

Abstract

In the thesis, the author presents the history of the revived local government of Chorzów during the first three terms of office, i.e. between 1990 and 2002. The content is chronological and dedicated to specific issues.

Chapter I discusses the position of local government and local administration in the period of the Polish People's Republic (PRL) and the Third Republic of Poland (III RP). In the period 1944–1950, people's government used the old forms of state organization contained in the 1921 Constitution, giving them new content. Mention was made of the decree of the Polish Committee for National Liberation of 21 August 1944 *on the procedure for the appointment of general administration authorities of the first and second degree* and the Act of 11 September 1944 *on the organization and scope of operation of national councils* introducing a hierarchical, five-tier structure of national councils, and the decree of 23 November 1944 *on the organization and scope of operation of the local government*, which restored local government bodies. The Act of 20 March 1950 *on local bodies of the single state authority* introduced an administrative model derived from the Soviet paradigm. It brought an end to local government in Poland. National councils were deprived of their legal personality. Commune property disappeared, and local budgets became part of the state budget. Subsequently, further transformations of the system of national councils are presented through the 1950s until 1970s, when the role of local authorities was consistently diminished, until the 1980s, when attempts were made to give a new shape to national councils within the framework of the existing system. The social and political breakthrough of 1989 caused a wave of internal reforms in Poland. One of the directions of the reforms involved the functioning of public administration. An assumption was made that the prerequisite for the existence of local government is the full enjoyment of civil and economic rights and freedoms. Polish Round Table agreements provided for the independence of local government.

Of the initiatives to rebuild local government that emerged in the years 1970–1980, the activity of the informal discussion club *Konwersatorium "Doświadczenie i Przyszłość"* turned out to be the most significant. The initiatives of the *Solidarity* Trade Union were equally important. The most popular concept of democratization of Poland's social, economic and political system was the programme of *Rzeczpospolita Samorządna*, which was adopted by the First National Congress of Delegates of the *Solidarity* Trade Union in 1981. The initiatives of the Kraków community represented by a team of legal experts associated in *Centrum Obywatelskich Inicjatyw Ustawodawczych* were also of great significance. Even before the

parliamentary elections of 4 June 1989, the Sejm, i.e. the Polish Parliament, adopted the Law on Associations, which truly mattered for the revival of local government. It was associations that used to win the local elections in Chorzów throughout the whole studied period, as well as in subsequent terms, until 2014. The Polish Senate's initiative aimed at reviving local government in Poland by amending the Constitution of 29 December 1989 was of crucial significance as the amendment guaranteed the participation of local government in the exercise of power.

Apart from restitution of local government and liquidation of the system of national councils, the Act of 8 March 1990 amending the Constitution of the Republic of Poland introduced a division into independent government and independent local government administration. The Act on *local government* adopted on the same day stated in Article 1 that "Residents of a commune form, by virtue of law, a local government community".

Subsequent governments developed modern foundations of the local government reform, which were reflected in the Constitutional Act of 17 October 1992 on *mutual relations between the legislative and executive powers of the Republic of Poland and on local government*, as well as the Act amending the Act on local government of November 1992. The act limited the economic activity of the commune (*gmina*) and commune units to tasks not exceeding public utility tasks, limited the competences of the commune council in real estate management, strengthened the position of the commune board in relation to the council and for the first time defined the internal structure of the commune body; by introducing an audit committee it unified the structures of commune control throughout the country. The Act of September 1995 *amending the Act on local government and amending several other acts* was one of the more extensive amendments to the Act on local government, formalizing and unifying the commune system, by analogy to the *Act on commune management* of December 1997. In the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997, the basic principles of the political system of the state included the decentralization of public authority, definition of the principles of territorial division of the state, the confirmation of the principle of corporatism, giving the whole population of the territorial division unit the status of a local government community; the entire Chapter VII and Articles 163 to 172 were dedicated to local government. Jerzy Buzek's government established local government poviats (*powiat*) and voivodeship government, as well as introduced a broad unification of local authority. The SLD–

PSL¹ government reduced the size of commune councils, thus further weakening their position in relation to the board.

Chapter II presents the socio-economic situation of Chorzów at the turn of 1989–1990. It discusses the establishment of the Regional Civic Committee “Solidarity” in Chorzów and the election of Anna Knysok as a member of the “contracted” Sejm, as well as the forming of the Chorzów Civic Committee *Chorzowski Komitet Obywatelski*, its organization and main objectives, the composition of management boards and the reason for the replacement of its chair, the activation of the local community, an attempt to establish the local Upper Silesian magazine *Górnoślązak* and the importance of this magazine for today’s knowledge of those times. The situation in the PZPR² City Committee after 4 June 1989 and the role of the Team of Young Councillors in the last year of the operation of the City National Council were discussed, as well as the conflict over the seat of the PZPR City Committee and the related presidential crisis. The main needs of the city, its problems and barriers to development are indicated. The role of ChKO in the preparations for local election is also outlined. The thesis also discusses the state of the largest Chorzów-based establishments, the decrease in production potential, the problems of enterprises, such as production reduction, restructuring, employment reduction, obsolete technologies and environmental pollution, as well as issues with non-productive assets.

Chapter III is dedicated to the first term of office. The results of the local election of 27 May 1990 in Chorzów are discussed, in which the Civic Committee “Solidarity” won 43 out of 45 seats in the City Council. The election of the Chair of the City Council Marian Machura and his deputies, the delegates to the *Sejmik*³, City President Stefan Kwiatkowski, and the appointment of the Inventory Committee are elaborated on in detail. The election of the other members of the City Management Board and the work related to the organization of the operation of the City Council, the City Management Board and the City Hall are described. A local idea for an efficient information flow was the activity of the so-called Convention, which

¹ Democratic Left Alliance (Polish: Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej, SLD) is a social-democratic political party in Poland (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Left_Alliance); The Polish People's Party (Polish: Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe), abbreviated to PSL (traditionally translated as Polish Peasants' Party), often shortened to *ludowcy* is an agrarian Christian-democratic political party in Poland (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_People%27s_Party).

² The Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP; Polish: Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) was the Communist party which governed the Polish People's Republic from 1948 to 1989 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_United_Workers%27_Party).

³ A voivodeship sejmik (Polish: sejmik województwa), also known as a provincial or regional assembly, is the regional-level elected legislature for each of the sixteen voivodeships of Poland (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voivodeship_sejmik).

included members of the Praesidium of the City Council and the chairpersons of the permanent committees of the City Council. The Convention met for all three terms of office. A significant part of the thesis is devoted to the discussion of the ongoing work on the rules of procedure of the City Council, the City Statute and the appointment of the Audit Committee. All changes in the composition of the Praesidium of the City Council, including the Chair of the City Council and the election of Florian Lesik to the post, are taken into consideration. The reasons for and course of the presidential crisis are discussed, as well as Stefan Kwiatkowski's dismissal and the election of Marek Kopel as President of the Management Board and other members of the Management Board. The transformations of municipal units and commune enterprises, the strike in the Housing Management Company and the dismissal of its director Zbigniew Szymała are described in detail. The liquidation of inefficient municipal enterprises is presented: Municipal Greenery Management, Investment Services and the RPRB renovation and construction company; their assets were privatised. A city centre responsible for sports and recreation, *Miejski Ośrodek Rekreacji i Sportu*, was established. The author demonstrates a very strong tendency of the local government in Chorzów to expand its competences and take over additional tasks from the District Office in Katowice. The thesis also discusses the fate of the so-called pilot project in Chorzów, which Chorzów ultimately did not join, but accepted the competences contained therein on the basis of separately concluded agreements. The Chorzów City Council also strived to take over part of the property of the Voivodeship Water and Sewage Company, Heating Plant, Culture and Leisure Park, as well as schools and kindergartens. The City Council was definitely in favour of taking over the educational institutions. The management of kindergartens was transferred to the commune in April 1991, and the primary schools were transferred on 1 January 1992. The aim was to make schools as independent as possible and to systematically improve the condition of educational facilities and their equipment. Transformations were made in healthcare. In 1991 hospitals, ambulance services and outpatient clinics became independent. Directors became responsible for the operation of the hospitals that they were in charge of, and at the end of 1992 the Municipal Health Service was liquidated.

Chapter IV is devoted to the second term of office. The election campaign and the outcome of the local election in Chorzów are outlined. The election was won by the *Electoral Committee Wspólnie dla Chorzowa*. The Committee brought together 21 political parties and local associations, which was one of the largest local electoral coalitions in the country. The coalition won 21 seats and together with the Social Movement of Chorzów Residents, the

Silesian Autonomy Movement, the Nonpartisan Bloc for Support for Reforms (BBWR) and the Upper Silesian Charity Society took power in the city, gaining 30 seats. The thesis discusses the establishment of the Praesidium of the City Council with Florian Lesik as chair, and of the Management Board with Marek Kopel as president. Delegates were also elected to the Local *Sejmik* of the Katowice Voivodeship. Works on the final edition of the City Statute are referred to. Transformations were made in healthcare. The City Council adopted six programme resolutions to support healthcare. The programmes were as follows: cardiology, oncology, mental healthcare, health promotion, integrated noncommunicable diseases intervention within the CINDI programme – World Health Organization as well as alcohol prevention and alcohol-related problem solving. The development and adoption of the first five programmes was the result of an analysis of the health of Chorzów inhabitants. The authors of the programmes (Health Commission and its chair Romuald Romuszyński) outlined the problem that they intended to solve, set the objectives, methods of reaching them and identified sources of funding. The *Health Promotion Programme* was launched as well. An active policy of transformations in the healthcare system was adopted, adjusted to the changing regulations; the number of beds were reduced, wards were profiled, and since 1998 all hospitals have become independent. The conflict around the Józef Rostek Hospital building was also outlined. The changes taking place in education were discussed: the Department of Education was established and the *Educational Programme for the City of Chorzów* was developed, which also included the *Environmental Education Programme*, *Family Life Education Programme*, *Physical Education Programme* and *Regional Education Programme*. The *Charter of Family Rights* was adopted. On the other hand, as part of the *Physical Education Programme*, urban and school sports and recreation facilities were made available, an investment and renovation plan for the sports base was adopted, and the *Chorzów Physical Fitness Badge* was awarded. Effective from 1 January 1996, secondary and special schools were taken over. The financial condition of the city education also significantly improved: the buildings were renovated, the laboratories were equipped and annual educational debates were held. The structure of schools was prepared for the approaching population decline. The establishment of higher education was spurred on and the following higher education institutions were founded: Szkoła Zarządzania (*School of Management*), The WSB University in Chorzów and the Karol Godula Upper Silesian Academy of Entrepreneurship in Chorzów. The adoption of the *Cultural Policy Programme for the City of Chorzów* was discussed. The programme charted the course of action for the city's cultural facilities and, above all, restored the idea of opening the Chorzów Cultural Centre in the building of the former Chorzów City Theatre. Two new cultural institutions, MDK "Batory"

and MDK “Centrum” were established, the cultural monthly “Wspólny Chorzów”, endorsed by the local government was founded, and publications about the city were initiated. The interaction between the city and artistic milieu was positive. Significant improvement was seen in municipal services management and the housing sector. Wolności Street underwent a major overhaul and was turned into an eye-catching promenade. The following streets, of crucial importance for local transportation, were also renovated: ul. Dąbrowskiego, al. Wojska Polskiego, ul. Szpitalna, ul. Powstańców and ul. Hajducka. The dispute over the tram tracks running along Wolności Street was described, and the initiative to cover the River Rawa was also mentioned. The method of subsequent steps led to the development of the *Housing Policy*, which structured the housing issues in the city for several years. City councillors’ disputes over the system of calculating the rent for social housing and adjusting it to the market were discussed. The author pointed out how the activity of the local government in Chorzów was negatively affected by the largest employers’ decrease in production as well as the related budget problems of the city. In 1996, the city had to take out a loan for the first time to cover its budget expenses. Protests were organized against the government’s actions, which were unfavourable to the local government. A serious issue for the city, the shortage of telephone lines, was solved. The author provides an account of several disputes on the City Council’s forum concerning the sale of real estate: the so-called skyscraper at ul. Wolności 41a, the villa at ul. Powstańców 27 and first of all the AKS area. This last topic stirred up strong emotions and was discussed in detail. The author also points to the activity of the City Council committees and the political and content-related disputes on the City Council’s forum.

Chapter V covers the third term of office of the City Council. The election campaign and the outcome of the local election in Chorzów were discussed. The independent association *Wspólnie dla Chorzowa* won 24 seats, the parties: SLD – 14, AWS⁴ – 4 and Unia Wolności⁵ – 2. The establishment of the City Council with chairman Florian Lesik and of the City Management Board with mayor Marek Kopel was discussed as well as the forming of the City Council’s problem committees and the dispute, ongoing throughout the entire term of office, over the establishment of the Budget and Finance Committee. The changes concerning the internal organization of city bodies were also outlined. The role of crucial reforms, decisive for local governments and introduced by Jerzy Buzek’s government, was pointed out. The changes

⁴ Solidarity Electoral Action (Polish: Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność, AWS) was a political coalition in Poland (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solidarity_Electoral_Action).

⁵ The Freedom Union (Polish: Unia Wolności, UW) was a liberal[2] democratic political party in Poland ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_Union_\(Poland\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_Union_(Poland))).

occurring in the healthcare system are referred to. Public healthcare institutions were replaced with non-public healthcare institutions. As a consequence, outpatient clinics were renovated, the scope of services was extended and the competitiveness on the medical services market improved. The local government allocated PLN 20 million for modernisation and equipment of hospitals in Chorzów. The educational reform enforced the establishment of a network of primary, middle and secondary schools. School complexes and integrated classes were also set up. The Complex of Mechanical and Electrical Schools was closed down, the number of classes at general schools was determined, the number of secondary schools was increased, the educational structure of the city was restructured and modernized. Schools were given statutes. The introduction of the reform comprised an important sphere of the city's life – altogether 76 institutions and 2,615 staff – thus stirring up emotions and controversy, and led to the replacement of the chair of the Education Committee. The issues were caused by the implementation of the new provisions of the Teacher's Charter. Despite financial difficulties, a number of initiatives were carried out in the field of culture. However, culture had to give way to housing and municipal services management, as well as to an extensive construction programme of sports and recreation facilities. The growing problem of unemployment was addressed, and attempts were made to reduce its symptoms. The most important tasks of the municipal services and housing management include the shaping of the housing and rent policy to prevent the deterioration of the condition of buildings and flats, and, subsequently, to raise their standard. The establishment of six companies intended to deal with the administration of residential buildings ended in failure. The opening of new sports and recreation facilities and the renovation of old ones are outlined. At the expense of many sacrifices, the Sports Complex "Hajduki" was built in Chorzów Batory. The complex features a full-size sports hall with fully equipped facilities and an auditorium for 200 people as well as a full-size swimming pool. The sale of the AKS area was described in detail. The only completely new programme adopted by the City Council of the third term, the *Safety Programme for the City of Chorzów*, was also discussed. It covered all institutions that addressed security or public order in a broad sense, as well as individuals, associations and social groups that, through their activities, were willing to participate in the implementation of the programme. The term of office was characterised by a large number of disputes referred to by the author. The City Council sessions were dominated by two groups, the association "Wspólnie dla Chorzowa" and the nationwide SLD party. One of the most important resolutions was adopted on the *Land use plan of the Chorzów commune*. The issues of metallurgy going bankrupt, unemployment and the problems of the city budget were closely related and, in connection with the dragging AKS issue, definitely affected the

image of the third term of office, which, additionally burdened with the implementation of government reforms, was extremely difficult and required an extraordinary amount of work.