Report of the Branch Board on the activities of the Gorzów Branch of the Polish Political Science Association for the years 2019-2021

Abstract

This report presents the activities of the Gorzów Branch of the Polish Political Science Association during its first term of existence. The branch’s activity was primarily focused on the organisation of discussion meetings, methodological seminars and the co-organisation of conferences organised by the Faculty of Administration and National Security (WAiBN) of the Jacob of Paradies University (AJP).

Keywords: Polish Political Science Association, report

Polish Political Science Association (Polskie Towarzystwo Nauk Politycznych, acronym: PTNP) is a scientific association established in 1957. The aim of the Society is to support the development of political science and to disseminate knowledge in this area and to influence the formation of the political culture of society, as well as to integrate the community of political scientists. PTNP currently has twenty branches. Branches are established in cities where universities operate.

The Gorzów Branch of the PTNP was established by a resolution of the General Board on 7 February 2019. The 1st General Meeting of the Branch members was held on 20 March 2019. During it, the branch authorities were elected: a three-member Branch Board and a three-member Audit Committee.

The Branch Board was constituted as follows: Dr Anna Chabasińska – President, Dr Juliusz Sikorski – Secretary, Dr Tomasz Marcinkowski – Treasurer. The composition of the Audit Committee was as follows: Dr Łukasz Budzyński – chairman, MA Joanna Lubimow – member, MA Waldemar Kaak – member.
Initially, the main activities of the Branch were focused on discussion meetings, which we started to co-organise with the Gorzow branch of the PTSE, and with time also with the Regional Centre for International Debate.

The first debate was organised on 11 April 2019. Its topic: “The prospect of Brexit in the light of current events” was presented in an interesting way by Prof. AJP Dr. Paweł Leszczyński (WAiBN). Participants in this inaugural meeting included Mirosław Marcinkiewicz (Vice-Chairman of the Sejmik) and Sławomir Jach (Director of the AJP Main Library). The discussion was attended by students of the Faculty of Administration and National Security of the University.

The second debate took place on 21 May 2019 and its topic was ‘European and Polish determinants of the 2019 European Parliament elections’. The introductory speech was given by Dr Tomasz Marcinkowski. The next debate took place after the holidays on 23 October 2019. Its topic was defined as ‘Poland after the elections’ and had the character of a moderated discussion. The November meeting (26.11.2019) was devoted to the topic: “The role of Russian special services in the formation of Russia’s power politics”. The introductory speech was given by Dr Andrzej Skwarski (WAiBN AJP) reflecting on whether the Russian state has services or the services have a state.

‘Eastern’ issues were also the theme of the last meeting of 2019. It was held on 12 December. An introductory speech on the topic: “ZBiR to Russia. The state of Russian-Belarusian relations and what does this imply for Poland?” was presented by Professor Paweł Leszczyński (WAiBN AJP). He discussed the historical conditions of relations between Russia and Belarus and pointed to the most important contemporary determinants of the political situation in that country.

In addition, in 2019, the Branch sponsored the panel ‘Socio-political determinants of state security’, which took place as part of the 5th All-Polish Scientific Conference ‘Poland’s National Security. Threats and determinants of change’.

The year 2020 marked the second year of activity of the Gorzow Branch of PTNP. The numerical strength of the branch did not change, and it had 8 members.

The activities of the Gorzow Branch of PTNP continued to focus on organising discussion meetings to disseminate knowledge and the state of research in political and security sciences and co-organising scientific conferences.
On 14 January, a scientific seminar entitled ‘The European Commission Facing the Challenges of the Future’ took place, at which European Commission experts Dr Aleksandra Szczersza-Zawada and Dr Marta Witkowska presented ‘Priorities of the New European Commission – The EU Facing Challenges and Problems’ and ‘Institutional and Political Determinants of Agreeing and Implementing the Priorities of the European Commission’. On 26 January, a discussion meeting took place entitled. ‘Chekist in retirement. Russia from Prime Minister Putin to Prime Minister Mishustin’, with an introduction by Professor Kazimierz Kraj. On 9 March, we co-organised a meeting entitled “From suffragettes to feminists. Women’s rights in Poland!”. The meeting started with a recital by Matylda Błakała, while Dr Natalia Gorzkiewicz and Dr Aleksandra Szczersza-Zawada introduced the issues.

On 28 May, we co-organised an on-line discussion meeting (Teams) for the first time. It attempted to answer the question “Will the post-pandemic world be different?”. The discussion was introduced by Prof. Dr Beata Orłowska, Dr Łukasz Budzyński, Dr Tomasz Marcinkowski and Dr Juliusz Sikorski.

An online seminar (Teams) entitled ‘Migration in the shadow of a pandemic – pandemic in the shadow of migration’ was held on 15 July. The issues were presented by Dr Marta Pachocka (SGH, Team Europe in Poland, PECSA), Dr Joanna Lubimow (AJP, PTNP) and Dr Aleksandra Szczersza-Zawada (AJP, Team Europe in Poland, PECSA, PTSE).

The next meeting was organised after the holidays on 26 October (online, Teams). Its topic was again devoted to the Russian Federation. This time we asked the question “Where are you going Russia?”’. The meeting was accompanied by the promotion of the book ‘Russia in the process of challenge – between democracy and authoritarianism’. It was addressed by Dr Tomasz Marcinkowski, who delivered the talk ‘The Russian Federation in the foreign policy of the United Right government in 2015-2019. Russia and Poland’s security in the new (un)international order’, Dr Andrzej Skwarski, who discussed ‘The links between Russian special services and organised crime organisations and their role in the implementation of the Kremlin’s domestic and foreign policy’, and Dr Juliusz Sikorski, who presented a talk entitled ‘Poland in the face of Russian information expansion’.

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On 3 December a Scientific Seminar took place on the theme “What kind of Poland in the European Union? What kind of European Union for Poland?” with the participation of Jacek Barcik, Ph.D., Prof. UŚ (University of Silesia in Katowice) (“EU conditionality mechanism – the essence”), Tomasz Grzegorz Grosse, Ph.D. (University of Warsaw) (“Polish veto on the conditionality mechanism – reasons”) and Beata Piskorska, Ph.D., Prof. KUL (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin/Team Europe) (“Polish veto on the conditionality mechanism – consequences”).

In addition, in November we co-organised the 7th Cross-Border Scientific Conference ‘Development on the Periphery? Poland Germany the European Union in the face of the crisis’, while in December we co-organised the 4th two-day national scientific conference ‘From stereotypes to hatred. Hate in an interdisciplinary perspective’.

The year 2021 was the third year of activity of the Gorzow Branch of the PTNP. The Branch’s General Meeting of Members was held remotely on 11 March 2021. At that time, the branch had nine members.

The activities of the Gorzow Branch of PTNP continued to focus on organising discussion meetings to disseminate knowledge and the state of research in political science and security science, methodological seminars and co-organising scientific conferences.

In January 2021, we organised a meeting with Dr. Darya Zviagina, a political scientist, cultural studies scholar, international relations expert with academic and business experience, graduate of M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Russian Academy of National Economy and State Administration. Dr Zviagina was asked to try to answer the question “Where are you heading Russia?”. Interest in the meeting surprised the organisers, and participants included academics from Estonia and Ukraine.

The February meeting was equally popular. The problem discussed was the contemporary security conditions of the Baltic States. An introduction to the issues was given by Col. Res. Dr. Zdzislaw Sliwa, dean of the Baltic Defence College in Tartu, a graduate of the Mechanised Forces Officers’ College and the National Defence Academy, the United States Army Command and General Staff College at
Fort Leavenworth and at the Centre for Strategic Studies at the National Defence University of the People’s Liberation Army in Beijing. A former commander of units up to battalion level, he was Chief of Operations Branch J3 at KFOR Headquarters in Pristina, Kosovo, and Chief of Operations Planning Branch J5 at the Polish Armed Forces Operational Command in Warsaw.

In March, Dr Katarzyna Dośpiał-Borysiak from the Faculty of International and Political Studies at the University of Łódź was invited to discuss the dilemmas of climate policy problems. Prof. Dośpiał-Borysiak is an expert on climate policy, regionalism and European integration, the Nordic countries, the Arctic and Baltic regions and sustainable development. She is the author of numerous articles and publications, including the book ‘State climate policy. The Norwegian road to sustainable development’ (Łódź 2019); and translator of M. Maslin’s book ‘Climate Change’.

In April, we organised a meeting on wage discrimination. The issue was introduced to the participants by Dr Anna Masłoń-Oracz from the Warsaw School of Economics (on Women in the labour market), Dr Aleksandra Szczerba Prof. AJP (on Proposing a directive on openness of salaries: an EU remedy for gender inequality?) and Dr Małgorzata Dziembala Prof. of the University of Economics in Katowice (e.g. Supporting equal opportunities for women and men in cohesion policy).

In May, on the other hand, a debate was held on ‘Security of telecommunications network data centres and their power systems’. Dr Zbigniew Szkaradnik, a computer scientist, former scientist, investor and founder of many successful ventures in the IT industry, gave an interesting talk on these rather complex issues.

Also in May, together with the Gorzow Branch of the PTSE and the Faculty of Administration and National Security, we initiated methodological seminars. The first speaker we invited was Dr Grzegorz Klein from WAiBN AJP, who devoted his talk to ‘Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research in security sciences – a case study’.

A month later, the Methodology Seminars featured Dr. Kazimierz Kraj Prof. AJP attempting to find an answer to the question he posed, “Can intelligence analysis as a scientific discipline in statu nascendi be used in the security sciences?”.
Also in June 2021, as part of the Conference on the Future of Europe initiated by the European Parliament, a seminar was held on ‘The Future of the European Union. European and National Determinants”. The introduction to the discussion was made by Prof. Zbigniew Czachór (President of the PTSE General Board) and Piotr Tosiek, PhD (Vice-President of the PTSE General Board).

We organised another debate after the summer holidays. It was devoted to ‘Contesting European integration and de-Europeanisation. Between theory and practice’. The introduction to the issues was made by Joanna Dyduch, Ph.D., Professor of the Jagiellonian University, author of many publications on foreign policy and international relations in the theoretical and practical perspective, including the monograph entitled “Europeanisation of Polish foreign policy in the perspective of structural realism”.

In November, the third methodological seminar entitled ‘Pedagogy and Security. Are these two disciplines different research worlds?” took place which included a presentation by Prof. Beata Orłowska (AJP), Dean of the Faculty of Administration and National Security at AJP.

In turn, in December, the seminar meetings featured Prof. Irena Machaj, Dean of the Faculty of Tourism and Health Sciences at AJP, who devoted her speech to considerations entitled ‘Security science in the methodological perspective of sociology’.

A few days earlier, the All-Polish Scientific Conference “Communication. Disinformation. Propaganda. The practice of information warfare” took place.

In conclusion, it should be emphasised that in 2019-2021 the Gorzow Branch of PTNP organised, in cooperation with its partners, eighteen discussion meetings, four methodological seminars and four online conferences.