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Occupation and Local Government Administration in Kielce during World War I

Administracja okupacyjna i samorządowa w Kielcach w czasie I wojny światowej

• Abstract •

The political situation of the inhabitants of Kielce changed with the hostilities of World War I. In the Military General Government of Lublin, on August 18, 1916, a regulation was issued regarding the local government system in 34 cities of the Austrian occupation, including Kielce. The announcement of elections to the city council in 1916 accelerated the city inhabitants' political maturation process. When the Kielce City Council was established in January 1917, it became a vital civic institution that contributed significantly to the increase in the inhabitants' social, economic and political activity. Then, the city government was an organized representation towards the occupation authorities, actively working to improve the living conditions of the city inhabitants. National and state demands were formulated at the City Council forum. Many councilors at that time, after regaining independence, actively participated in the local government life of Kielce in 1918–1939.

Keywords: local government; elections; councilors; political parties

• Abstrakt •

Wraz z działaniami wojennymi I wojny światowej zmianie ulegała sytuacja polityczna mieszkańców Kielc. Na terenie Generalnego Gubernatorstwa Lubelskiego 18 sierpnia 1916 r. zostało wydane rozporządzenie dotyczące ustroju samorządu w 34 miastach okupacji austriackiej, w tym w Kielcach. Ogłoszenie wyborów do rady miejskiej w 1916 r. przyspieszyło proces dojrzewania politycznego mieszkańców miasta. Z chwilą ukonstytuowania się Rady Miejskiej Kielc w styczniu 1917 r. stała się ona niezwykle ważną obywatelską instytucją, która walczyła o przyczynienie się do wzrostu aktywności społecznej, gospodarczej i politycznej mieszkańców. Ówczesny samorząd miejski był wobec władz okupacyjnych zorganizowaną reprezentacją, aktywnie działającą na rzecz polepszenia warunków życia mieszkańców miasta. Na forum Rady Miasta formułowano postulaty narodowe i państwowe. Wielu ówczesnych radnych po odzyskaniu niepodległości aktywnie uczestniczyło w życiu samorządowym Kielc w latach 1918–1939.

Słowa kluczowe: samorząd; wybory; radni; partie polityczne

The article: *Occupation and Local Government Administration in Kielce during World War I* was based on archival sources deposited in the State Archives in Kielce (or APK), in the following groups: the Files of the City of Kielce (or AmK), the Kielce's Governorate Review (or OKG), and compact studies. Newspaper articles published in *Gazeta Kielecka* [Kielce Newspaper] and *Ziemia Kielecka* [Kielce Land] were a valuable supplement to the information.

In the article, the author used an empirical method, focused on analyzing the impact of legal acts and activities of administrative bodies on political representation in the Kielce municipal government in the years 1914–1918.

In the years 1885–1914, the number of inhabitants in Kielce increased almost threefold (2.8), from 14,485 in 1885 to 40,728 in 1914. The first significant increase in population occurred in the years 1885–1890 and it can be associated with the completion of the railway line construction. The next one occurred after 1905, and the high growth rate continued until the outbreak of the First World War. Economic factors did not determine this, because the industry in Kielce did not create new jobs then. This is illustrated, among others, by the share of workers indicator in the total population. In 1909, it amounted to 1.13%, and three years later, it increased by only 0.01%, reaching 1.14%. The decisive factor in the development of Kielce before the First World War was its role as an administrative centre (APK, OKG, Sign. 1885, 1890, 1895, 1900, 1905, 1910, 1914).

After the outbreak of the war, the tsarist authorities did not change their policy towards the Polish population. When the situation on the front changed to their disadvantage, the Russians, by the resolution of the Council of Ministers of March 17, 1915, extended to the Kingdom of Poland the Russian city statute of 1892 ensuring limited self-government, which was not implemented because in 1915 they had to withdraw from the Kingdom of Poland as a result of the spring-summer offensive of the Central Powers (Kallas, 2007, pp. 64–65).

In May 1915, German troops entered Kielce. One of the first decisions of the occupation authorities was to establish the Citizens' Militia to maintain order and security in the city. The Kielce City Hall, established by the new Austrian occupation authorities on August 15, 1915, introduced the City Police instead of the Citizens' Militia. The project to develop the City Police was adopted on August 28, 1915, and a police department was also established at the city hall. In September 1915, Germany and Austria-Hungary took over the entire territory of the Kingdom of Poland, dividing it into two occupation zones. They were administered by two general governorates: Warsaw (German) and Lublin (Austrian) (Kallas, 2007, pp. 64–65).

The Austrian authorities also established an Advisory Committee composed of ten citizens to support the work of the city hall. It included well-known Kielce

lawyers, doctors, and a teacher, who represented all basic political orientations in the city. It was chaired by B. Markowski and included S. Dobrzyński (secretary), J. Filipkowski, H. Frejsyngier, Cz. Kalinowski, T. Kostuch, R. Kozłowski, E. Nawroczyński, S. Tomaszewski, and M. Zawadzki. M. Kozłowski was the first mayor of Kielce appointed by the Austrian authorities, and the city secretary, T. Poborowski, was his deputy. The municipal office consisted of a secretariat and eight departments: administrative and economic, military, treasury, sanitary, technical, school, provision, and police. At the beginning of 1916, the number of departments was reduced to five: economic, fiscal, sanitary, police, and commissioned activities. At the same time, the composition of the Advisory Committee was increased by two people. The city authorities organized in this way dealt with the city economy until the turn of 1916 and 1917, i.e., until the establishment of the Municipal Council of Kielce (Guldon & Massalski, 2000, pp. 301, 302).

According to the regulations of the Commander-in-Chief of August 18, 1916, regarding the municipal ordinance for Kielce, Lublin, Piotrków, and Radom and the rules regarding the municipal ordinance for the remaining 34 cities of the Austrian occupation, the decision-making bodies of municipal self-government were to be city councils, depending on the number of inhabitants, consisting of from 24 up to 60 councilors (Lewandowski, 1980, pp. 80, 81). According to the regulation, a member of a municipal commune was anyone who was a citizen of the Kingdom of Poland and lived within the city. At the same time, the occupation authorities stipulated that citizens of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy or its allies, as well as officers and military officers of the board of occupation authorities operating in cities, would be exempt from municipal contributions. The city council represented the urban community and was managed by a city board consisting of the city president, two vice-presidents, and six councilors. The election of the president and vice-presidents had to be approved by the General Government of Lublin. In its stead, the city president and the vice-presidents headed the city board and municipal offices and chaired the city council. The scope of activities of the city council included caring for the city economy, the health of the commune inhabitants, and culture. This was to be expressed through the management of municipal assets, protection and development of trade and industry, provision of food for the population, construction and maintenance of roads, lighting, taking care of the health and sanitary condition of the city, etc. The city council could request or issue opinions on all matters relating to the municipality. These were a wide range of powers granted to city councils. However, the deciding vote belonged to the General Government of Lublin, which reserved the right to approve resolutions regarding changes to the city's boundaries and regulations, budget estimates, matters relating to municipal property and its

burdens above 20,000 crowns, and tax rates. The occupation authorities were to be informed about all city council resolutions regarding the commune inhabitants. The magistrate was appointed to implement resolutions and orders of the city council and the Austro-Hungarian occupation administration on an ongoing basis (*Ziemia Kielecka*, 1916, No. 36).

The term of office of city councils and city boards was to last three years from the announcement date of the results. The General Government reserved the right to dissolve city councils before the end of their term of office and to dismiss city boards or their members. Supervision over the work of the city government rested with the Imperial and Royal District Command. The official language was to be Polish, but it was stipulated that all matters and applications were to be handled equally in German. The electoral law divided the city inhabitants into five curiae. The first group included people with higher education, the second group included merchants and industrialists, the third group included real estate owners, the fourth group included those who paid housing tax for at least a year, and the fifth group included other citizens. Women did not have active or passive voting rights. The Kielce municipality prepared voter lists based on a one-day population census on October 15, 1916 (36,132 people, not counting the army and Austrian officials). In November, *Ziemia Kielecka* [Kielce Land] provided the number of eligible voters in Kielce (according to religion) in individual curiae. The first numbered 105 Catholics and 2 Jews; the second, 749 Catholics and 922 Jews; the third, 386 Catholics and 110 Jews; the fourth, 86 Catholics and 38 Jews; the fifth, 1,871 Catholics and 1,224 Jews, in total, in the five curiae entitled to vote there were 3,197 Catholics and 2,296 Jews (*Ziemia Kielecka*, 1916, Nos. 37, 47; Pazdur, 1971, pp. 92, 93; Guldon & Massalski, 2000, p. 302).

Three electoral lists were created, two Polish and one Jewish, called “A”, “B”, and “C”. The Central Electoral Committee (or CKW) gathered supporters of National Democracy – the “A” list. On the second Polish list – “B” – was the National Democratic Electoral Committee, also called the Democratic Committee (or KD), which was established by the Polish Workers’ Committee of the Polish Socialist Party (or PPS) with the participation of the Industrialists’ Club and independence organizations. The Jewish community, not finding a common electoral platform with the other committees, put forward its own list – “C” (Pazdur, 1971, p. 94).

The electoral committees established reflected the political and nationalistic divisions existing in the city at that time. Due to the large Jewish population in Kielce (1915 – 14,794), the Central Electoral Committee attempted to create one Polish list for the city council. Representatives of municipal (Polish) social and cultural organizations were invited to the organizational meeting. The failure to invite

representatives of the leftist community prevented an attempt at electoral consolidation of Kielce's inhabitants of Polish nationality under the patronage of the Central Electoral Committee. The response of the leftist circles was the establishment of the above-mentioned KD (*Ziemia Kielecka*, 1916, No. 53; Urbański, 2003, pp. 43, 44).

The election campaign took place in an extremely heated atmosphere. There was a consolidation of individual political and social groups taking part in the elections. There were also spectacular political declarations, such as the pastoral letter of the Bishop of Kielce, A. Łosiński, which caused outrage from leftist circles. Franciszek Loeffler in *Ziemia Kielecka* [Kielce Land] described Bishop A. Łosiński's pastoral letter as a fact that "does not withstand criticism from either the theological or ethical point of view". F. Loeffler stated that it was unacceptable in the pastoral letter to call for voting only for the CKW list, which it called "democratic and national", while prohibiting, under pain of grave sin, voting for the "socialist" list. The CKW members' exerting economic pressure on voters was considered unacceptable. In December 1916, the inhabitants of Kielce elected members of the City Council. The curial electoral law as well as the strong economic position favored the groups associated with the CKW, which won the elections by introducing 26 councilors from the "A" list to the City Council. There were 15 councilors from the "C" list of the Jewish Election Committee, and 9 councilors from the "B" list of the KD (*Ziemia Kielecka*, 1916, No. 53).

The political cross-section of the elected Mayor of the City Council was a derivative of the political situation that occurred in the lands of the Kingdom of Poland occupied by the Central Powers. The victorious CKW was dominated by supporters of the National Democracy. Supporters of this political option belonged to a group with a high social status, thanks to which they had good contact with the occupation authorities, which they used to influence the economic policy of the occupiers (Lewandowski, 1980, pp. 65–68).

After the elections, the KD coalition was divided into the National Workers' Union (or NZR), PPS, and the independence group, as a result of which five clubs were established in the City Council: CKW, NZR, PPS, independence groups, and the Jewish community of Kielce. In November 1917, councilors of NZR and Christian Democracy established the Polish Workers' Circle (or PKR) in the City Council and established the workers' secretariat. PKR aimed to unite all workers' groups, regardless of party affiliation, to defend their interests. At the inaugural meeting of the City Council in January 1917, representatives of political groups made their programme declarations (APK, AmK, Sign. 1273, pp. 424, 425).

The inaugural meeting of the City Council took place on January 24, 1917, in the hall of the Mutual Credit Society, which was preceded by a solemn service. The

meeting was opened by representatives of the occupation authorities in the presence of whom the newly elected mayor of the city, G. Bukowiński, and his deputies, M. Gacki and M. Łukasiewicz, took the oath, followed by the remaining councilors. The Exposé was delivered by the mayor of the city, G. Bukowiński, who stated that thanks to the establishment of the city government, cooperation between all classes of Polish society in building progress will be possible, and Kielce should play a leading role in the Kielce region, both culturally and economically. Recognizing the Provisional Council of State (or TRS) as the legal state authority of the Kingdom of Poland, G. Bukowiński listed the main tasks facing the City Council in the economic and social fields. He included: creating rational financial management of the city; development of primary and vocational education; investments improving the sanitary and health condition of the city; rational development of Kielce by developing the city regulatory plan; municipalization of public utilities. He also pointed to the urgent need to help the city's poorest residents through, among others, organizing public works. President G. Bukowiński concluded his speech by paying tribute to "the national heroes" (APK, AmK, Sign. 1273, pp. 13, 14; *Gazeta Kielecka*, 1917, No. 19).

NZR declaration made by K. Wodzinowski emphasized the convergence of the interests of workers with other social groups of the Polish nation. This was to be expressed in the fight of the "nationally conscious" working class in the ranks of the Polish army, which it had been fighting since 1914 under the leadership of J. Piłsudski for independent Poland. The declaration stated that NZR, despite "misery and hunger", expected TRS to give a signal to fight against "Moscow" for an independent Polish state. As for its role in the Kielce City Council, NZR saw it in working to build the foundations of an independent existence, taking into account the "interests of the working class". The most urgent task of the City Council, according to NZR, should be to abolish the occupation borders, rebuild the economy, create jobs for the unemployed, and provide housing, food and fuel for the poorest (*Gazeta Kielecka*, 1917, No. 21).

The declaration of "socialist workers' representatives" in the City Council presented by F. Loeffler had a decidedly left-wing character, corresponding to the PPS programme. His political demands included, among others: the demand to convene a legislative parliament, introduce a five-adjective electoral law and the entire catalogue of political and social freedoms. When it comes to the urban economy, the socialist councilors were in favor of providing help to the poorest through free distribution of food, fighting against high prices and speculation, organizing public works, etc. The declaration stated that the socialist councilors did not want to limit themselves only to criticism and remaining in opposition, but through their

participation in the city management and city institutions, they actively participated in solving problems (*Gazeta Kielecka*, 1917, No. 22).

Jewish councilors belonging to various political trends also presented a joint declaration at the City Council. In the introduction, they emphasized the centuries-long coexistence of Poles and Jews on Polish lands and their deep respect for their common homeland and Polish culture. They expressed their will to cooperate with all those who want the successful development of the urban economy and thus the development of the country. It was emphasized in the declaration that the urban economy should be based on democratic principles, rejecting all class and religious privileges, corruption and patronage. Jewish councilors declared that they would support only such actions of the City Council that would aim at a fair distribution of the contributions to the city. They voted for better provision in the city, the fight against poverty and infectious diseases, as well as the creation of jobs and wide access to education. The need for equal rights for all nationalities in access to public care, education and work was mentioned. The inaugural meeting of the City Council was celebrated by Jewish councilors with a solemn service in the synagogue of the Israelite Community, in which invited members of the City Council presidium also participated (*Gazeta Kielecka*, 1917, Nos. 21, 22).

The competences of the city government excluded its political activity. However, they could not be indifferent to the prevailing political situation. On various occasions, councilors, mainly socialists and those of the independence movement, submitted political motions, which were immediately rejected by the chairman of the City Council, arguing that it was necessary to maintain the apolitical nature of the city government (APK, AmK, Sign. 1273, pp. 174, 209, 210). The anniversaries of 1917 were an occasion for political speeches. In order to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of T. Kościuszko's death, the City Council decided to appoint a special commission to prepare the programme of the ceremony. Its members included: L. Knichowiecki, K. Szubert, A. Jakóbkiewicz, J. Kotowski, and A. Wilner. At the same time, the City Council resolved to restore Tadeusz Street to its previous name – Tadeusz Kościuszko Street – and to purchase a fragment of the square adjacent to it in order to place an obelisk there commemorating the place where T. Kościuszko camped in 1794. The obelisk was consecrated on October 21, 1917, and despite minor disruptions, the ceremony took place in a solemn patriotic atmosphere (APK, AmK, Sign. 1273, pp. 311, 312, 377, 424, Sign. 1269, pp. 67, 73, 75).

The most emotional event was the celebration of the 126th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of May 3, which electrified political parties and factions in the city, largely due to the attitude of the Catholic Church. When, at the meeting of the City Council, eight councilors submitted a motion to establish a committee to

celebrate the anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of May 3, the mayor of the city read a letter from the Bishop's Curia in Kielce to the City Council, in which the church informed about its organization of the celebration of the anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of May 3 on May 6 (Sunday) dedicated to Our Lady Queen of the Polish Crown. The celebrations were to consist of a "supplication" service and a "national-religious" procession in which the entire clergy of the Kielce diocese, headed by the bishop, and the faithful were to participate. Setting the celebrations for May 6, according to the Church, was to create the opportunity for as many "Poles-Catholics" from the city and the countryside as possible to participate in the celebrations. At the same time, it was announced that the National Catholic Committee for the Celebration of May 3 and 6 had been established to organize those celebrations (APK, AmK, Sign. 1273, p. 120, Sign. 1269, p. 1).

The proclamation read by the president was a surprise for left-wing and independence councilors, as was the information that the president and several councilors were members of the National Church Committee for the Celebration of May 3 and 6. Councilor R. Cichowski asked directly whether the Bishop of Kielce wanted to prevent the celebration of the Third of May. T. Kostuch, however, stated that May 3 is a celebration of cities for which the May Constitution created a chance for rebirth, and the current Kielce City Council, as the first civic institution resulting from free elections, should be the main organizer. Despite the heated discussion, voices calling for compromise prevailed, including: socialist councilor F. Loeffler, who believed that although the initiative to organize the celebration should be secular, he was happy that the clergy would celebrate May 3. B. Markowski informed the City Council that at the conference of the Polish School Motherland it was decided to start the celebration of May 3 on May 3 with a service for students, this day was to be free from classes. He also proposed that the anniversary celebrations would begin on May 3 with a ceremonial meeting of the City Council and an academy and end on May 6 with participation in church celebrations. Explaining the situation, the president said that the celebrations on May 6 organized by the Church were not intended to prevent the celebration of the holiday on May 3. Due to the compromise, the City Council decided to establish a committee for the celebration of May 3, composed of councilors: T. Kostuch, B. Markowski, F. Loeffler, R. Kozłowski, S. Dobrzański, and E. Fankanowski (APK, AmK, Sign. 1273, p. 121).

Pursuant to a resolution, on April 21, the councilors established their own Municipal Committee for the Celebration of the Anniversary of the Constitution of May 3. The Church did not invite groups and organizations associated with the leftist and independence movement to participate in the "national-religious" march. The City Committee appealed to the National Catholic Committee for the Celebration

of May 3 and 6 asking to include the participation of all interested people in the procession, emphasizing that such decisions deepen the division in society, which must be united like never before. The response of the National Catholic Committee was clear that the service and the procession were of a religious nature, excluding any politics, i.e., the participation of organized delegations of parties, groups and political organizations. According to the National Catholic Committee, this did not exclude the possibility of individual participation of Catholics in the procession (APK, AmK, Sign. 1269, pp. 3, 4, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21).

Given the situation, the celebration of May 3, organized by the City Council on May 3, became more important. The Municipal Committee invited all municipal social organizations, political groups, schools and representatives of the Jewish community. The May 3 celebrations began with a ceremonial meeting of the City Council with the participation of invited delegations, after which everyone went to the city garden, where – under the monument of S. Staszic – tribute to him was paid. The Jewish community organized a solemn service in the local synagogue as part of the celebration of May 3. The celebrations in the city garden were disrupted by PPS activists who used the celebrations for political agitation. At its meeting on May 10, the City Council expressed disapproval of such actions, stating that “national” holidays should be free from political agitation and have a “cross-party” character (APK, AmK, Sign. 1273, pp. 125, 129, 134; Sign. 1269, pp. 41, 42, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 59, 61, 63).

The news about the provisions of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk caused an unprecedented wave of indignation and protests among all the city’s inhabitants, regardless of political orientation and nationality. The City Council decisively and forcefully condemned this treaty at an extraordinary meeting. Jewish councilors also joined the protest. With each month of 1918, the temperature of political and social life increased due to the fight for independence and radicalization of moods. In October 1918, due to the disintegration of Austria-Hungary, events accelerated rapidly. At the City Council meeting on October 30, left-wing councilors put forward a motion to hold new elections to the City Council based on the five-adjective electoral law. Workers’ rallies that took place in the city at that time formulated demands towards the City Council, demanding, among other things, decisive actions for the poorest inhabitants of Kielce as well as a boycott of the orders of the occupation authorities. In Kielce, on November 1, the City Police and Polish paramilitary organizations began to disarm Austrian soldiers (*Gazeta Kielecka*, 1918, Nos. 19, 20).

The first constitutive meeting of the newly elected City Council took place in the hall of the Kielce Mutual Credit Society on December 27, 1916. The atmosphere surrounding the meeting of the City Council was solemn. The meeting was opened

by the Electoral Commissioner, Starost Dr. T. Konecki, who confirmed its validity and then raised the cry “Long live Poland”, repeated by everyone gathered in the room. The incumbent mayor of the city, M. Kozłowicz, was the chairman of the meeting. The first to speak was B. Markowski, who discussed the goals and tasks of the city government and presented proposals for organizing work of the municipality. He also presented the remuneration project and the method of arranging the city budget. After the discussion, the City Council voted on the motions submitted by councilor B. Markowski and the amount of remuneration (in rubles): the president – 2,400, the vice president – 1,500, the head of the treasury department – 1,500, the lay judges and the head of the administrative and sanitary department – 1,500 (APK, AmK, Sign. 1273, pp. 1–3, 5, 6).

The president was elected at the third constitutive meeting of the City Council on January 3, 1917. As a result of the vote, G. Bukowiński received 32 votes and his opponent S. Frycz – 16 votes. In his first speech, G. Bukowiński, thanking for the election, declared that he was taking up his duties under the slogan of “work for the good of the city”. At the same time, he expressed hope that in this task he would be able to count on the help of the councilors, whose unity and consent would contribute to surviving the difficult times in which the established City Council was to operate. Then, the first vice-president was elected, M. Gacki, and M. Łukasiewicz was the second vice-president (APK, AmK, Sign. 1273, pp. 7–11).

Six city councilors were also elected, including three receiving salaries: the attorney S. Tomaszewski (a financial advisor), Dr. B. Laskowski (a sanitary advisor), J. Niepokrzycki (a police advisor), and three councilors performing their functions on an honorary basis: B. Markowski, A. Wilner, and S. Paradistal. The duties of city officials and the procedure for dealing with customers’ matters were also defined. City officials and officers were to handle matters in accordance with the law, without unnecessary difficulties, politely and as quickly as possible. Every customer in the city hall had to be thoroughly informed in an understandable way, and special care had to be given to the poor and “less intelligent”. Officials should consider each case professionally and show a lot of good will and a sense of civic responsibility (APK, AmK, Sign. 1273, pp. 15–18; *Gazeta Kielecka*, 1917, Nos. 19, 20, 21; *Ziemia Kielecka*, 1917, No. 4).

The elected City Council, which had relatively broad competences, had to develop its own procedures and regulations. Appropriate committees were established for this purpose. The first commission to develop the regulations of the City Council and the Magistracy was appointed, consisting of: B. Markowski, T. Kostuch, W. Ciechoński, J. Skórecki, S. Frycz, S. Dobrzański, and H. Lewi. The budget committee responsible for preparing the draft budget estimates included:

B. Markowski, F. Loeffler, K. Wodzinowski, B. Kołtoński (father), P. Jankowski, L. Knichowiecki, J. Nowak, R. Cichowski, and I. Rajzman. The following members joined the state tax commission: J. Barański, S. Dobrzański, R. Kozłowski, J. Nowak, J. Sternfeld, and H. Zagajski. A commission for the assessment of housing tax was also elected, composed of: H. Anszer, C. Gierałtowski, J. Jakubowicz, S. Artwiński, K. Wodzinowski, S. Frycz, and E. Koczanowicz (*Gazeta Kielecka*, 1917, No. 22; *Ziemia Kielecka*, 1917, No. 4).

The scale of the problems overwhelmed the newly established municipal government of Kielce. Therefore, in the first months, long-hour evening meetings of the City Council were held almost every day. Therefore, serving as a councilor required significant personal and material sacrifices. Councilors did not receive allowances, devoting their free time, and often performing their functions was at the expense of working time. In addition to mandatory participation in City Council meetings (unexcused absence was punishable by a financial fine), councilors had to participate in the work of the fixed sections of the City Council and appointed committees. It can be assumed that this was the reason for quite high absenteeism at meetings and the increasing phenomenon of resignation from the councilor's mandate. This gave rise to a procedural problem, because the applicable city ordinance did not contain any provisions or regulations regarding the manner of councilors resigning at their own request during their mandate (APK, AmK, Sign. 1273, pp. 43, 83–86, 129, 133, 134).

An important issue regarding the organization of the work of the City Council was the development of the “basic regulations of sections and commissions” by the regulations committee, which was adopted in February 1917. The City Council was divided into sections that prepared matters falling within their competences for meetings as well as considered and dealt with current matters referred to them by the City Council. The number of sections corresponded to the number of departments in the municipality office. Sections of the City Council performed control functions in relation to the departments and cooperated with them if necessary. Each councilor, except the president and vice-presidents, had to belong to at least one section, which could not consist of more than 10 councilors (APK, AmK, Sign. 1268, pp. 1, 2).

During the elections to individual commissions of the City Council, the consequences of the curial electoral law could be observed, which to some extent transferred the social relations prevailing in Kielce at that time to the city government. An example of this situation could be the elections to the commission for the reorganization of the City Police, where the councilor F. Świtalski protested against the election of M. Gacki as its member, because F. Świtalski believed that “citizens

of the city” and not “random ones” (those who did not own property in the city) should be elected to the commission. These were not isolated cases, as evidenced by the earlier resolution of the City Council to appoint representatives of all curiae when electing councilors to the commission, if possible (APK, AmK, Sign. 1273, pp. 348, 476, 522).

Table 1. The Composition of the Fixed Sections of the City Hall on March 23 in 1917

Sections	Councilors
Activities assigned	W. Ciechoński, M. Jankielewski, J. Kotowski, Z. Niesiołowski, S. Rzeźnicki, K. Szubert
Police	J. Jakóbowicz, E. Koczanowicz, Z. Niesiołowski, S. Rzeźnicki, K. Szubert
Public health	H. Anszer, S. Artwiński, J. Barański, C. Gierałowski, P. Jankowski, B. Laskowski, J. Lewinson, H. Lewi, J. Sternfeld, K. Wodzinowski, F. Świtalski
Treasury	R. Cichowski, L. Knichowiecki, B. Kołtoński, B. Markowski, J. Nowak
Administrative and economic	priest J. Bielecki, J. Bokwa, N. Hasesenbein, B. Kołtoński, W. Krzyżkiewicz, M. Noyszewski, K. Rutkiewicz, K. Sieklucki, A. Wilner
Public charity	S. Dobrzański, E. Fankowski, L. Kohn, priest B. Lipiński, M. Rawicki, A. Wargoń, H. Zagajski
Provision	S. Frycz, T. Kostuch, R. Kozłowski, F. Leoffler, I. Rajzman, S. Rzeźnicki,
Disciplinary	priest J. Bielecki, W. Ciechoński, S. Frycz, B. Kołtoński, K. Sieklucki

Source: APK, AmK, Sign. 1273, pp. 101, 102.

In addition to the fixed sections of the City Council, it could appoint committees to deal with current matters, which operated like sections. The committees had to submit periodic reports on their activities to the City Council. After completing its work, the commission was dissolved at the request of its chairman. Both sections and commissions could co-opt people from among the city citizens and invite experts and appraisers with an advisory vote to their meetings. Sections and commissions had no right to conduct any negotiations or conclude contracts on behalf of the commune (e.g., purchase, sale or exchange of real estate, supplies for the commune). Members of the section and committee performed their duties free of charge, they were only reimbursed for costs related to performing their functions, e.g., travel costs (APK, AmK, Sign. 1268, pp. 3, 4).

The internal organization of the city hall, developed at the end of January 1917, provided for five departments: commissioned activities, police, public health, treasury, and economy. The general office of the magistrate and the president dealt with general matters that were not included in the scope of activities of the established departments (APK, AmK, Sign. 1268, pp. 27–31).

Table 2. Official Positions in Kielce City Hall in 1917

Structure	Official positions			Other positions	Total
	senior	mid-level	entry-level	janitors, service staff, police officers	
General Office of the city hall and the President	1	2	3	3	9
Department I – commissioned activities	1	3	4	4	12
Department II – police	1	3	4	58	66
Department III – public health	1	1	4	6	12
Department IV – treasury	1	6	10	10	27
Department V – economic	1	1	5	9	16
Total	6	16	30	90	142

Source: APK, AmK, Sign. 1268, pp. 18, 19.

The first months of operation verified the structure and organization of work of the city board and municipal offices. The initiative to reorganize work fell to the president of the city, G. Bukowiński. His demands included a ban on councilors taking up paid positions in the area belonging to the city government, replacing paid councilors with officials and developing rules for appointing officials. The president submitted a total of five motions that were accepted by the City Council. As a result of the reorganization of the city board, M. Łukasiewicz became the first vice-president with a salary, and B. Markowski, who did not receive a salary, was elected the second vice-president. M. Gacki, T. Kostuch, and R. Kozłowski were also elected as honorary councilors. As a result of the reorganization of the municipal offices, the economic department was merged with the fiscal department, and the department of commissioned activities was merged with the secretariat into a general department. The sanitary, charity and provision departments were to deal with solving serious problems resulting from the lack of supplies and the sanitary condition of the city. The project of reorganization of the municipal offices was approved by the City Council and recommended to be implemented from January 1, 1918 (APK, AmK, Sign. 1273, pp. 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 379, 380).

As announced, in January 1918, the municipal offices were reorganized. M. Łukasiewicz became the head of the combined economic and financial

department, W. Szydziński was appointed city journalist, E. Rochowski was appointed to keep the books of the permanent population, J. Czarnecki remained the treasurer of the municipal treasury, W. Durniat became the bookkeeper and B. Pytlewski remained a clerk of the charity department (*Gazeta Kielecka*, 1918, No. 6). The main problem in the functioning of the city government in Kielce was low attendance at City Council meetings. Especially in 1918, the frequent lack of quorum paralyzed its work. Inevitably, the main burden of managing the city's affairs fell on the city board (*Gazeta Kielecka*, 1918, Nos. 3, 33).

In 1918, due to the irregular work of the City Council and its sections, a convention of seniors was established whose task was to prepare motions for City Council meetings. Its members included: S. Artwiński, R. Cichowski, S. Dobrzański, S. Frycz, C. Gierałowski, A. Jakóbkiewicz, E. Koczanowicz, M. Witecki, K. Wodzinowski, J. Lewinson, S. Paradistal, and I. Rajzman (*Gazeta Kielecka*, 1918, No. 23).

The announcement of elections to the City Council in 1916 accelerated the process of political maturation of the city's inhabitants. When the Kielce City Council was established in January 1917, it became an extremely important civic institution that contributed significantly to the increase in the social, economic and political activities of the inhabitants. The contemporary city government was an organized representation towards the occupation authorities, actively working to improve the living conditions of the city inhabitants. National and state demands were formulated at the City Council meetings. Many councilors at that time, after regaining independence, actively participated in the local government life of Kielce in 1918–1939.

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APK – Archiwum Państwowe w Kielcach [State Archives in Kielce]:

OKG – Zespół: Obzory Kieleckoj Guberni, Sign. 1885, 1890, 1895, 1900, 1905, 1910, 1914.

AmK – Zespół: Akta miasta Kielce, Sign. 1268, 1269, 1273.

Gazeta Kielecka: 1885, No. 20; 1917, Nos. 19, 20, 21, 22; 1918, Nos. 3, 6, 19, 20, 23, 33.

Ziemia Kielecka: 1916, Nos. 36, 37, 47, 53; 1917, Nos. 4, 22.