

## PROTECTION OF ARCHIVAL MATERIALS IN POLAND. HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

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Issues related to the protection of archival materials, as well as the care of archival materials and the structure of the archival network were raised just on the threshold of the existence of new Polish state that regained independence in 1918. On February 7, 1919, the Head of State Józef Piłsudski signed a Decree on the organization of archives and protection of archival materials [1]. Provisions of this legal act were in force until 1951, when the Decree on archives was issued [2]. Another change in legal regulations binding until today took place in 1983 [8]. The goal is to show how the protection of archival materials has changed in the mentioned legal acts.

### 1. Decree on the organization of archives and protection of archival materials

The decree was issued in the first months of the independent Polish state and gave the legal foundations for the organization of archives. It adopted a model of centralized archival service and set out the principles of state care over certain archives. The remaining part of the archives was still under private management [3,5,7]. Protection of archival materials was regulated in chapter 1 of the Decree, which indicated that the Archives Department at the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment was the the superior institution dealing with these issues. In addition, in chapter 3 and 4 the principles of protection implemented by the Department over non-state public archives and over all archival monuments in the country were set out in general manner.

### 2. Decree on archives

Changes in archival law were made after World War II, which caused that the Polish state was in a different political situation and its territory was significantly changed. The decree on state archives issued on March 29, 1951 gave new legal basis for operation of the state archival service [2]. It was short because it contained only 11 articles and created a new organization of the archival service in Poland. At the same time, it confirmed earlier legal acts that led to the nationalization of archival materials contained in private archives. The decree gained its significance through implementing acts which were announced in its content. The Regulation of the Council of Ministers of April 26, 1952 defined what should be understood by the term “archival materials” and defined the function and structure of these materials. The formal and practical management of the archives was to be exercised by the General Directorate of State Archives, which was subordinated directly to the Prime Minister [6].

### 3. Act on the national archive resource and archives

A comprehensive legal act which defined the functioning of archives and the principles of protection of archival materials collected in them, was adopted in 1983. This Act regulated in detail what should be understood as archival materials. It gave a legal definition of this term [4,8]. It also introduced a new concept of the national archive resource, which covers all archival materials, regardless of who owns them. It divided this resource into a state resource (owned by states) and non-state resource

(private owners) and established the principles of its protection, with the state authorities exercising supervision over the protection of archival materials stored nationwide. In the case of private owners, the Act limited their property rights, and introduced criminal liability for destroying archival materials [4,8].

#### REFERENCES

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