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Dmytro BONDAR

PhD (Public Administration), Rector of Lviv State University of Life Safety, 35 Kleparivska Street, Lviv, Ukraine, postal code 79000 (d.bondar.ldubgd@gmail.com)

ORCID: 0009-0004-9571-7828

Volodymyr BAKALA

Postgraduate student, Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, 57 Shevchenko Street, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine, postal code 76000; Senior Researcher, Oleksa Dovbush Ivano-Frankivsk Historical and Memorial Museum, 1 Hetman Ivan Mazepa Street, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine, postal code 76000 (volodjabakala@gmail.com)

ORCID: 0009-0003-8766-3818

Дмитро БОНДАР

кандидат наук з державного управління, ректор Львівського державного університету безпеки життєдіяльності, вул. Клепарівська, 35, м. Львів, Україна, індекс 79000 (d.bondar.ldubgd@gmail.com)

Володимир БАКАЛА

аспірант, Прикарпатський національний університет імені Василя Стефаника, вул. Шевченка, 57, м. Івано-Франківськ, Україна, індекс 76000; старший науковий співробітник, Івано-Франківський історико-меморіальний музей Олекси Довбуша, вул. гетьмана Івана Мазепи, 1, м. Івано-Франківськ, Україна, індекс 76000 (volodjabakala@gmail.com)

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THE FIRE-FIGHTING ACTIVITIES OF THE NATIONAL AND CULTURAL SOCIETIES IN EASTERN GALICIA IN THE 1920s – 1930s

Abstract. *The purpose of the research is to elucidate the development of fire-fighting movement in Eastern Galicia in the 1920s and 1930s through the prism of the history of national cultural societies in the region: “Gymnastics and Fire Society “Sokil” / “The Ukrainian Sports Society “Sokil-Batko”; Rukhanka Fire Society “Sich” / Rukhanka Fire Society “Luh”. The methodology of the research is based on the principles of scientificity, historicism, structuralism and criticality. There have been used general scientific methods of scientific knowledge (analysis, synthesis, generalization) and special historical methods: historical genetic, historical systemic, historical typological, historical comparative. There has been applied a problem chronological approach in order to clarify the main aspects of the fire-fighting movement in the historical retrospect, as well as a systemic structural approach in order to determine the historical development patterns of the fire-fighting movement during the interwar period. The Scientific Novelty.* *Based on a wide historiographical and source base, the main milestones in the fire-fighting direction formation of the Sokil-Sich societies in the 1920s and 1930s have been outlined*

thoroughly; the forms of this activity have been generalized. **The Conclusions.** Due to World War I and the national competitions for the Ukrainian statehood, including the Polish-Ukrainian War, there was the decline of national cultural societies, in particular, the rukhanka-fire societies, such as “Sokil”, “Sich”. The institutional restoration of these societies faced a considerable resistance by the Polish administration, which was not satisfied with the national patriotic direction of organizations, their active practical activities in training young people, teaching military affairs, and later fire defense. Despite the fact that the fire-fighting societies “Sokil” and “Sich” from the beginning of their activities, and later in a restored form during the interwar period, became a significant support for state fire-fighting for ideological reasons, especially after the beginning of the “pacification” measures, their activities were limited or prohibited.

Key words: fire-fighting movement, Sokil-Sich organizations, fire-fighting movement societies “Sokil”, “Sich”, “Luh”.

ПРОТИПОЖЕЖНИЙ НАПРЯМ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ НАЦІОНАЛЬНО-КУЛЬТУРНИХ ТОВАРИСТВ НА СХІДНІЙ ГАЛИЧИНІ В 1920 – 1930-х рр.

Анотація. Мета дослідження. Висвітлення розвитку протипожежного руху на Східній Галичині у 1920 – 1930-х рр. крізь призму дослідження національно-культурних товариств краю “Гімнастично-пожежного товариства «Сокіл»”/“Українського спортивного товариства «Сокіл-Батько»”; руханково-пожарного товариства “Січ”, а після його заборони – руханково-пожарного товариства “Луз”. **Методологія дослідження** базується на принципах науковості, історизму, структурності та критичності. Використані загальнонаукові методи наукового пізнання: аналізу та синтезу, узагальнення допомогли визначити роль національно-культурних товариств Галичини в окреслений період; завдяки проблемно-хронологічному проаналізовано головні проблеми діяльності протипожежного руху в послідовній ретроспективі; системно-структурний – сприяв виділенню закономірностей розвитку руху у міжвоєнний період. **Наукова новизна.** На підставі широкої історіографічної та джерельної бази ґрунтовно окреслено головні віхи становлення протипожежного напрямку діяльності сокільсько-січових товариств у 1920 – 1930-ті рр., узагальнено її форми цієї. **Висновки.** Перша світова війна та національні змагання за українську державність, зокрема і польсько-українська війна, спричинили занепад національно-культурних товариств руханково-пожежного спрямування, таких як “Сокіл”, “Січ”. Інституційне відновлення цих товариств зустрічало чималий супротив польської адміністрації, яку не влаштовувало їхнє національно-патріотичне спрямування, активна практична діяльність із вишколу молоді, навчання військової справи, а згодом й пожежної оборони. Незважаючи на те, що протипожежні товариства “Сокіл” та “Січ” від початків своєї діяльності, а згодом у відновленій формі, у міжвоєнний період ставали суттєвою підтримкою державної протипожежної оборони, з ідеологічних міркувань, особливо після початку “нацифікаційних” заходів, були обмежені у діяльності, або заборонені.

Ключові слова: протипожежний рух, сокільсько-січові організації, руханково-пожарні товариства “Сокіл”, “Січ”, “Луз”.

The Problem Statement. The reforms of enlightened absolutism and a subsequent complex of cultural, educational and social reforms of the Austro-Hungarian Empire had influence on the growth of public and apolitical activity of the Ukrainians in the 19th century. Hence, the end of the 19th century became a turning point for the development of political and national cultural institutions, including the Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia (Panfipova, 2014, pp. 123–124; Haliv, 2018, pp. 68–69).

The ideas of the Sokil movement penetrated into the territories of Eastern Galicia due to an extensive network of the Polish national and cultural societies in the second half of the 19th century, which were substantiated by the Czech figures Myroslav Tyrsh and Henryk Figner (Korolko, 2012, p. 73). The self-organization of the Ukrainian movement took place more

slowly than the Polish one, because the latter had a significantly better network of society (Papenko, 2017, pp. 76–77), while the Ukrainian public did not understand the expediency of creating such sports Sokil society: “Our citizens of that time were offended directly, angry with the “slapped” Lavrivskyi, having heard about his activities around the foundation of the movement society, mocking his fixed idea, and taking pity on the untalented spreader of the Sokil thought. Several people asked the following questions: “Why do we need “Sokoly”? Are we the Poles or the Czechs to deal with such nonsense? What else do the Poles have, they have money, they have power, so they need “Sokoly” too!..” (Tyrsh, 1948, p. 20). The creation of firefighting societies modelled on the All-Slavic “Sokil” society was actively promoted by the public figures Volodymyr Lavrinskyi and Vasyl Nahirnyi at the end of the 1870s. It should also be noted that the local administration in Eastern Galicia consisted mainly of the Polish officials, who created systematic bureaucratic obstacles to the approval of the statutory documents of the Ukrainian societies, and despite the fact that the statute of the Ukrainian Sokil society was an almost identical translation from the Czech document, which was also used by the Polish Sokil societies (Datsiuk, 1996, p. 23).

There were held preparatory constituent meetings in Lviv in July of 1892 in order to establish the “Sokil” society. The Ukrainian public figures Vasyl Nahirnyi and Volodymyr Lavrinskyi wrote the Charter of the Ukrainian “Sokil” society, the main goal of which was to create “united Ukraine that would not be subjected to the national, political, and spiritual oppression”. The Ukrainian Sokil movement aimed to “awaken and nurture mobility, sociability, and national consciousness in citizens through physical exercise, competition, physical games, and fun, and travel” with the help of physical education, while fire-fighting activities were designed to foster “unity and obedience, endurance, and a sense of duty” (Papenko, 2015, p. 71). The broad masses of the Ukrainians were drawn to the “Sokil” education system, as they were impressed by the democratic approach and the contribution to the national self-awareness in general (Papenko, 2016, p. 422). The Ministry for Internal Affairs and the Galician Governorate approved the Charter of the Ukrainian society “Sokil” – “Fire Society “Sokil” only on July 28, 1893. The society changed its primary name in 1908 to “Gymnastics and Fire Society “Sokil””, and from June 1, 1935 – “The Ukrainian Sports Society “Sokil-Batko”” (Korolko & Bordulaniuk, 2017, p. 103).

Taking into account the growing confrontation between the Austro-Hungarian and the Russian Empires and a possible war, the issue on the role of the Ukrainian movement in a possible conflict, or even the possibility of creating the Ukrainian state on an independent basis, also appeared at the beginning of the 20th century. Therefore, the Ukrainian figures consciously began to prepare patriotic and military formations for youth, which would contribute to the Ukrainian ideas establishment and could be the basis for the future struggle for statehood (Bahan, 2023, p. 177). The further formation of the sports and fire-fighting movement in the form of Sokil-Sich societies took place in Galicia in the 1910s (Rapetskyi, 1956, pp. 11–12). The leadership of the Sich movement – the “Ukrainian Sich Union” was headed by Kyrylo Trylovskyi (a co-founder of the first “Sich” in 1990, the village of Zavallia (modern Ivano-Frankivsk region) (Yakymovych, 2012). There was the network of “Sich” and “Sokil” as the academic youth carried out significant work on the military patriotic education. According to K. Trylovsky’s project, the Galician Governorate eventually granted approval for the organisational registration of the society “The Ukrainian Sich Riflemen” on March 18, 1913, marking the third attempt at the legal registration. An eminent public figure Volodymyr Starosolskyi became the koshevyi, and Dmytro Katamai (later on –

Ivan Chmola) became the osavul (Trylovskiy, 1999, p. 57). Another rifle organization was created, which was called “Sich Riflemen II” at the beginning of 1914. According to the recollections of the contemporaries, the key difference between these groups was only that the “Sich Riflemen I” considered itself a school of officers, while the “Sich Riflemen II”, considered itself an organization of private soldiers and a revolutionary army as there were students and high school youth (led by Roman Dashkevych), (Zinkevych, 1974, p. 100). Owing to the assistance of the leadership of the “Sich Riflemen II”, there was carried out a comprehensive development of its members, in particular, they conducted military training, taught fire-fighting (Bahan, 2023, pp. 178–179). It should be noted that the network of “Sich” and “Sokil” grew, in particular, as of 1914, there were 967 “Sokil” organizations in Western Ukraine, 1056 – “Sich” (Lazarovych, 2005, pp. 51–54).

The Review of Recent Research and Publications. Taking into account a significant role of the societies in the national consciousness development of the Ukrainians, the following contemporaries studied the issue on the history of the Sokil and Sich societies formation and spread – Stepan Ripetskyi (Ripetskyi, 1956), Ivan Krypiakievych (Krypiakievych, Hnatevych & Stefaniv, 1992), Vasyl Fedorchak (Fedorchak, 1935), Ivan Boberskyi (Boberskyi, 1939) and the others). There were published publications during the time of independent Ukraine, which were mainly devoted to the Ukrainian fire-sports movement in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th centuries. The studies by Ihor Andruhiv (Andruhiv, 1994), Bohdan Koverka should be singled out among them (Koverko, 1997, pp. 62–74). There were carried out comprehensive studies on the Sokil organizations as an important part of the Ukrainian sports and gymnastics movement by the following scholars: A. Blahitka (1996), Oksana Vatsaba (1997), Andriy Sova (Sova & Tymchak, 2017; Sova & Romaniuk, 2019, pp. 71–80; Sova, 2022, pp. 104–112); the Sich movement was studied by Mykola Huivaniuk (Huivaniuk, 2009), A. Kovalenko (Kovalenko, 1992, pp. 18–22), Ivan Homa (Homa, 2011), Mykola Lazarovych (Lazarovych, 2005). There is no comprehensive study on this issue despite the large number of studies on the Sich-Rifle movement, its work in the field of patriotic and sports education of youth, and its fire-fighting activities, with the exception of the work written by S. Popovych (Popovych, 2006).

The purpose of the research is to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the fire-fighting activities of the Ukrainian Sich-Sokil societies after World War I under the conditions of the ban on the activities of the Sich rykhanka-fire society.

The Results of the Research. The activity of voluntary firefighting in Galicia dates back to the period of the Habsburg monarchy. In 1867, the law “On Societies” was adopted, which stipulated that public organizations are voluntary associations that do not have political goals, but are created to solve social, charitable and other tasks. The management of the National Union of Volunteer Firefighters (KSDP) issued the resolution in 1901 on the regulation of relations between the professional and voluntary fire departments. However, the volunteer firefighters were responsible for providing assistance, because these settlements were unable to maintain a paid fire service in small cities and towns. Modernization processes contributed to urbanization. Taking into consideration the growth in the number of cities, the number of fires also increased, so the issue on standardizing existing legislative norms regarding fire safety became urgent. Due to insufficient funding and a small number of firefighters, the Regional Department (the executive body of the Galician Regional Diet) obliged the communities of cities and towns to establish voluntary fire brigades. It was stated in the circular of the Galician Governor on February 15, 1904, as well as the “Agreement on the Patronage of the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine over Voluntary Fire Brigades”, issued by the Galician Governorate on July 23, 1904 (Hontar, 2015, pp. 347–348). In 1911, the

regional branch in Lviv regulated the organization of fire protection partially. A circular to the powiat (county) branches declared that “the voluntary fire protection in cities and towns, which performs the duties of the commune fire service, is obliged to constantly... provide fire service” (Przewodnik Pozarniczy, 1911, pp. 54–57).

The Ukrainian scholar Natalia Vovchasta, who studies the formation of firefighting movement in Western Ukrainian territories, noted that after the restoration of independence, the Polish state had limited institutional and financial capabilities to organize a firefighting service. In parallel with the state institutions that ensured fire safety, at the request of the Ministry for Internal Affairs in 1921, the “Florian Union” (founded in 1916) was reformatted into the “Union of Fire Protection of the Polish Commonwealth” (Vovchasta, 2012, p. 41). According to a scholar Zoriana Hontar the legislative framework for fire protection remained imperfect during the interwar period. After all, initially its basis was legislative acts that were adopted before the legislative formalization of the independence of the Polish Republic, or temporary laws of 1919 – 1920. This imperfect legislation reduced the effectiveness of the fire protection greatly, did not take into account the peculiarities of the region. There were partial improvements, which occurred only in 1934 – on March 13, the Sejm adopted the law “On Protection from Fires and Other Natural Disasters”, which entered into force on November 18 (Ustawa o ochronie przed pozarami i innymi klęskami, 1934).

World War I and later on the Polish-Ukrainian War made significant adjustments to the activities of the Ukrainian national cultural societies. A significant part of the figures from their ranks joined the armed struggle in the interests of the Ukrainian state – they joined the Legion of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, and later on also the Ukrainian Galician Army. The order was issued by Ivan Boberskyi, the head of “Sokil-Batka” and a member of the Ukrainian Combat Board, which was called “To all branches of “Sich” and “Sokil”” with an appeal to join the Legion of the USS (Hayduchok, 1996, p. 90). There were more than 25 thousand members of the youth associations from Western Ukrainian territories, who responded to this call (Ripetskyi, 1956, p. 76).

The Polish administration establishment occurred in Galicia in the 1920s, despite the challenges and obstacles from the authorities, there was a gradual restoration of the organizational and practical activities of the Sokil-Sich societies, among which fire protection occupied an important place.

The former leaders of the “Sokil” decided to restore the society. The first meeting was held in Lviv on November 10, 1920, as a result, a lawyer and public figure Stepan Shukhevych as the Chairman was elected, and later on – Mykhailo Voloshyn. On April 23, 1923, the general meeting of the society was held and the head was Myron Zayachkivskyi, hence, and a new leadership was elected. The above-mentioned meeting gave impetus to the further restoration of the societies network, in general, according to the calculations of a scholar Yevhen Papenko, in 1922 – 1923, the Foreman held 37 meetings, at which 486 issues were resolved, 276 new members were accepted. In 1926, a new Charter of the society was approved, in which the main emphasis was placed on the fire and rukhanka activity of the society, so that it would be approved by the Polish authorities (officially approved on November 1, 1927) (Papenko, 2017, pp. 141–149).

The activities of the “Firefighters Section” were extremely important for the expansion of the societies network. The “Firefighters Section” of the “Sokil-Batko” organized the first post-war fire-fighting course for the Ukrainians, residents of Galicia already on May 9–14, 1922. The programme for this event was prepared by a public figure Stepan Haiduchok: he divided it into two parts – the theoretical part and practical part. There were lectures conducted and practical classes in firefighting. At the same time, the programme included issues on the “organizational state, tasks, goals and ideology of the Ukrainian Sokil organization”. The

activities of the Ukrainian Sokil societies were prohibited during the period of a significant growth of the national consciousness and at the beginning of the pacification reforms in 1930. The Polish administration prohibited the approval of the statutory documents of the Ukrainian Sokil and Luh societies, which operated on the basis of fire-fighting principles from 1935. The decision was dictated by the law on the “Union of Fire Guards” adopted by the Ministry for Internal Affairs on January 14, 1935. As a result, at the end of 1935, only 182 Sokil societies cells remained in Galicia, compared to 586 in 1929 (Papenko, 2017, pp. 154–155).

In the summer of 1921, the OSS activists, among whom Roman Dashkevych played an active role, held a general meeting in the premises of the “Zoria” society, which put forward the idea to restore the “Povitova Sich”. On January 22, 1922, the General Meeting of Lviv “Povitovaya Sich” was held in Lviv with the participation of 50 pre-war Sich activists. During the General Meeting, a new leadership of the society was approved: the Koshevyi – Roman Dashkevych, the Osaul – Yuriy Otmarshtayn; the clerk – M. Marenin (Bahán, 2024, pp. 119–120). The last step in the organizational restoration of the “Sich” was the massive fire-fighting courses, held in the spring of 1922 in the “Sokil-Batka” hall (Kyrychuk, 1993, p. 42). The first powiat Sich holiday took place in June of 1922, which aroused interest in society. Owing to R. Dashkevych’s assistance, the “Sich Visti” was restored – the printed organ of the society (Nahirniak, 2016, p. 120). The first issue of the periodical outlined the ideological direction of the society and its areas of activity: The “Sich Visti” is a completely non-party organisation, which is not associated with the party programme of a political party or any political and social grouping. Our main call is: to foster a healthy spirit among the younger generation of the nation, to develop and spread education, to organize Sich gymnastic and firefighting societies, to provide assistance in case of fires, and further – to awaken admiration for physical exercises and athletic games, and to support sociable life, discipline and discipline” (Nashi zavdannia, 1922). The editorial office also posted calls for the resumption of work (Do pratsi, Vidnovluyte Sichi, 1922, pp. 2–4), and R. Dashkevych published the article “How to Restore Sich Societies” with specific instructions (Dashkevych, 1922, pp. 4–6; Bahán, 2024, p. 122).

The issue on the fire protection was raised in the next second issue of the “Sichovi Visti”. It is emphasized in the extensive article “How to Protect yourself from Fire? Sichovyky are Fire Watchmen” that the danger of fire increases closer to summer period, in particular due to the preoccupation of the peasants and due to thatched roofing material. The importance of preventive measures was noted – the formation of “...a ready organization, whose civic duty would be to rush to the aid of a burning building so that the fire in it would end and not spread further”. The gymnastics and fire society “Sich” was that type of organization, which helped, hence, young people should join its ranks. It was also noted that for the effective operation of the new “Sich” its main task in the field is the purchase of “sykavka” (fire pumps), constant training with them, or, in the absence of “sykavka”, the Sichovyky should practise with “konovka” (buckets). Attention was drawn to the importance of having special equipment in each cell of the society two or three two-wheeled barrels in order to deliver water in time; tools that are needed for dismantling, clearing the area from burning buildings and trees (Yak okhronyty sebe pered pozharom, 1922, pp. 10–11).

The administrative and political leadership of Warsaw averted the spread of the revived “Sich Gymnastics and Fire Society” in Eastern Galicia, as it decided to consider these “Sich” organizations to be invalid due to the formal absence of the societies approved statutes. Despite the ban, the Powiat Sich submitted the statutory societies for consideration by the administration on the behalf of several villages. However, due to the military nature of the offered formation, the authorities refused registration, and certain adjustments to the statutes

did not help. The last Sich holiday took place in June of 1923, and the rukhanka and vocal event in the winter of 1923 (Nahirmiak, 2016, p. 128).

In the autumn of 1925, the “Sich” district association, at the active insistence of R. Dashkevych, again submitted to the local authorities in Galicia three draft statutes of motor and fire companies – “Sich”, “Luh”, “Bratstvo” (Svarnyk & Feloniuk, 2009, p. 325; Bahan & Stetsiv, 2022, p. 146). Lviv Voivode approved the statute only of the “Luh” company in the village of Pidberizki, Lviv voivodeship. There developed a network of “Luh” companies in 1925, in particular, according to the scholar A. Bahan, more than 200 companies appeared in the villages of Galicia during the specified period, and in 1926 – 600 (Shumskyi, 2004, p. 148; Bahan, 2023, p. 195).

The “Luh” Sports and Fire Society carried the traditions of the “Sich”. It was a sports and fire-fighting society officially, but it was a patriotic and educational centre for the young people mainly, who were being prepared for the future struggle regarding the Ukrainian statehood (Krezubskyi, 2020, p. 64). The structure of the new society had a three-tiered form, the main leadership operated in Lviv, there were also district “Luh” and societies in the fields. The “Luh” society followed a paramilitary structure in terms of its ideological and structural orientation, as it conducted shooting and military training for its personnel (Shumskyi, 2004, p. 150).

R. Dashkevych devoted an important place to the statutory design of the “rukhanka society and fire watch “Lug””, which had the following goals: “I. Humanitarian: 1. Providing assistance in case of fires; 2. providing assistance in case of floods; II. Cultural and educational: 1. Spreading enlightenment among members; 2. Spreading love of exercises and sports games; 3. Maintaining social life”. The fire appliances were purchased and maintained in order to achieve the outlined goals, as well as means for rescuing people in case of floods; the society members were taught to use them, practical training was conducted in extinguishing fires, localizing fires, and rescuing in case of floods; public lectures, concerts, courses for the illiterate were organized; reading rooms were maintained, etc. (Bahan, 2024, pp. 126–127).

There were held “Fire and rukhanka” courses and “Luh” festivals, similarly to those in the Sich centres for the practical training of personnel mainly. The courses usually followed the following programme: 1) firefighting theory; 2) exercises with a fire pump; 3) rukhanka exercises; 4) how to conduct work in the society. The cultural and educational programme was an integral part of the courses, in particular, the essays presentation on the Ukrainian history. At the same time, the leadership of the “Luh” society always noted that, in addition to teaching rukhanka exercises and firefighting, the society also has “great cultural, educational and pedagogical tasks” (Vynnychuk, 1999, p. 187).

It should be noted that during the second half of the 1920s, the “Luh” society network expanded actively, despite the opposition of the Polish authorities, who refused to register new branches. However, in 1930 – 1932, after the “pacification actions,” a large number of organizations virtually ceased to exist (Fedorchak, 1935, p. 10). According to a scholar Oleh Vynnychuk, 600 societies were liquidated in 1930 – 1932, and about 500 remained active. It should be also noted that there were negotiations between the “Luh” leadership and the Ministry for Internal Affairs regarding the further format of the society existence in 1932. The authorities declared that the organization could not exist in the same form as it had existed until that time, so “either it would change its Charter to a physical education and sports society and would be subject to the Government of Physical Education and Military Training,” or it would become a purely fire-fighting society. After discussions, the society’s leadership chose a “physical education and sports” direction, and so it officially received the name “Ukrainian Physical Education and Sports Society “Luh”” (Vynnychuk, 1999, p. 190).

The Conclusions. The interwar period of the 20th century became the period of significant challenges for the Ukrainians of Eastern Galicia, caused by geopolitical changes after World War I and the defeat of the liberation struggle in Naddnpiarianshchyna, the Polish-Ukrainian War. There was a restoration and partly reorientation of the methods that encouraged the civil society to take active actions aimed at protecting their national interests under the conditions of the introduction of Polish power in the region. The sports and firefighting societies played an important role in the work of building the national self-determination, patriotic education of the youth. Despite the bureaucratic, institutional, and later on the political opposition of the Polish administration, the “Sich-Sokil” societies restored the network of their societies gradually at the beginning of the 1920s. Despite the de facto ban on the “Sich” movement and firefighting societies, a new organization with a similar ideology was created – “Luh”. The most significant challenge for the activities of the national cultural societies, including sports and firefighting societies, was a complex of “pacification” measures, which ultimately significantly reduced their number and activity of figures. Taking into account the conditions of an imperfect legislative framework and permanent financial problems, the issue on ensuring fire protection not only in cities but also in small settlements was acute. The activity of voluntary fire brigades operating within the fire-fighting and gymnastics societies demonstrated their high efficiency in ensuring fire safety. The “Sich”, “Sokil”, and later “Luh” societies became important centres for teaching not only theory, but also practical methods of fighting fire and eliminating the consequences of fires. The “Fire-rukhanka” courses, Sich and Luh holidays were held mainly for the purpose of the national and patriotic education and at the same time for training personnel.

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