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## Andrzej Sznajder - "Everyone and Everything for Upper Silesia"



### **Everyone and Everything for Upper Silesia**

**In the reborn Republic of Poland, interest in the ‘Upper Silesian question’ was enormous.**

Everyone and everything for Upper Silesia – this was the motto of ‘Upper Silesian Week’ organised by the Central Plebiscite Committee in Warsaw at the turn of December 1920 and January 1921. Similar events, organised through the efforts of dozens of local Silesian

committees, took place throughout Poland during this time. They were conceived as a show of support by Polish society for Upper Silesians seeking to unite Upper Silesia with Poland. 'We want Upper Silesia to join Poland, but for us, Silesians are not just a supplement to coal; for us, they are brothers in flesh and blood, brothers who have already shed blood for their Polishness twice in the past two years, who deserve our help', wrote Wojciech Trąmpczyński, Speaker of the Polish Sejm, in a proclamation calling on his compatriots to actively participate in the event.

Interest in the 'Upper Silesian question' in the reborn Republic of Poland had been lively since 1919, and it intensified in the following years. Silesian committees were dynamically formed already during the First Silesian Uprising.

They had great success in collecting money for Silesia. Later, they popularised knowledge about Silesia during rallies, lectures, in the press, and in dozens of appeals and proclamations to the public.

In the period before the plebiscite, the Committee for the Unification of Upper Silesia with the Republic of Poland, which coordinated the activities of local Silesian committees throughout the country, raised funds to help refugees from Upper Silesia, to popularise the Silesian cause in Poland, and to support the propaganda campaign in Silesia itself. Over 142 million Polish marks were collected through public fund-raising and self-taxation.

The outbreak of the Third Silesian Uprising on the night of 2 May 1921

brought an almost immediate wave of support rallies in the whole country – from Białystok, Będzin, Bochnia, Brześć, Ciechanów, Częstochowa and Dobrzyń, through Grójec, Krzemieniec, Mińsk Mazowiecki, Lviv, Łęczyca, Łomża and Łódź, to Poznań, Poddębice, Pułtusk, Radom, Węgrów and Zawiercie.

As early as 3 May, the people of Warsaw organised rallies in front of the Entente states' embassies. In Krakow, participants of a demonstration declared that 'the whole Polish nation is ready to help the Upper Silesian insurgents'.

On 4 May, students of the Jagiellonian University and the Academy of Mining declared that they were ready to join the Upper Silesian ranks at a moment's notice. In turn, at a rally on 6 May, students of Warsaw universities expressed their 'deepest homage' to the Silesian insurgents, along with 'most sincere gratitude and unshaken faith that the spilling of their blood will not be in vain'.

At a rally in Dąbrowa Górnicza alone, about 40 thousand people gathered at a rally on 8 May, and the resolution proclaimed there demanded 'immediate convening of the Sejm, a quick and decisive action, the immediate and most vigorous repulsion of all Teutonic attempts and foul, treacherous schemes, even with the use of arms'.

It is now 100 years since those events of the three successive Silesian uprisings and the plebiscite, which resulted in part of Upper Silesia being united with the Republic of Poland. We recall them once again in the pages of our nationwide daily press, expressing our conviction that

the 'Upper Silesian question' is still part of the essence of Polish affairs.

Andrzej Sznajder

Director of the Katowice Branch

Institute of National Remembrance

For more articles on the topic, download the PDF of the Press Supplement on the Centenary of the Third Silesian Uprising below:

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