was the first provincial commander, Mjr Józef Pacyna-Głowacki¹⁰. On 16 April the eighty-person "Kielce" group arrived, commanded by Lt Eugeniusz Gałka. Between 15 and 17 June another one hundred militiamen arrived, this time from the "Bydgoszcz-Poznań" group. Officially, the provincial command in Olsztyn started operations on 14 April.

Then, from June to July 1945 officers delegated from the MO Provincial Headquarters formed the district headquarters of MO (hereinafter

⁶ B. Łukaszewicz, *For New Poland. From the History of the Apparatus of Safety and Public Order in Warmia and Mazuria in the Years 1945–1950*, Olsztyn 1989.

⁷ H. Panas, R. Wachowiec, T. Willan, W. Zamecki, *In the Service of the Nation in Warmii i Mazuria. XXV years of Civic Militia and Political Secret Police*, Olsztyn 1969.

⁸ K. Lesiakowski, *The Role of the District Office of Public Security in Central Poland and in the Regained Territories in the Years 1945–1947*, [in:] *Communist Authorities Towards the Regained Territories after WW II*, S. Łacha (ed.), Słupsk 1997, p. 41.

⁹ K. Lesiakowski, *The Role of the District Office of Public Security in Central Poland and in the Regained Territories in the Years 1945–1947*, [in:] *Communist Authorities Towards the Regained Territories after WW II*, S. Łacha (ed.), Słupsk 1997, p. 41.

¹⁰ B. Łukaszewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 27. 3 IV 1945 the Chief Commandant of MO upon the Order no 5 established five operational groups with a view to organising MO in the Regained Territories. Olsztyn group was formed by 4 officers and 172 militiamen.

KP MO)¹¹. Problems with violation of discipline by MO officers were often the cause of complaints arising from the administration of the district. Governors had serious problems with the stabilization of relationships with law enforcement and public safety bodies. Especially in mid-1945 the office of attorney for the District of Mazury received a lot of complaints on the way MO operated. The head of the county in the Prussian Iławka wrote in the report of June 1945 that the local MO unit consisted of five officers and the commander. The skills of the officers were disastrous, which according to him, meant that it was “absolutely necessary to look after them”. For example, one of them shot himself because he could not handle the weapon and the commandant travelled to Olsztyn with a subordinate, and never returned. Therefore, the three other militiamen were disarmed and sent back to the capital district¹².

In the same month the representatives of the Morağ county assessed the work of law enforcement bodies as “beneath all criticism”. Officers were characterised by the absence of subordination, alcohol overuse and ignoring their superiors. During his visit to the barracks the governor found the commander and other police officers “with chicks in bed, not on duty”¹³. Also, the Governor of Kętrzyn in July 1945 negatively rated the work of the militiamen from the district. Despite the fact that this was a small unit, the officers were characterised by the lack of discipline. The commander of the municipal administration disregarded the orders of the county administration. The militiamen robbed both Poles and Germans of food. Alcohol was the source of quarrels with the employees of the State Repatriation Office¹⁴. A similar situation took place in August 1945. In Gierdawy the Governor characterized the militia as follows: “(...) the MO staff consist of the element without proper moral values and responsible training. The commander of the county, a very young man, without proper service preparation, does not have his subordinates’ ear, the state of security has not improved since the day of MO arrival”. Later, the governor still complained about the conduct of officers which even worsened the already

¹¹ Ibidem. P. Majer gives 17 April 1945 as the date of the beginning of the work of the MO Command of the Province, see P. Majer, *op. cit.*, p. 115 as cited in Z. Jakubowski, *The Creation and Work of the Apparatus of Safety and Civic Militia in the Western and Northern Territories (1945–1950)*, “Historical Notebooks ASW”. 1988, vol. 8, p. 20.

¹² Ibidem. p. 143.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 144.

hard situation in the district. In January 1946 complaints regarding the brutality of the Militia flowed every day. They robbed the German population. There was even a situation in which militiamen began to plunder the neighboring district of Kętrzyn. Instead of decreasing, crime increased due to the conduct of MO servicemen. The state of affairs was explained in the following way: “The commander of the MO station is illiterate and makes use of his son who is not a militiaman, either. The commander’s wife also interferes with the work of the militia”¹⁵. In the report of May 1946 the Mrągowo county governor pointed out that the security situation was still unsatisfactory. The reasons included young and poorly trained militia officers who did not understand the nature of the work of security institutions¹⁶.

The problem with the quality of staff was also noticed by the provincial commander of MO, Józef Pacyna-Głowacki. In August 1945 he complained about the lack of people with the appropriate work and life experience. Also, it lacked properly prepared officers who would be able to take over positions of district commanders. The Commander of the Province did not hide that some militia officers had had to be expelled because they were inexperienced and “of low moral level”. The problem was that it was not anybody who could replace them. In the assessment of the commander the militia needed “the healthiest element” and the local one was demoralised¹⁷.

The level of discipline and low morale of the officers can be illustrated by the example of MO station in Dąbrówno. In this unit it was decided to change the position of the commander because of “continuous drunkenness and rows” inspired by the until then leader. Between the previous and the new commander there was a conflict due to the introduced discipline and a change of the current conduct of officers. As a result, after a few rows, a try to rebel other militiamen from the station and attempted shooting of the new commandant, the former commander together with his son defected from the ranks of MO¹⁸.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 144–145.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 143.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 141–142.

¹⁸ The Institute of National Remembrance, Bi, 120/198, p. 11–19. Decade report on the work of MO Provincial Command in Mazuria District of 5 June 1945 for the period between 25 May and 5 June 1945.

Since the beginning of the functioning of the militia in the District of Mazury representatives of the judiciary evinced a negative attitude to the work of officers. Judges and prosecutors severely evaluated the attitude and behavior of militiamen. Among others the Prosecutor of the Court of Appeal in Olsztyn Zygmunt Kałapski pointed out that the officers did not have proper training and required the selection which would ensure the proper assortment of staff. He stressed that the ranks of the militia had to employ honest people, because property left unguarded in Recovered Territories was a “temptation” and “depraved people”¹⁹.

In September 1945 the judge of the District Court in Elk Władysław Markowski informed the President of the District Court in Elk Władysław Wilanowicz of the fact that militiamen in Pisz failed to carry out their duties. Moreover, they themselves were involved in the armed attacks²⁰. In the January 1946 in decade report of the external service of the Pisz district command it was written that the state of morale of the militia left much to be desired. A part of rank and file officers do not understand their obligations. Drunkenness among them was frequent, which was the cause of scandals and failure to attain the tasks posed. Both the work done in the field by non-commissioned officers and political and educational talks, warnings or penalties imposed by the commander of the district did not bring the expected results²¹.

On 15 October 1945 prosecutor A. Frackowiak carried out an inspection of one of the MO stations around Prabuty. The staff of this unit was the commandant and four militiamen who had arrived two days earlier. The militiamen complained about the lack of basic equipment and chancellery utensils. The officers were young people without proper training, totally unprepared for the tasks they were entrusted with. Working conditions they encountered, the extremely poor state of the personal supply and bad food meant that they were dejected and discouraged. Also, they

¹⁹ State Archive in Olsztyn, The Court of Appeal in Olsztyn, 2806/3, p. 259–260. [August 1945] A copy of the document of prosecutor Z. Kałapski addressed to the minister of justice in Warsaw.

²⁰ State Archive in Olsztyn, The Court of Appeal in Olsztyn, sign. 2806/3, p. 346–350. The report from 21 September 1945 by W. Markowski, a judge of the Court of the Province of the service travel to Biała Piska and Pisz.

²¹ The Institute of National Remembrance, Bi, sign. 120/45, p. 14. Decade report no 1 of external service of the MO Province Command in Pisz for the period from 23 December 1945 to 3 January 1946.

did not receive proper uniforms and warm coats. Regarding the board, they were left to “their own ingenuity and gaining food on their own”²².

Another type of problems occurred in the district of Giżycko. On 13 September 1945 the District Cross-party Committee in Giżycko complained about the inactivity and drunkenness of the district command staff. In the letter to the provincial command they demanded that militia officers and their superiors be removed from their positions. The officers not only ignored the decisions of the governor, but also intoxicated had feuds with mayors, village heads and local people. Moreover, the perpetrators of theft and brawling which they committed under the influence of alcohol. There were also clashes with the soldiers of the Red Army²³.

Difficulties in the functioning of the Giżycko militia were also perceived by the representatives of the judiciary. In 1945 the shameful behaviour of militia officers in the area of Giżycko county was described by Judge of the District Court in Giżycko Odo Klasse in the following manner:

In the city there exist the District Command of Militia, the Municipal Command of MO and the District Security Command. The skills of the functionaries of these units is the worst possible. Discipline almost none. Attitude miserable. In connection with the present action for the expulsion of the Germans across the Oder, there take place scandalous acts abuse by the militia. Inhumane treatment, raking everything, including milk for babies, raping women, beatings, etc. Displaced Germans are completely removed from the law. The attitude of the Militia to Polish citizens is also reprehensible. No prosecutor's office on site produces total impunity. The district office is cluttered with complaints about the conduct of the Militia and can do nothing. Therefore, any assimilation activity among Masurians is paralyzed. Masurians, seeing unprecedented abuse from the authorities, and, on the other hand, succumbing to the German agitation go to Germany together with Germans, and the country is getting depopulated of farmers. [...] If the moral and educative state of the Militia were raised to an at least possible level, public security in the county and in the city would be satisfactory. The current security state, still possible to withstand owes its condition only to the fact that the discussed areas are not of special interest for

²² State Archive in Olsztyn, The Prosecutor's Office of The Court of Appeal in Olsztyn, 2819/10, p. 13. Letter from 18 October 1945 of a prosecutor of the District Prosecutor's Office of the Regional Court in Olsztyn A. Frąckowiak to a prosecutor of the Prosecutor's Office of the Court of Appeal in Olsztyn Z. Kałapski.

²³ M. Płotek, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

the incoming criminal element, as these are areas already deserted and virtually devoid of portable possessions, suitable for easy plunder and removal. On the other hand, the militia sell the plundered things to the Germans at low prices and that makes different individuals arrive here to purchase these things, who, of course, take this opportunity to cultivate the so-called looting²⁴.

The situation in Giżycko was not improved by the creation of the district court and the prosecutor's office. Prosecutor Zdzisław Książkiewicz believed that cooperation of the prosecution and MO county commands as well as the District Offices of Public Security was "downright hostile". The bad relationships were caused by the fact that the so-called security leadership "developed a complex of superiority and complete independence from any authority or control factors". According to Z. Książkiewicz people working in MO and UB were "a jumble of different, often criminal types". The staff consisted of "fortuitously employed candidates" who, making the most of the situation, "ruled in a specific way".

Due to the lack of military courts the Citizens' Militia for quite a long period of time was subject to competences of common courts. Meanwhile, the provincial command, followed by individual county commanders, did not want to accept this state law. This thus formed a paradoxical situation. Numerous crimes committed by the militia officers were not prosecuted because military courts the officers would be subject to, had not been created yet. Ordinary courts or prosecutors' offices were not handed over proceedings concerning the offenses committed by militiamen because commands did not notify of them. The prosecutor had to fight with the authorities of MO for the cases against the militia to be handed over to his office. The victims were mostly intimidated natives, remaining silent. This situation meant that among the militia a sense of utter impunity became predominant. Later, cases against the officers were taken over by the prosecution of the Military District Court in Olsztyn. Disciplinary dismissals of secret political police and MO employees and conducted training affected the quality of work²⁵.

²⁴ M. Płotek, *Officers...*, p. 71.

²⁵ State Archive in Olsztyn, The Prosecutor's Office of the District Court in Giżycko (hereinafter: APO PSOG), sign. 2572/1, p. 247. Report from 21 January 1947 by Z. Książkiewicz on the work of The Prosecutor's Office of the District Court in Giżycko for the period from 18 February 1946 to 1 January 1947.

The prosecutor of the Court of Appeal in Olsztyn Zygmunt Kałapski at the congress of judges and prosecutors of appeals of Gdańsk, Olsztyn and Toruń in November 1945 stated that within three months police work had improved thanks to the attitude of the provincial commander of MO. Z. Kałapski was aware that militia officers consisted of a “raw and untrained element and sometimes irresponsible people”. There were attempts to change this state of affairs by improving the quality of work by making court employees participate in briefings, conducting lectures and providing immediate guidance. The fight against crime was impeded by the lack of well-trained militia forces. Kałapski cited examples of acts of abuse and crimes committed by MO officers. Investigating judge of Elk applied a preventive measure in the form of detention in relation to seven officers and the commander of the city MO station in Pisz. The reason for this preventive measure was a robbery carried out by militiamen on 9 October 1945 on two farmers in a village commune of Duży kocioł. In another case, four militiamen from the Pisz command of the district, going from house to house, deprived the inhabitants of clothes. One of them was taken into custody. In Giżycko militiamen showed not only a lack of subordination but also basic knowledge on how to conduct investigations. The treatment of their citizens was considered reprehensible. In addition, prosecutors were confronted with incidents of insufficient uniforms of officers and delayed payment of salaries, which was the cause of bitterness and pushing for bribery or even robbery²⁶.

Problems with the maintenance of discipline in the ranks of MO occurred and in subsequent years. Commanders of the province pointed out the lack thereof manifesting itself mainly in drunkenness and neglect of official duties. Therefore, attempts were made to heal the situation in different ways. In September 1947 the commander of the province Bruno Skuteli issued a special order concerning the lack of discipline and its loosening in the organizational units of MO in which he stated that lately the state of discipline in the units had deteriorated. One could also notice widespread drunkenness among the militia, as evidenced by the following facts.

²⁶ State Archive in Olsztyn, The Court of Appeal in Olsztyn, 2806/47, p. 173–177. Situational report from 31 October 1945 delivered by a prosecutor of the Court of Appeal in Olsztyn Z. Kałapski at the convention of judges and prosecutors of appeals of Gdańsk, Olsztyn and Toruń on 3 and 4 November 1945. Formally, the District Prosecutor’s Office in Olsztyn started work on 1 May 194; see. B. Łukaszewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

In the MO District Headquarters MO in Szczytno on 17 September 1947 officers arranged a carousal in a store, as a result of which they beat each other and caused a fuss in the city, beating outsiders.

In the MO District Headquarters in Górowo Iławeckie an intoxicated militiaman on duty shot that command chauffeur, with whom he previously drank alcohol.

On 28 September 1947 an officer of the District of Osterode, while under the influence of alcohol, shot at six people at a dance, as a result of which three persons died.

In addition, Skuteli stated that the militia behaved inappropriately in public places. Frequently the appearance of a militiaman was scruffy, officers wore unbuttoned clothes and did not care about the cleanness of their uniforms. While apprehending civilians they performed professional duties intoxicated, which was the reason for frequent assault and battery. This indicated a lack of responsibility and discipline in performing official duties. Therefore, he recommended that the political and educational department of the MO Command of the Province held a series of talks aimed at raising the moral level of officials. County commandants had to tighten discipline in the subordinate units through reinforced controls both during and after the service and immediately react to the slightest signs of a breach of discipline. The commander of the province forbade officers to attend public parties until further notice. The militiamen sent to the parties on duty did not have the right to stay inside the building where they were held.

In addition, everyone, regardless of rank and position, who perpetrated drunkenness, negligence of duties and deliberate breach of professional discipline was to be held to strict accountability, including bringing the matter to Military District Prosecutor's Office in Olsztyn. He made the commanders and deputies for the political education responsible for the moral state of his subordinates. Causing moral decay and allowing drunkenness in the command of the district could be the cause of deprivation of the position of the commander and taking him to military court²⁷.

The situation did not improve in subsequent years. The evidence might be the fact that morale still was not appropriate. Discipline, which was still at a low level, sought improvement. Among others this was to be achieved

²⁷ The Institute of National Remembrance, Bi, 120/319, k. 50. Special order no 23 of the MO commander of the province lieutenant colonel B. Skuteli from 29 September 1947.

by a special order No. 46 of 12 May 1948 of the voivodeship commander Lt. Col. Joseph Marchwiński. In the order in question the commandant stressed that the formation created on the basis of the Decree of the Polish Committee of National Liberation of 7 October 1944 “became a legal and public service of formation of Public Security”. Its task was to protect the security, ensure peace and order, but the militia was also the “armed wing of the People’s Democracy”.

Accordingly, J. Marchwiński ordered all officers, irrespective of their degree, to be role model for citizens as well as to avoid situations that “would cause offence to the militia uniform”, particularly:

- a. alcohol abuse,
- b. reckless incurrence of debt,
- c. squandering and theft of state property,
- d. bribery,
- e. relationships with notorious characters,
- f. vulgar referring to citizens.

Apart from that, Marchwiński stressed that incidents of abuse of power by officials of MO happened. First of all, it was about forcing the beating of the detained and remaining in custody to acknowledge the blame or obtain incriminating evidence. As emphasized by the commander, beating people was contrary to the law and “tainted the entire apparatus of MO in the eyes of society”. Therefore, in April 1948, not following these rules resulted in expelling seven officers and sentencing fifteen militiamen to 10–14 days in prison. At the same time he instructed the head of special branch to conduct an accelerated investigation against the interim commander of the MO station in Rybno for the abuse of power, specifically, beating people and to take the matter to the Military Prosecutor’s Office in Olsztyn. Also, in the next two cases he ordered the referral of the case to the same prosecutor’s office. In the case of an officer of the operational platoon of the MO Provincial Command in Olsztyn for allowing the arrested to escape and common drunkenness and the commander of the militia station in Małdyty for “inaction of power”.

Political and educational officers carried out a series of talks aimed at raising the moral level of MO officials. Commanders of the county were to “tighten discipline” in the subordinate units by enhancing control over the militia officers in the on and off duty. Commandants and their deputies for politics and education were responsible for the moral state of their sub-

ordinates. Marchwiński threatened that officers of MO, regardless of the degree and position held, allowing the drunkenness, beatings, ill-treatment of citizens on and off duty and will be held to strict accountability, including bringing the matter to the Military Prosecutor's Office in Olsztyn²⁸.

The problem of binge drinking among militiamen appeared in later years. It was so serious that the commander of the provincial Mjr Jan Konieczny issued another special order. The document pointed out that in the region of Olsztyn there was noticeable weakening of discipline in the ranks of MO, primarily due to alcohol abuse by officers. "Common drunkenness in MO units largely weakened the militia vigilance, undermined the authority and trust in bodies of MO and gave up arms to the enemies of Polish People's Republic". According to the commander, "the enemy used the incidents of offenses against militia and party discipline and tried every possible means to inspire his fancy, hostile work even among the less conscious MO officials, urging them to commit various crimes".

As negative examples of the conduct of officers, the commander quoted an incident involving two militiamen of MO Command of the Province in Węgorzewo who, being drunk, stripped naked in the presence of civilians. One of them lost his service weapon. In a show trial held in the MO Provincial Command The District Military Court sentenced the mentioned militiamen to prison.

Elsewhere, on 4 November 1949 the drunk commander of the militia station in Kumielsk, situated in the district of Pisz, shot three people with a pistol, the mayor of the local municipality, the chairman of the municipal People's Council and a random person. Moreover, he tried to shoot an encountered underage girl, but his gun got jammed. By the verdict of the District Military Court the militiaman was sentenced in summary proceedings to triple death penalty and ten years in prison. He was imposed a total penalty of death.

Major J. Konieczny ordered to treat cases of drunkenness on and off duty as a criminal offense under the provisions of the Criminal Code of the Polish Army. He ordered those responsible, regardless of rank and position held to be apprehended immediately and, together with a report, brought to the disposal of the Department of Special Militia for further

²⁸ The Institute of National Remembrance, Bi, 120/319, k. 112. Special order no 46 of the MO commander of the province lieutenant colonel Józef Marchwiński from 12 May 1948.

investigation. Also, department heads who would not respond to the identified drunkenness among officers were to be brought to disciplinary and even criminal liability²⁹.

Basing on the above mentioned reports it can be concluded that the discipline of the militia of the regional capital Olsztyn was at a low level. It was reflected in a certain attitude towards the public, as well as their approach to their duties, or as in cases of a few officers even beginning a life of crime. You can see that the levels of demoralization in many cases reached a high degree. The reason for this state of affairs was mainly weak vocational training of the new MO personnel, which was symptomatic of the whole country³⁰. Candidates preferred for service were of working-class or peasant origin, which at that time was associated with low levels of education overall. In the case of the Recovered Territories should be noted that the first MO staff consisted of people who came to the area from outside.

This was the reason for the lack of social ties, which occurred on the Ancient Lands. Hence the officers did not know the environment in which they worked, they found it alien or even threatening. They had no sense of belonging to the environment in which they served. This led to aberrations in their behavior. There was also no proper recruitment and selection of personnel. Verification of the Militia ranks had not proceeded until the time of service. In many cases these were random people, not necessarily honest, who should never enter the ranks of the Militia. We must also remember that the war had left a negative imprint on humans, in many cases leading to their demoralization. In addition, in the first years of the organization of coercive apparatus, officers worked in poor social conditions. They lacked adequate food or uniforms, not to mention the regular payment of wages. This situation led to the fact that the officers got by, in some cases, committing a crime, and, the sense of impunity and the possessed power encouraged such behavior. Executives, who were to act as role models and enforce proper performance of their duties, also did not meet expectations. What is more, many militiamen were young

²⁹ The Institute of National Remembrance, Bi, 120/319, k. 240. Special order no 80 from 14 November 1949 on combating drunkenness in MO ranks and increasing the level of discipline issued by Maj. Jan Konieczny, The MO Commander of the Province in Olsztyn.

³⁰ More widely the state of staff in the first years of MO operation was described by P. Majer in the aforementioned work.

people with no experience of life, which were yet to be properly shaped as officials responsible for order and security of the society. These and other factors contributed to the decrease in discipline among the Militia officers serving in the Warmia and Mazury in the forties of the twentieth century.

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12. State Archive in Olsztyn

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