

SUMMARY

The German aggression on the territory of the Republic of Poland sparked the Second World War. The September tragedy of the Polish state and nation was made complete by the encroachment of the Red Army and the Soviet collaboration with the Third Reich in the fourth partition of Poland. The country fell prey to the expansionist policies of the neighbouring superpowers, two ideologically different totalitarian systems, while its citizens became victims of the extermination policy, i.e. deportations, arrests and executions. Despite such a difficult situation from the beginning of the war and the later subjugation, the effort to regain independence was undertaken nonetheless. Its design and fulfilment in the territory of the occupied country was the work of the Polish Underground State. In the history of the fight for independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Poland, one of the key factors was the struggle with the imperialist aspirations of the Soviet Union, including the threat posed by the Polish communists. Their political activity was of interest (i.e., it was observed and deeply analysed) by the competent agencies of the Polish Underground State. The elemental instrument used to fight all the negative consequences, as perceived by the Polish decision makers, of the Polish communists' and, foremost, of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR) political presence and activity was the propaganda and information campaign conducted in the centrally-managed everyday underground press. It was an instrument which, owing to the possibility it provided to act on the part of the society it reached, was influential not only on the plane of official, institutionalised political relations, but also on that of social attitudes, the general social stance taken towards communists and their programme assumptions. It was in the underground, independence-oriented press that the first ideological and propaganda protective barrier for the Polish society and nation was built against the communist and *de facto* Soviet threat. By virtue of that, the journalistic activity of the Polish Underground State agencies became the most visible evidence to the society of the attitude of the Polish independence circles towards the communists and communism.

The present work, through an analysis of the centrally-managed conspirational press publications, provides a reconstruction of the stance of the Polish Underground State towards the Polish communists in the period of 1939–1945. It represents an attempt to find an answer to the questions regarding the extent to which the independence-oriented structures were committed to the anti-Communist campaign, its nature, forms, contents, intensity and progress, i.e. its successes and failures. It is also a study which tries to indicate, analyse and debunk the stereotypes that functioned in the Underground and misrepresentations of the Communist movement in Poland relating to its ethnic composition, numbers, organisational structure. It is thus an attempt to present the state of knowledge of the independence-oriented Underground about the Communist movement and, indirectly, also the degree of the awareness of the Polish society

about it. This paper reconstructs the course of the propaganda and informational confrontation between the Polish Underground State and the Polish communists. Simultaneously, a reader who wants to take advantage of this work must be aware that the author's intention was not in any way to produce a monograph on the history of the underground press, nor that of the Communist underground, but he attempts to demonstrate the anti-Communist propaganda and informational campaign and, on that plane, provide a comprehensive review of the attitudes of the independence-oriented, pro-government Underground towards the communists and their activity.

The attitudes were unambiguously negative and confrontation-oriented. In this seemingly monolithic stance, as regards the choice of forms and instruments to counter the Communist circles, there appeared fairly pronounced discrepancies in the Polish Underground State. The National Democratic, Christian Democratic circles and the Pilsudski-ites opted for trying, prosecuting or even physically eliminating the communists as representing a Soviet agency. The other groups of the independence-oriented Underground – especially the People's Party – and its governmental and military institutions were, for various reasons, against such solutions. The debate over the forms of fighting the Communist agencies dominated the subjects of the underground press announcements devoted to the so-called "K" question, finally favouring a moderate solution, i.e. a uniform, comprehensive propaganda campaign which came to be coordinated by the Social Anti-Communist Committee (SKA) established in October 1943. In this manner, the stance represented by a large section of the Polish Underground organisations was rejected, a stance which advocated a decisive fight against the Communist underground not only restricted to propaganda, but also involving a settlement by force. Paradoxically, several months later, having seized power in Poland, the PPR-AL (Polish Workers' Party and People's Army) activists did not have any moral or tactical inhibitions on this matter in relation to the independence-oriented Underground they fought. The soldiers of the independence-oriented Underground were murdered, imprisoned and exiled to the interior of the Soviet Union.

The confrontation with the Communist forces ended in defeat for the Underground Polish State. However, the centrally-managed, independence-oriented press came off victorious in the war turmoil. The "K" victory was decided, first of all, with Soviet tanks and bayonets, not with the efficacy of the social influence of PPR (Polish People's Party) or ZPP (Union of Polish Patriots) agitation. The agitation met an insurmountable barrier, i.e. the anti-Communist propaganda campaign by the Underground Polish State which could boast many a success (e.g. the formation of an anti-Communist, pro-democratic and independence-oriented social awareness; the prevention of a premature general uprising started by the communists; the exposure of all the Communist tactics, slogans and methods to the society; the formation of a common anti-Communist front under the banner of SKA) but whose list of offences, errors or even defeats can not be said to have been short (e.g. a relatively poor reconnaissance of the "K" segment in the pre-PPR period; basing the anti-Communist campaign only on propaganda, neglecting court institutions which had the legal resources to fight high treason and whose sentences could become an effective propaganda instrument; a belated formation of the SKA; the February talks of the Government Delegation for Poland with the PPR; the use by the AK [Home Army] of the unfortunate watchword "keep arms at the ready" which provided excellent fuel for the Communist propaganda). The present work deals with all the above questions.