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The Role of Teachers in Aviation Education in the Second Polish Republic

ABSTRACT

This article examines a topic within the history of education, focusing on the role of teachers in aviation education in Poland between 1918 and 1939. Through qualitative analysis of historical sources—such as journals, official documents, publications, and archival materials—the study discusses teachers' involvement in aviation education during this period. Aviation was considered one of the most important areas for the advancement of modern states, with the expectation that society as a whole would contribute to its progress. It was also a domain for pedagogical work and the pursuit of educational goals. Teachers, as a distinct social group, were actively encouraged by aviation activists and members of the Airborne and Antigas Defense League to engage with the objectives of aviation education. The majority of the teaching community became involved in this effort by incorporating aviation themes into their lessons and by supporting aviation-related organizations. Their efforts enabled aviation education to reach a broad youth audience, and extend its influence to families and local communities, thereby promoting aviation awareness and uniting society under the slogan “Strong Winged Poland.”

KEYWORDS

aviation education,
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Introduction

The 20th century can rightly be called the century of aviation, both materially and symbolically. This (then) new invention aroused a mix of awe, horror, curiosity, and hope. Aviation emerged as a new kind of weapon, a means of transport, a branch of sport, industry, and technology, and a key objects of interest for both highly developed and developing countries. Public enthusiasm for aviation and its strategic importance to state policy were growing rapidly during this period, particularly in the United States and many European countries. This enthusiasm also reached Polish lands, where, after 1918, aviation had the opportunity to develop (Zbierański 1958: 8–9; Malinowski 1987: 33–38). Polish state authorities recognized the potential of aviation to unify society around the slogan of a “Strong Winged Poland.” During the interwar period, interest and even fascination with aviation spread to all levels of Polish society. Pilots became national heroes of the collective imagination and role models, while the airplane emerged as a symbol of progress, modernity, and human conquest of the skies (Le Corbusier 1935: 2–21; Łoziński 1987: 10–15; Woźniak 1987: 5; Rzepka 2023: 6–7).

The entire society was expected to contribute to the expansion and strengthening of aviation, with every person regardless of education, background, age, or gender, participating according to their abilities, aptitudes, and interests (Dobrzycki 1927: 79; Kretowicz 1933: 31–32; Meliński 1933: 19–20; Latwis 1935: 31). A special role in this effort was assigned to teachers, who were regarded as possessing the intellectual capacity to understand the essence and importance of aviation for the country. Teachers were recognized for their broad-mindedness, ability to make insightful observations, educational background, social sensitivity, and, most importantly, their access to large groups of children and young people. Thus, they were considered one of the most important groups tasked with conducting aviation education, i.e. consciously and deliberately influencing the intellectual, emotional, and moral development of the youngest generation, so that as many individuals as possible, whether directly or indirectly, in the present or future, would become engaged. Aviation education was, therefore, viewed not only as a strategic priority for national security and Poland’s international standing but also as

an integral part of the daily lives of prewar Polish citizens and as a pedagogical tool for individual growth (Rzepka 2023: 76; Magiera 2015: 161).

No comprehensive monograph dedicated to this topic currently exists in the academic literature. This article seeks to fill this gap by identifying and clarifying facts that have so far been overlooked in historical-pedagogical and pedeutological scholarship. It examines the social and pro-state contributions of teachers to aviation education in the Second Polish Republic. Expanding the knowledge on this subject may provide a more complete picture of this professional group. The research was conducted using qualitative analysis of sources, a fundamental method in historical research. The research material was purposefully selected and includes written sources from 1918–1939: aviation and pedagogical journals, official documents from educational authorities, correspondence, and anniversary publications from aviation organizations. The collected sources were subjected to external and internal criticism, as well as pragmatic interpretation. Logical reasoning methods, including both induction and deduction, were employed in the analysis (Rubacha 2008: 337–340; Mierzwa 2001: 301–304).

Teachers' interest in aviation and aviation education

The primary role in promoting aviation within society and engaging a broad spectrum of citizens in aviation-related activities was played by the National Air Defense League, founded in 1923. Renamed the Airborne and Antigas Defense League (Polish abbreviation: LOPP) in 1928, it was a nationwide paramilitary organization whose main objective was to support the comprehensive development of Polish aviation. By the eve of World War II, the LOPP was the largest social organization in the Second Republic, boasting more than 2 million members (Konieczny 1987: 26). In 1934, a Decree of the Council of Ministers officially recognized it as an association of higher public utility (Journal of Laws of the Second Polish Republic of 1934, No. 11, item 90). The LOPP actively encouraged teachers to become involved in aviation education and contribute to its goals. The organization sought to involve educators at all levels, particularly primary school teachers (Osiński 1925: 3).

One of the key strategies employed by the LOPP's Management Board and committees to reach teachers was organizing direct meetings and discussions with teachers. These gatherings, held primarily between 1926 and 1931 in cities such as Warsaw, Lviv, and Łódź, took the form of conferences for school administrators, principals, and teachers. During these events, several topics were discussed, including the objectives of the LOPP, strategies for recruiting young people, methods of arousing interest in aviation among students and teachers, the role of aviation in peace-building, initiatives in gliding and modeling, and the distribution of aviation magazines to younger audiences (*"Wiadomości bieżące: z Polski"* 1926; *"Co nowego w naszym świecie: w Polsce"* 1927; *"Zjazd Dyrektorów Szkół Średnich we Lwowie"* 1930; Seweryn 1930: 232). Conference participants generally responded with enthusiasm to the information presented. Notably, some conferences were organized by teachers themselves, such as those in the Lviv School District in the mid-1920s, led by Artur Passendorfer, a teacher of Polish and German (*"Co nowego w naszym świecie: w Polsce"* 1927).

Additional opportunities to engage with teachers and support aviation education were provided through general courses, such as LOPP speakers' courses, held in Vilnius, Lublin, Krakow, and Warsaw. These courses typically attracted 30–100 teachers at a time. Similarly, specialized courses for flight instructors and aviation science were organized for educators at primary and secondary schools (Halewski 1928: 103; *"Z działalności LOPP: Kraków 1927"*; Humpola 1927: 271; *"Otwarcie kursu instruktorów wydziałów lotniczych LOPP"* 1934). The second important way of reaching teachers was through indirect influence facilitated by educational authorities. A major achievement of LOPP activists was securing the support of officials from the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment (Polish abbreviation: MWRiOP), including Zygmunt Zagórowski, and ministers such as Gustaw Dobrucki, Kazimierz Świtalski, Wacław Jędrzejewicz, and Wojciech Świątosławski (Rzepka 2023: 105–112). This led to two notable outcomes: the establishment of a LOPP circle within the MWRiOP, which included 248 officials by 1938, and the publication of official directives related to aviation in government journals (*"LOPP na terenie stolicy..."* 1939). Among the most significant of these documents was

a circular issued by Dobrucki on April 3, 1928 (Okólnik MWRiOP z dn. 3.04.1928...) devoted to the promotion of aviation in schools.

In the circular, the Minister provided teachers with guidelines for systematically integrating educational, developmental, and promotional activities related to aviation into their work. Dobrucki justified this initiative by highlighting aviation as not only a vital sector for strengthening the state but also an attractive and interesting subject for young people. Its appeal, he argued, made it an effective tool for educational purposes. According to Dobrucki, school educators were tasked with three main responsibilities:

The school should ... inspire interest in aviation among the youth under its influence; It should, through the minds and hearts of students, reach the family circles and propagate it throughout society; Finally, it should identify capable and creative individuals from among the student body who may later contribute actively to the field of aviation. (Okólnik MWRiOP z dn. 3.04.1928...)

The circular also listed specific methods for teachers to incorporate aviation into their educational and didactic work. These included introducing aviation topics into lesson plans, utilizing aviation-themed teaching materials, encouraging students to read aviation-related publications, organizing lectures for the school community, setting up and supporting school-based LOPP circles, participating in aviation events with students, and organizing field trips to aviation exhibitions (Okólnik MWRiOP z dn. 3.04.1928...).

The second equally significant document from the educational authorities was a circular issued on May 14, 1937, by W. Świątosławski, on the need to persuade secondary school graduates to enroll in the Aviation Officer Cadet School (Okólnik MWRiOP Nr 46 z dnia 14 maja 1937...). The Minister justified this initiative not only by referring to national defense and military development but also to the educational benefits of service in military aviation. He stated: "Engaging an individual in aviation mobilizes their entire spectrum of their spiritual and intellectual capacities. The nature of air service enhances moral values, uncovering latent talents. Moreover, it compels the acquisition of broad and diverse knowledge in various fields" (Okólnik MWRiOP Nr 46 z dnia 14 maja 1937...). To support this initiative, Świątosławski recommended that teachers assist graduates in identifying their aptitudes and interests through

individual guidance, organize discussions on the concept of national defense and the professional role of aviation officers, inform students about admission requirements to aviation schools, and disseminate basic knowledge about aviation, including its history, technology, and applications (Okólnik MWRiOP Nr 46 z dnia 14 maja 1937...).

Efforts to persuade teachers to take an interest in aviation were also pursued by school district superintendents. Official journals under their supervision published messages and articles to raise awareness among teachers about the significance of LOPP activities and the necessity of involving schools in these initiatives through organizing fundraising efforts and promotional campaigns (Rzepka 2023: 110–115). Superintendents regarded the objectives of the League as equally vital from an educational standpoint as those of other organizations active in schools, such as circles of the Maritime and Colonial League, the Polish Red Cross, the Vanguard, the Polish Scouting Association, the Sodality of Our Lady, and student cooperatives, sightseeing, and military training groups. Engaging young people in LOPP activities was seen as a crucial aspect of civic education, as it inspired a spirit of selfless service for organizations of higher public utility. Moreover, youth participation in strengthening the air force was considered a means of contributing to the cultural and civilizational power and peace of the Polish state (Moniewski 1936a: 54; Moniewski 1936b: 103–104; Moniewski 1937: 174).

Other channels of reaching teachers and ways of encouraging their involvement in the goals of aviation education included the publication of methodological aids and materials designed to support educators in their work. Notable examples of such resources include Władysław Baliński's *Dlaczego jest nam potrzebne lotnictwo* [*Why Do We Need Aviation?*] (1928), Józef Makłowicz's *O lotnictwie i obronie przed gazami* [*Aviation and Antigas Defense*] (1929), Zygmunt Troniewski's *Pełny spichlerz, ziemia żyzna – kiedy skrzydła ma Ojczyzna* [*Full Granary, Fertile Soil – When the Homeland Has Wings*] (1930), Władysław Umiński's *O lataniu dla przyjemności, czyli o sporcie lotniczym* [*Flying for Fun, or Aviation Sports*] (1930), Wojciech Woyna's *Wskazówki dla instruktorów modelarstwa lotniczego* [*Guidelines for Instructors of Aviation Model-Making*] (1925), Antoni Szczepkowski's *Zagadnienia lotnictwa i morza w nauce rysunku* [*Issues of Aviation and the Sea in Drawing Education*], (1939), and guidebooks such as

Propaganda lotnictwa w szkołach [*Promotion of Aviation at Schools*] (1928) published by the LOPP Management Board, and Franciszek Szymczak's *Szkolne Koła LOPP* [*School LOPP Circles*] (1935).

The efforts of LOPP members and educational authorities yielded positive results. Teachers generally welcomed these initiatives, and recognized the educational potential of aviation-related topics and activities ("Korespondencje" 1928). Many teachers enrolled in the LOPP independently, and some even established aviation circles for educators. For instance, the Local Circle of Teachers of Primary Schools in Kielce was established in 1928 (Archiwum Państwowe w Kielcach, sygn. 21/101/440...). Additionally, similar circles were founded among students in teacher training institutions. In 1937, for example, there were eight LOPP circles at seminars and pedagogy and teacher training courses in the Warsaw area, with a total of 706 members ("XV lat 1923–1938. LOPP na terenie stolicy" 1938).

Teachers' activities within the LOPP were also supported by professional organizations. In 1935, representatives of the Polish Teachers' Union (Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego – Polish abbreviation: ZNP), the largest teachers' organization in the Second Polish Republic, signed an official agreement of mutual cooperation with the LOPP. Under this agreement, ZNP paid lump-sum membership fees to the League, and all ZNP members automatically became supporting members of the LOPP ("Współpraca ZNP z Ligą Obrony Powietrznej Państwa" 1935). However, the agreement was terminated two years later, partly due to disputes over unpaid dues. Despite this, the two organizations continued informal collaboration, with ZNP members individually maintaining their paid League membership ("Wspólny komunikat LOPP i ZNP" 1937). Articles promoting Polish aviation and educational activities on aviation achievements and events were also published in the ZNP's central press organ, *Głos Nauczycielski* [*Teachers' Voice*] (Rzepka 2023: 118–119).

The Society of Secondary and High School Teachers (Towarzystwo Nauczycieli Szkół Średnich i Wyższych, Polish abbreviation – TNSW), the second-largest teachers' organization in the Second Polish Republic, also supported the involvement of its members in the work of the LOPP. Members from the Pomeranian, Lviv, Poznań, Silesian, Białystok, Warsaw, Krakow, Vilnius, Stanisławów, and Cieszyn-Orlovsk districts were particularly active in promoting

aviation (“Sprawozdanie TNSW za rok 1932” 1933; “Z życia TNSW” 1938). Like their counterparts in the ZNP, TNSW teachers contributed to discussions on aviation education through their journal, *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* [*Pedagogical Review*]. They authored articles on topics such as the benefits of including aviation topics into educational work (technical, pro-defense, intellectual), the need to promote aviation among students, controversies surrounding frequent fundraisers targeting young people, and teachers’ involvement in subscribing to the Anti-Aircraft Defense Loan (Rzepka 2023: 120–122).

It should be added, however, that efforts to persuade teachers to engage in LOPP activities occasionally met with criticism. Some teachers questioned the necessity of participating in the work of this particular organization, citing their already heavy workloads and a preference to contribute to other state and social initiatives unrelated to aviation. Consequently, some LOPP teachers’ circles restricted their activities to merely paying membership fees (“Kwesty szkolne” 1930; “Prasa o szkole i nauczycielu” 1934; “Sprawozdanie z działalności Komitetu Powiatowego LOPP...” 1929). A small number of teachers also enrolled in aeroclubs, though they remained a minority within such organizations. For instance, in the Warsaw Aeroclub and the Silesian Aeroclub in Katowice, teachers accounted for less than 1% of the membership. Some teachers also obtained flying qualifications. Among them were Maria Kann, a glider pilot and teacher at the Andrzej and Olga Małkowski Primary School in Warsaw, and two university professors with tourist pilot licenses: Tadeusz Pruszkowski, from the School of Fine Arts, and Wojciech Świątosławski, from the Warsaw University of Technology (“Aeroklub Warszawski w cyfrach” 1937; “Sprawozdanie Aeroklubu Śląskiego za rok 1938” 1939).

Aviation education in schools

The most important success of the propaganda campaign targeting teachers was their active commitment to the goals of aviation education for children and young people. It was recommended that teachers combine educational objectives with propaganda efforts. Władysław Baliński, director of the LOPP Board, justified the fusion of these approaches in 1930:

The teaching profession, which has been called upon to educate the minds and shape the characters of the youth, constitutes a propaganda element of great value. The ethics of the teaching profession mean that the vast majority of teachers have independent judgment and usually successfully resist the temptations of political groups to make teaching a tool of political propaganda. The propaganda of great ideas, of unquestionable aims, finds very useful and brave propagators among teachers (Baliński 1931: 31).

In the Second Polish Republic, teachers were regarded as second only to family members in their influence on shaping the attitudes of children and young and, consequently contributing to the development of the country's moral and civic culture. Their influence on students was possible primarily through their frequent and close contact with students (Witkowska 1920: 103; Kulwieć, Lipski 1920: 73–79). As long as teachers used their pedagogical competencies, they were likely to achieve educational objectives.

In the domain of aviation education, substantive knowledge and didactic-methodological skills were important, but educational competencies held even greater significance (Taraszkiewicz 2001: 175). These included moral integrity, interpersonal communication, cooperative abilities, and leadership skills. A teacher needed advanced communication skills, the capacity to address students' problems, and the ability to serve as a role model for the younger generation—particularly in demonstrating personal commitment to aviation development. Teachers were also tasked with consistently motivating students to undertake multiple activities, employing diverse and effective methods. It was very important to learn how to interpret aviation-related events accurately and encourage moral reflection on their significance for the state and the advancement of civilization (Żegnałek 2008: 191; Rzepka 2018: 105–111).

The most common platform for promoting aviation education was during regular school lessons. Teachers used these opportunities to deliver talks on aviation-related topics, even if loosely connected to the subject of the lesson. They provided information on historical and current aviation events, explored and shaped students' views on these issues, encouraged student involvement in aviation activities, and inspired creativity through aviation-themed artwork. These artworks were often showcased at school events, published in aviation magazines, or entered into various competitions—including those

related to art, literature, poetry, and modeling—frequently organized by the LOPP (“Konkursy L.O.P.P. wśród młodzieży” 1936; Rzepka 2023: 420–440).

In Polish language lessons, teachers introduced students to the lives of famous aviators, most notably Franciszek Żwirko and Stanisław Wigura, as well as the history of aviation to inspire an appreciation for the ethos of aviators and aircraft designers in the school community. Aviation-related content featured prominently in school textbooks, with as many as 32 aviation-themed texts—poems and readings—included in 20 textbooks, nearly three-quarters of which were for primary schools (Rzepka 2023: 150–156).

Teachers also included aviation fiction into their curriculum. Seven aviation books were included in the supplementary reading list approved by the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment. These works included *Żwirko i Wigura: załoga RWD* [*Żwirko and Wigura: The Crew of the RWD*] by Janusz Meissner, recommended for grade VI of primary school and grade I of secondary school; *Skrzydlaty chłopiec* [*Winged Boy*] by Kornel Makuszyński for grade VII of primary school; *Night Flight* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry for grades III–IV of secondary school; and other titles such as *Na RWD przez Atlantyk* [*Across the Atlantic in an RWD*] by Stanisław Skarżyński, *Pomiędzy chmurami* [*Among Clouds*] by Zbigniew Burzyński, and *Moje wrażenia z lotu do Tokio* [*My Impressions from the Flight to Tokyo*] by Bolesław Orliński for grade IV of primary school (*Wydawnictwa dozwolone do użytku szkolnego* [*Textbooks for School Use*] (1939).

Many teachers did not limit themselves to the official reading list and also discussed other aviation-themed books during lessons. The variety of available literature was extensive; over 110 aviation-related books—including novels, reports, and memoirs—were published during the Second Polish Republic (Rzepka 2023: 191). Among these, the most popular was Janusz Meissner’s novel *Szkola Orłąt* [*Eagles’ School*], which became the best-known aviation novel of the era (“Stąd i stamtąd” [From Here and There], 1936). Teachers further encouraged students to read aviation literature during their free time. Some gave talks on the subject, while others authored prefaces to aviation books. For instance, Gustaw Morcinek, a teacher from Skoczów, wrote a foreword recommending Maria Wardasówna’s

Maryśka z Śląska [*Mary from Silesia*] to young readers (Morcinek 1937: 1–2).

Furthermore, teachers often incorporated aviation-related content into various lessons beyond those specifically designated for the topic. For instance, Jan Kowal, a teacher at the Adam Mickiewicz State Secondary School in Vilnius, pointed out that physics lessons provided an excellent platform to explore topics such as the mechanics of flight, aerodynamics, and the operation of aircraft engines (Kowal 1927: 217–218). Practical applications of these principles were also integrated into manual works lessons, where students constructed flying models to test the laws of physics. Starting in the 1935/1936 school year, the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment made aeronautical modeling a mandatory component of manual works curricula in grades VI–VII of primary schools, grades I–IV of state secondary schools for boys, and the equivalent grades in coeducational schools (“Pomorski Okrąg Wojewódzki LOPP” 1936). Model-making activities not only taught the fundamentals of materials science but also nurtured students’ creativity, precision, patience, and manual skills (Kozłowski 1935: 121–122; Stopa 1930: 566–569; Grzeszczak 1932: 22).

To ensure that teachers were well-prepared to teach aeromodelling, specialized training courses were organized locally starting in the mid-1920s. In 1930, planning for these courses was centralized, with the Higher Courses in Aviation Modelling organized by the LOPP in collaboration with the State Institute of Handicrafts. Representatives from various school boards were sent to attend these courses, which were held annually until the outbreak of World War II. Over nine editions, 710 teachers from across Poland completed the training (Kozak 2007: 106).

Teachers also integrated aviation themes into other subjects, including:

- chemistry lessons topics included engine cylinder processes, gases for balloons, construction materials, fuel types, and air-gas defense (Kowal 1927: 217–218);
- geography lessons focused on the role of aviation in modern Poland, such as its importance for air transport, aviation manufacturing, and the metal industry, especially in the Central Industrial Area. Activities included organizing

air-based sightseeing tours and calculating air route distances (Hryniewiecka 1936: 212; Mścisz 1928: 27).

- in history lessons, teachers discussed the history of aviation, its role as the pinnacle of technological and military advancements, and its significance in defense tactics. They compared past and present aircraft types and presented profiles of aviation pioneers (Iwińska 1938: 56–60; Sawicki, Witkowska, Sobiński 1929: 296–300);
- nature lessons addressed the role of sanitary aviation in rescue and public health efforts (Skowroński 1939: 113–114);
- in drawing lessons, students participated in excursions to airports, which often are examples of modernist architecture, and completed artwork on aviation-related themes (“Sprawozdanie z wycieczki kl. VIII...” 1936; Szczepkowski 1939: 29).

Many teachers also carried out aviation education activities outside of regular lessons. Some established school aviation circles under the auspices of the LOPP, while others took charge of already existing ones. The opportunities for involvement were numerous, as school LOPP circles were widespread and rapidly growing during the Second Republic. By 1933, school circles accounted for 60% (8,992) of all LOPP circles (Kozak 2007: 51). The responsibility of supervising these circles was formalized in the “Regulations of School Circles of LOPP Youth,” adopted in 1928 by the Youth Section of the General Board of LOPP. Teachers were either appointed as guardians by school principals or required to obtain the principal’s consent if they volunteered for the role (“Seksja do spraw młodzieży” 1927).

Teachers accompanied the students in implementing the circles’ programs, which usually centered around the deepening of theoretical knowledge of aviation, participation in aviation events, popularization of aviation in schools and local communities, and engaging in aeromodelling. They also promoted the circles’ activities, often publishing reports in aviation magazines. One of the most dedicated circle guardians was Aleksandra Zasusanka, who contributed articles to *Lot i OPLG Polski* [*Flight and Airborne and Antigas Defense League of Poland*], a monthly publication by the General Board of LOPP. In her articles, she showcased the achievements of the circles she supervised and encouraged boys to consider careers as pilots (Zasusanka 1936a: 8; Zasusanka 1936b: 12). Additionally, Zasusanka authored

a theatrical play titled *On the Threshold of Victory: A Comedy in 3 Acts* (1934), which her female students from the LOPP circle performed. These students were from the 2nd J. Kochanowski Municipal Female Secondary School in Warsaw, where Zasusanka taught Polish language and literature (Laskowska 1935: 64).

Teachers also provided students with advice and assistance, represented the circles in external interactions, and served as liaisons with school principals. Their responsibilities included ensuring compliance with the rules outlined in the “Regulations of School Circles.” These rules stipulated that meetings be held only after school hours, that membership be limited to students without academic difficulties, and that inactive or misbehaving members could be expelled. It is worth noting that other organizations operating within schools, such as scout groups, also fell under teachers’ care. Some teachers, who were simultaneously scout instructors, established such units in the schools where they worked. For example, Maria Kann, a Polish language teacher at Andrzej Małkowski Public School in Warsaw, founded an aviation scout group in 1934 and served as its leader (Kann 2021: 20–21; Rzepka 2019/2020: 13). Through these activities, teachers combined aviation education, scouting, and broader educational efforts within the school environment. These initiatives aimed to instill patriotism and a sense of duty to the state, in line with the principles of state education, the prevailing educational ideology in Poland after 1926 (Jakubiak 1994: 29–30).

In examining the aviation education conducted in schools by teachers, it is also essential to expose the qualities and attitudes that it sought to develop among students. These desired qualities can be categorized within a pedagogical framework that acts as an axiological and cognitive guide, directing thought and organizing values around dynamic issues central to the educational process (Rutkowiak 1995: 25). Józef Górniewicz who proposed one such framework, identified seven pedagogical categories: subjectivity, responsibility, self-fulfillment, tolerance, creativity, imagination, and moral imagination (Górniewicz 2001: 14–106). As conceptualized by Górniewicz, subjectivity in aviation education during the Second Polish Republic was cultivated by supporting students’ intrinsic motivation to become personally involved in issues related to the development of domestic aviation, as well as by fostering a sense of personal agency

and influence over these matters. Teachers instilled responsibility in students by accentuating both civic duty—regarding the progress of Polish aviation—and accountability to fellow citizens and state authorities who relied on the participation of youth in this area of national importance.

Opportunities for self-fulfillment were provided by enhancing students' potential abilities through aviation-related activities tailored to their age, interests, and skills. Teachers employed methods such as discussions, debates, and teamwork to promote tolerance for differing viewpoints among students. Creative tasks, such as designing and building models or producing written and artistic works, nurtured students' imagination and creativity. Furthermore, moral imagination was developed through activities that required students to anticipate the consequences of their actions, both in terms of their immediate projects and their broader contributions to the advancement of Polish aviation. These exercises also instilled a sense of moral responsibility for the outcomes (Górniewicz 2021: 14–106; Rzepka 2023: 432–439).

Conclusion

Teachers in the Second Polish Republic—characterized by social awareness, pedagogical expertise, intelligence, and social respect—earned the trust of young people and maintained close engagement in their daily education. Therefore, aviation enthusiasts viewed educators as one of the key groups responsible for implementing aviation education (Papierski 1930: 585–587). Through the efforts of activists from the Airborne and Antigas Defense League, teachers became integral to achieving the goals of aviation education. Their motivation was reinforced by official directives issued by educational authorities, structured training programs, initiatives by teachers' organizations, and the availability of methodological and instructional resources designed specifically for education. Although some aspects of aviation education sparked controversy, the teaching community broadly supported the initiative and collaborated willingly with the LOPP. Some educators even became members of aeroclubs and obtained certifications in piloting airplanes or gliders.

The school, at every level, was the main setting for teachers' involvement in aviation education, although their activities often extended beyond the classroom. Key areas of their engagement included:

- incorporating aviation content into lessons,
- supervising school clubs,
- publishing articles in aviation magazines, and
- setting up and managing aviation scout groups.

Teachers, depending on their interest and level of commitment incorporated aviation-related material into various subjects. This allowed them to shape students' attitudes and enhance their knowledge and skills. For example, they introduced students to the lives of notable aviators as role models, analyzed literary works on aviation, or taught students how to build model aircraft. Commonly employed instructional methods included talks, discussions, and hands-on activities.

Some teachers took on the role of guardians of school clubs and aviation organizations operating within or outside the school, such as those affiliated with the Polish Scouting Association. Some shouldered the initiative to establish these groups, actively participating in their vibrant activities, as well as publishing articles in aviation magazines, which were popular among youth interested in aviation during the Second Polish Republic. The widespread involvement of teachers in aviation education in the Second Polish Republic ensured its broad reach, and engaged children and young people from diverse social backgrounds. Through these young learners, aviation education also permeated family homes, neighborhoods, and communities. This social engagement played a crucial role in advancing this vital area of national development during the interwar period. It inspired a sense of national pride, unity, and security, contributing to the vision of a "Strong Winged Poland." Tragically, these achievements were disrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War (Rzepka 2023: 424–440).



This article does not fully exhaust the extensive topic of teachers' involvement in pre-war aviation education. As the first publication

dedicated to this issue, it aims to spark interest among historians of education in the Second Polish Republic and encourage further research in this field. In the future, it would be particularly interesting to explore regional variations, the level and types of schools involved, and the practical implementation of aviation education during individual lessons. Comparative historical-pedagogical research could also shed light on similarities and differences between the aviation education initiatives of Polish teachers and those of educators in other European countries during the interwar period. Such studies would not only enrich our understanding of the history of education and pedagogy but could also contribute significant knowledge for contemporary educators. For modern pedagogy, these historical topics can inspire the search for relevant ideas and areas that resonate with today's social and national needs. By incorporating such elements into everyday teaching and educational practices, educators might also find innovative ways to engage and captivate young people with compelling and meaningful content.

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