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“What sort of communists are you?” The struggle between nationalism and ideology in Poland between 1944 and 1956

Jan Ryszard Kozdra
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**“What sort of communists are you?” The struggle between nationalism and
ideology in Poland between 1944 and 1956**

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Bachelor of Arts**

**This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts**

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2017

Abstract

The period between 1944 and 1956, also known as the “Stalinist period”, is one of the most controversial and turbulent in Polish history. The Polish communist party launched the project of restructuring Polish society, whose historically well-established national identity seemed incompatible with the communist project. Firstly, the communists effected a demographic change that resulted in a near mono-ethnic state. Simultaneously, they introduced a centrally planned economy, transformed state symbolism, initiated a national education system, attempted to re-shape popular attitudes to religion, and launched a massive propaganda campaign to reinforce and popularize their objectives.

This study seeks to investigate the communists’ attempts to accommodate Polish nationalism, the impact these attempts had on the success of the communist project in Poland and, by implication, the governments’ relationship with Poles and the USSR. By exploring these aspects of the debate, the author discovered that Polish communists, Poles themselves in most cases, struggled to find a balance between their national identity and the communist ideology. In fact, the thesis argues that leaders of the Polish communist government developed a dual identity in their approach to governing Poland: that is, they were primarily nationalists rather than Stalinist communists, but retained some key elements of the ideological and totalitarian framework. As a result, the Polish communist project deviated from the Soviet model and ultimately failed to produce a new and coherent narrative. Crucially, the spread of literacy and education throughout Polish society served to reinforce historic national identity. In 1956, due to popular unrest, the quasi-totalitarian Polish state had to abandon Stalinist style rule and effectively the nationalist component from thereon dominated the narrative of the regime.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
- (iii) contain any defamatory material.

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Chapter I:

Introduction

“What sort of communists are you?” asked Joseph Stalin of the delegation of Polish communists in Moscow in 1944 (Esiler, as cited in Leszczyński, 2013) in regard to their moderate attitude concerning land reform and redistribution, Stalin ultimately questioned the revolutionary zeal of Polish communists and their attachment to the very ideology of communism. Indeed, the Polish communist regime, even at the height of Stalinism, was much more moderate than communist regimes in Czechoslovakia or Hungary with regard to oppression or even forcing the communist ideology, attempting “to succeed at a minimal cost, before resorting to more brutal methods, they wanted to exhaust other possibilities” (Esiler, as cited in Leszczyński, 2013). Furthermore, as one Polish communist claimed, they “knew the Soviet Union” and told themselves “we could do it differently, we could do it better” (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 457). Such a statement highlights a tension between the Soviet model and Polish approach. Therefore, it is crucial to ask why Polish communists attempted a more moderate and less ideological approach. Such questions can be answered in terms of a sentiment shared by the entire Polish nation, especially after the World War II – nationalism. It is impossible to critically engage with Poland’s post war history without reference to the strong forces of nationalism that have driven Polish history. However, nationalism is not easily compatible with the internationally based ideology of communism that Poland was subjected to between the end of World War Two and the fall of communism in the late eighties. The tension between these two forces and the tension they placed on the Polish communist party between 1944 and 1956 are the focus of this thesis.

The significant role that nationalism played in post-war Polish politics is highlighted by the demographic statistics. Post-1945 Poland is a state where, according to the most recent censuses, 94% of citizens identify themselves as ethnically Polish (Cordell and Dybczynski, 2005, p. 81), while her predecessor – the Second Polish Republic – had only 69% of ethnic Poles as citizens, with the other 31% consisting of mainly of Ukrainians, Jews and other minorities (Prażmowska, 2010, p. 102). By modern standards, Poland, with her almost complete ethnic homogeneity, can be counted among those few polities where a nation is congruent with the state – a nation-state (Connor, 2004). The process of homogenization of the Polish state was launched immediately after the World War II (Mironowicz, 2000) and had a tremendous impact on the Poles and their self-perception as a nation (Czubiński, 2001). These policies, however, were launched and conducted by the new, Soviet-backed, communist government. Indeed, between 1945 and 1989 Poland, alongside other countries in Eastern Europe, was subject to Soviet political, economic and military

domination (Prażmowska, 2010). Soviet-backed regimes, by default mimicking the Soviet model, were quasi-totalitarian, containing elements of a totalitarian regime such as secret police, prisons and labour camps, control of media and press, and oppression and, for most Poles, this period was a traumatic one. These particular historical experiences, understandably, created the perception of that period as a “black hole” in Polish history - a period that most Poles would sooner forget - although it was also a period of modernization and important social changes (Czubiński, 2001, p. 4).

Consequently, the literature critically engaging with the Polish communist experience is still rather scarce, especially in terms of its impact on Poles’ national identity. As Conversi argues, socialist regimes were engaged in social engineering more than any other form of government in history (2008, p. 1287). In this light, the policies pursued by the communist government focused on ethnic cleansing and expulsions of ethnic minorities, a national educational curriculum, national unification through religious affiliation, significant nationalisation of the economy, propaganda, and attempts to form a new modern Polish historiography to justify the new borders and political system. These policies aimed to shape the new Polish nation. Therefore, this project investigates these policies to assess the degree of their success and impact they had on Poles as a nation and, specifically, to highlight the internal tension between ideology and nationalism in their formation and execution by the Polish regime. The period this project will focus on is between 1945 and 1956, the formative years for the new Polish state where all policies were launched and ethnic homogenization completed (Mironowicz, 2000). Other policies were shaped and implemented in that period and endured with only slight modifications, until the communist regime collapsed in 1989. Furthermore, by 1956 the Soviet leadership acknowledged that the Soviet Model was inherently incompatible with Polish nationalism and it effectively allowed dominant nationalist narrative as long as Poland officially remained within the Eastern Bloc (Esiler, 2015).

Critical engagement with the communist past has been largely absent in post-1989 Polish society, where two main narratives emerged – one aiming to completely discredit the period between 1944 and 1989, known as People’s Poland (pol. Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa – PRL) and another discrediting most aspects of it (Ochman, 2013). Therefore, the period of almost five decades of Polish history is analysed through the context of internal oppression and foreign domination (Czubiński, 2000). Nevertheless, the People’s Poland, with all its shortcomings, was the milieu for millions of Poles, since there was no alternative

(Czubiński, 2000). The current Polish historiography only began to re-evaluate the PRL as a period of Polish history, with more balanced accounts by Czubiński (2000), Ochman (2013) and Prażmowska (2010, 2011). However, in the main, these important works focus on the general history of Poland, without detailed analysis of specific communist policies and approaches.

The significance of this dissertation, therefore, is its attempt to revise the current historical narrative concerning the formative period for the communist regime between 1945 and 1956, specifically the role that both ideology and nationalism played in this formative period. Within the scholarly debate it is possible to identify two main approaches displayed by two different sides the historical discourse – Polish and Western. Polish historians like Gontarczyk (2013) and Eisler (2015) claim that Polish communists betrayed the national cause and served as a proxy for the Soviets, while Western historians like Curp (2005), Douglas (2012) or Fleming (2010) argue that nationalism dominated the Polish communist regime. Porter-Szucs goes as far to argue that some members of the regime, especially Gomułka, were “deeply grounded in nationalist far right” politics (2014, p. 231). However, this does not mean that there is consensus among western historians on the nature and extent of nationalism among Polish communist leaders. Norman Davies, for example, acknowledges the incompatibility of the regime and Polish nationalism and argues this was the root of its rejection (2001, p. 2-3). Polish historians working in the West also present differing opinions about the role of nationalism and ideology. Adam Zamoyski claims that “although fashioning itself like a socialist version of the medieval Piast kingdom,” the regime “failed to create “a new Polish society, but transformed it into a repressed group of individuals” (2011, pp. 249-250). The analysis of Polish nationalism under communism (in reference to members of the regime or the nation itself) is acknowledged in both generalist and specialist literature. However, these analyses focus predominantly on the most apparent manifestation of nationalism – the ethnic cleansing effected after the WWII. Only Zaręmba (2002) explicitly discusses the use of nationalist rhetoric for propaganda purposes. Eisler alludes to nationalist responses within the regime (2008, 2014), yet he does not provide a detailed analysis. Overall, an argument for the dual identity of the regime, and the tensions and contradictions it created, is absent from a broader historical debate. This project will argue that Polish communists struggled to find a balance between the communist ideology and nationalism, especially in the formative period between 1944 and 1956. At this point, it is important to emphasize that the nationalist responses and actions of the communist regime can be divided

into two distinct groups – the open endorsement of nationalist sentiments and subtler and less open nationalist responses that manifested themselves in more moderate approaches in terms of policies such as nationalisation of industry, collectivisation, or terror. The former was used as a tactic and a tool of popularising the regime (Zaremba, 2002), while the latter demonstrates the tensions between nationalism and communism within the Polish communist party. Such tensions are most sharply demonstrated by an account of Józef Światło (high ranking official of the repression apparatus) who claimed that Gomułka believed that the regime would follow the officially endorsed and more moderate version of socialism that was advocated to popularize the regime, while other members of the Politburo (Minc, Berman and Bierut) knew it was only a propaganda move. Such tension is aptly illustrated in most recent scholarly publication concerning the period in question – Anita Prażmowska’s biography of Gomułka (2016). She analyses Gomułka’s rejection of the Soviet model and push for moderation; nevertheless, such moderation would be still implemented within the framework of a socialist model. When the official stage of endorsing nationalism was over, Gomułka was imprisoned and replaced by Bierut. (HIA, DSM, sygn. 158, scan 420). These tensions within the politburo itself reflect more general tensions between the regime and Polish nationalism.

Światło’s revealing comment also draws attention to the existence of two periods within the timeframe of this project – the first phase between 1944 and 1948, when nationalism dominated the regime’s narrative, and the second between 1948 and 1956, when the communist regime attempted to replace nationalism with their modified version of Soviet communist ideology. Thus, the main argument of this thesis is that Polish communists in the formative years between 1944 and 1956 struggled to find a balance between their national identity and the communist ideology. By the end of that period, however, the ideological approach resulted in a deep crisis of the regime. The crisis on its own was caused by the ongoing erosion of the regime’s power following Stalin’s death. The attempt to suppress nationalism post-1948 resulted in an eruption of nationalist sentiment that nearly toppled the regime when it was at its weakest and exposed Poland to the threat of Soviet intervention. The transformation of the regime post-1956, instigated to avoid the collapse, introduced nationalism as the dominant narrative within the communist party. This dissertation will not deny the trauma of past generations, nor will it attempt to provide any moral assessment of the People’s Poland. It aims to investigate, explain and assess the extent to which the communist party and its policies of ethnic cleansing (Mironowicz, 2000), interference with

religion, the economy, education curriculum, “polityka historyczna” (politics of history) and propaganda (Ochman, 2013, p. 22) responded to the Polish national sentiments and, in fact, helped shape and strengthen modern Polish national identity. The author acknowledges that such a view sits at considerable odds with the prevailing cultural view of contemporary Poles and the historiography of the period.

In order to explore these issues and ideological tensions, this dissertation will aim to establish a theoretical perspective through which the shape of the development and shape of Polish nationalism prior to 1945 will be analysed. Then it will move to analyse the tensions between the Soviet model and the Polish approach and its impact on the policies launched by the regime. Next, the specific aspects and policies will be analysed, the first and most important of them being the physical expulsion of ethnic minorities and Germans from the newly acquired territories. The mass ethnic cleansing created a state almost completely devoid of ethnic minorities, thus approximating the model of a nation-state (Prażmowska, 2004). Such action, and its resulting cultural, linguistic and ethnic homogeneity, had very significant implications for Polish identity, which this dissertation will aim to analyse.

Another set of ground-breaking policies, aimed at re-shaping Polish national identity, was the introduction of new set of symbols and national celebrations, which the regime combined with a new nation-wide education scheme and the new curriculum, especially in the teaching of history. However, as Mironowicz (2000) notes, the majority of primary, secondary and tertiary education institutions were established by the communist government. Assuring free education at all levels, the communist government not only eliminated illiteracy, but achieved a tool to disseminate its ideological values, through schools. However, the curriculum was never entirely free of nationalist components. Compulsory attendance at the primary level (Mironowicz, 2000) assured that all born between 1945 and 1989 were educated along the lines of the established communist curriculum. Since millions of Poles who live in the new, democratic, Poland were educated by the communist regime, it would be hard to argue that some values instilled by the communist education system were lost when the regime collapsed in 1989. Then this project will move to analyse the regime’s propaganda, which aimed to promote its ideological values in the society and equip it with the popularity and legitimacy it lacked. Finally, this project will analyse the religious politics of the communist government, which oppressed all religious forms within its boundaries, following the secular doctrine of communism. However, the communist government, while repressing the Orthodox and Protestant Christians, as well as Muslims, allowed the Catholic

Church to operate relatively freely (Prażmowska, 2011). Thus, as the oppressed religious minorities waned, Catholicism emerged as the dominant religious denomination in the PRL, which, coupled with ethnic cleansing, assured that Poland became not only a mono-ethnic state, but also a mono-religious one. Given the historical connection between Catholicism and national identity in Poland, the dominant position granted to the Church was a reflection of regime's acknowledgement of this relationship and, as a consequence, strengthened the growth of post-war nationalism.

Having investigated all aforementioned aspects and policies, this dissertation will then attempt to synthesise the information collected in order to critically engage with the communist attempt to create a new Polish identity and assess the degree of success it achieved in this endeavour between 1944 and 1956, the formative period of the regime. The constraints of this project will warrant that certain aspects, like the post-war reconstruction and the architectural landscape as well as the change in the class structure of the population, will not be included in this argument, and might be the subject of further research if such opportunity should present itself. Other issues, like collectivisation, the use of terror, and persecution, will be analysed briefly and only in respect of the underlying tensions between nationalism and ideology within the Polish communist party. Nevertheless, the author of this dissertation is aware that issues discussed here are selected to reflect the underlying argument. This thesis attempts to fill a gap in the literature, as well as to provide a revised approach to Polish post-war history. The current literature exposes in very few cases (Torańska, 1985) of the dual identity among Polish communists, and an analysis of that identity cannot be found in scholarly debate. Some historians, like Esiler (2008; 2014), point to some nationalist responses of the regime (especially in 1956); nevertheless, the uneasy relationship between the communist ideology and nationalism does not appear in the scholarly debate. The argument of the dual identity proposed here can assist in explaining why Poland attempted to develop its own "Polish road to socialism" and, furthermore, why the very members of the regime contributed to "erosion of the communist dogma" (Taras, 1998, p. 81). Understanding and acknowledging the dual identity of Polish communists can broaden the historical debate concerning the post-war Polish history or, as Esiler framed it, "the Polish way through socialism" (2004, p. x). Such broadened understanding has the potential to provide new perspectives regarding the communist project in Poland – its domestic and foreign policies. It can also provide a deeper understanding of regime's almost perpetual political crisis (turmoil occurred in 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976 and 1981-3, leading to

the non-violent transformation of 1989). Additionally, this revised perspective offers an exhaustive explanation as to why the Polish variant of socialism deviated so significantly from the Soviet. Furthermore, this approach assists in understanding why Poland was the most successful in asserting its own “way to socialism” while other Soviet Bloc regimes fell victim of a Soviet (or Soviet - ed) invasion for attempting to alter the Soviet model (like Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968). This study will examine Polish nationalism and its impact on the communist project in Poland between 1944 and 1956, arguing that the ultimate failure of communism was not only caused by its oppressive nature and popular rejection, but also because the very regime that launched the communist project struggled to reconcile the communist ideology and Polish national identity. Thus, the very people charged with implementing the communist project also played a part in its failure. It is important to emphasize that the tension between nationalism and ideology was not the only dynamic that occurred and shaped more than forty years of the communist rule in Poland – there have been ideological tensions within the party as well as tensions within the Eastern Bloc. However, this dissertation will solely focus on the tensions between nationalism and ideology and their impact on post-war Poland in the first twelve years after communist takeover in 1944.

Research Questions:

The investigation will be guided by an overarching question regarding the extent to which the Polish communist party sought to accommodate Polish nationalism and the tensions this created with its ideological foundations in communism. From this general question arose the issue of the dual identity of Polish communists, a result of their attempts to reconcile nationalism and the communist ideology. This idea of a dual identity through which to explore the regime’s policies and impact is not represented in the current literature which, as mentioned above, is highly polarized. As the thesis argues, this dual identity influenced the regime’s policies to re-shape post-war Poland and impacted its relations with both the Soviet Union and Polish society. Finally, the question of the overall impact of their dual identity on the communist project will be addressed. As I argue in the thesis, the existence of the dual identity at the heart of the communist regime helped to unravel the communist project through its lack of internal consistency. Each chapter aims to explore the issue of communist dual identity that manifested itself in various policies and projects the regime launched during the first twelve years of its existence. The specific research questions guiding the discussion are:

- 1) To what extent did the Polish communist party seek accommodation with Polish nationalism? This question will be investigated through the entire project as all areas

of the regime activity contained or allowed space for nationalist discourse.

- 2) In what ways did that accommodation produce the dual identity in the Polish communist party? This issue is analysed in Chapter II; however, elements of dual identity underpin all areas covered by this project.
- 3) In what ways did the Polish communist party members use their dual identity to shape post-war Poland? This issue will be explored through the chapters concerning specific policies launched by the regime; namely ethnic cleansing, changing national symbols, new education system, propaganda and struggle with the Church
- 4) How did the dual identity impact relations with the USSR and Poles? All chapters include an attempt to answer this question through investigating individual responses to communist policies; the relation with the USSR is analysed in Chapter II and the Conclusion.
- 5) How did that dual identity impact the communist project in Poland? Assessment of that issue is provided in the general conclusion of this project.

Methodological Approach

The aim of this study is to examine the construction of both Polish identity and Polish nation state as a socio-political process in the period of 1945-1956. For this purpose, a qualitative rather than a quantitative method has been chosen. In this case, as Cook and Crang point out, knowledge needs to be contextualized and set against particular and individual backgrounds; therefore, it can be seen as a construct rather than a set of undeniable facts (2007, p. 70)

The qualitative approach demands use of interdisciplinary methods of analysing both “talk” and “text” (Parakyla & Ruusuvuori, 2013) and an expressed acknowledgment that the researcher cannot be fully separated from or unbiased towards his or her research, being subject to varying backgrounds and influences (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1983). Therefore, the broad methodological framework of this study is interpretivist, and predominantly concerned with “social reality” (Harrison, Hill and Leitch, 2010, p. 68). Furthermore, this epistemological perspective accepts that knowledge is both a construct and “a product of human action and interactions and of the meanings that social actors attach to their experiences” (Wignall, 1998, p. 305). Hence the project includes inductive analysis of Polish ethnic nationalism and its appropriation by the communists, which will be rendered from the perspective of ethno-symbolism as outlined by Smith (1988, 1991) – the ethno-symbolist

perspective being one that emphasizes “cultural material of the past” (Ozkirimli, 2000, p. 187) as well as obstinacy of previously existing “myths, symbols, values and meanings” (Ozkirimli, 2000, p. 167) in the historical process of nation formation.

Primary, archival and secondary research

This exploratory study adopts a mix of qualitative research approaches. Being concerned with socio-political events that occurred between 1945 and 1956 and their impacts of later developments, this research project also adopts a historical approach. After reading appropriate literature concerning the topic and formulating research questions it moves towards selection of appropriate primary historical sources found in archives (both in digital and hard copy form) and national libraries (accessed through the Federation of Digital Libraries – pol. Federacja Bibliotek Cyfrowych). The primary research can be divided into two categories – hard copy *in situ* resources found in archives and, secondly, their digitalised form. The *in situ* archival resources were accessed during a research trip to Poland between November 2015 and February 2016. These resources had to be analysed and processed on site; thus, actual analysis of data came from the researcher’s detailed notes. Other sources have been accessed online – these include Polish Film Chronicle (newsreels), *Workers’ Tribune* (pro-regime newspaper), propaganda posters and additional archival material available online. The different forms of archival material can be distinguished by the form of internal referencing, which deserves explanation on its own. The style of referencing of archival material adopted by this thesis is not compatible with the APA style, as adherence to APA guidelines in case of Polish archives would only obscure the direct sources; instead a style commonly used by Polish historians had been adopted. The difference between the onsite and online material is distinguishable in a following way – the onsite materials are indicated by their page number and online materials provide scan numbers (See Appendix A); other online material is referenced in accordance with APA guidelines. Analysis of data obtained from both academic and primary sources concerned analysis of fragmentary (as the issue of dual identity is non-existent in literature) and evidence of the dichotomous behaviour of Polish communists in primary and archival sources. The data was then combined and synthesised to form an argument that confirmed and emphasized the dual identity argument stipulated in this thesis.

Ethnographic component

Another approach was ethnographic. As there are many Poles who were subject to the communist policies of 1945-1956, the researcher engaged with them through interviews. Interviews were conducted in retirement houses and aged-care facilities across Poland. These interviews were conducted in groups of people who were born between 1933 and 1949. In total, 30 people were interviewed for this project. Participants were drawn from 4 different retirement homes and aged-care facilities (two in Lower Silesia, one in Szczecin and one in Warsaw); three other interviewees that I knew could provide a valuable insight to this project were approached directly; other participants, however, were enlisted through the institutions they resided at. I informed the institution about my research, providing the information letter and consent forms (see Appendix B), which was followed by a phone call to arrange the details. Questions regarded interviewees' personal experiences and responses to policies launched by the regime, as well as questions regarding their self-identification as Poles (see Appendix C); these, however, served only as a guide. Nevertheless, the semi-structured questions aimed to obtain information about particular areas – like education, propaganda and rituals of the state – thus in these cases the analysis of data was reduced to comparing initial assumptions with results as well as obtaining data regarding personal experiences and responses in the aforementioned areas. In this manner I discovered that only 2 out of 30 interviewees were members, at some point, of the Polish communist party. One did it to advance his career and the other from conviction; however, she only alluded to it, without expressing it directly. Additionally, I have used a collection of interviews with top communist officials conducted by Teresa Torańska and published in two volumes (*Oni – Them* and *Byli – Bygones*), which expose the characters of the most important Polish communists as well as providing another perspective regarding the events that unfolded between 1948 and 1956.

The interviews in most cases occurred in small groups of up to 3-4 people with the exception of three interviewees whom I knew beforehand. In all cases, participants chose to remain anonymous; thus, this thesis did not at any point disclose their identity. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym, which in its abbreviated form was used for internal referencing. Some patterns and responses were observable in all interviews, and some personal experiences and responses (although bearing similarity to all responses provided by participants) were used directly as they best exemplified aspects investigated by this project. Furthermore, twelve participants directly alluded to or mentioned the dual identity they could

observe among members of the regime apparatus, thus strengthening the argument that I propose in this project.

Chapter II:

Theoretical

perspectives

As previously mentioned, the Polish communist regime struggled to find a balance between nationalism and ideology, which caused significant tensions within the regime and impacted upon the approach and methods used by Polish communists. Since nationalism was such a significant element influencing actions of the regime, and because it has been a key component of Poland's long history, understanding nationalism, its forms and theories explaining its development are at the centre of this project. Nationalism itself is an elusive concept and/or theory to define. However, if we are to understand why Poland's post-war communist leaders retained strong links to Polish nationalism – in defiance of their Soviet patrons – an attempt must be made to grapple with the force of nationalism as a shaper of nations and states.

Theories of nationalism and forms of nationalism

The literature on nationalism is abundant and there are different theories and approaches. The issue is certainly complex and multifaceted. Particular nationalisms and their development heavily depend on historical, geographical, political and social contexts. Thus, a generic analysis of nationalism can prove difficult and will almost always omit certain aspects and particular developments. In order to better understand nationalism, it is essential to introduce the five main schools that aim to define nationalism and most common forms that nationalism assumes: primordialism, modernism, ethno-symbolism and ethno-nationalism and constructivism. Primordialism asserts that national bonds are primary and innate bonds that unite populations that nations developed with the birth of civilization and remain unchanged (Özirimli, 2000). Modernism stipulates that nations are a result of modern processes initiated by the First Industrial Revolution (Özirimli, 2000), therefore arguing that nations could not exist prior to modern technological developments, which allowed the state to unify its population. The third school, developed by Anthony D. Smith – ethno-symbolism – treats national ties as a result of a long historical process (Özirimli, 2000; Smith, 1987). Ethno-nationalism places ethnicity at the centre of national formation and identification. Ethnic criteria of nationality were scrutinised by many academics, such as Connor (1994), who coined the term ethnonationalism, and subsequently argued that nationalism is predominantly ethnic in its nature (2004). The constructivist theory of nationalism argues that nations are fabricated or “constructed” by ethnic or non-ethnic groups to assert their power (Taras, 1998, p. 80).

These main schools identify two main strains of nationalism – ethnic and civic (Shulman, 2002). Ethnic nationalism, argued to be confined to the East, defines nationality through cultural, linguistic and religious attributes of ethnicity (Deutsch, 1969). Adding to complexity of the nationalist phenomenon, ethno-nationalism can both be viewed as a theory of nationalism and one of the strains of nationalism, that uses ethnic criteria to define nationality (Shulman, 2002). The other form of nationalism – civic – defines nationality in purely political terms. Community of rights, common laws and government are the main criteria in defining nationality, as arguably it occurs in the West (Deutsch, 1969); ethnicity is not a differentiating factor and citizenship rights belong to all ethnic groups within a given state and can be even extended to foreigners (Shulman, 2002). This thesis is not theoretical in its purpose; it does not aim to support or contest any school of thought concerning nationalism. The Polish case is so complicated that I chose a synthesis of arguments. The complexities and disagreements within these schools of thought, as well as disagreements between them, will not be the major focus of this dissertation. These schools and selectively chosen arguments they propose, will therefore be used as a tool assisting in understanding the processes that occurred in Poland between 1944 and 1956.

Significance of ethno-symbolism to Poland

Having discussed the main schools and forms of nationalism, this chapter can now proceed to discuss the social and political processes that occurred in Poland after 1945 in relevance to Polish national identity and nationalism, as well as to justify the choice of the theoretical framework guiding the argument. The aim of this chapter is, therefore, to name and justify the chosen elements of theories of nationalism that relate to Poland. These theories best explain the ethnic form of nationalism that developed in Poland across the centuries. If ethno-nationalism places ethnicity as the main criterion of national affiliation, ethno-symbolism highlights the need to investigate the history of a given nationality through its ethnic and historical perspective. As it will be demonstrated, Poland's often turbulent, history produced three main components of Polish nationalism – language, religion and resistance to foreign domination. All these elements and traditions became embedded in ethnicity, which served as the ultimate identifying factor. Thus, theories that explicitly focus on ethnicity and its relation with historical developments most can most efficiently explain the form of national identity developed in Poland by the 20th century. Other approaches, like primordialism or perennialism, which argue that nationality and thus nationalism and nations are natural to human nature and as old as humanity itself; on the other side there is the

modernist approach, which treats nations and nationalism as a purely modern product of technological and civilizational developments (Ö zklřłmlł, 2000). All other approaches treat nations and nationalism as an occurrence – ancient or recent – while ethno-symbolism acknowledges that nation formation is a “long process” (Horch, as cited in Hutchinson and Smith, 2000, p. 608). Anthony D. Smith (1986; 1991; 1995; 2003), the most prominent ethno-symbolist, alongside Benedict Anderson (1983), consistently argue that the nation in its current form is to a large extent a product of modern circumstances. However, past experiences, myths, culture, customs and languages – the main tools and features of nationalism – have been developed throughout centuries and need to be taken into account, as nations are not suspended in a vacuum. Although Smith does not focus on modern technological developments in the nation-forming process, he openly acknowledges that “mass citizen states can only emerge in the era of industrialism and democracy” (1991, p. 44) and Anderson focuses on the role of “print-capitalism” and the rise of vernacular languages (1983, p. 77). Both authors allow their main argument to be supplemented by other developments and aspects of discussion, which concern the rise of nation modernity, capitalism, bureaucracy (Gellner, 1983), through modern political (mainly post-Versailles) settlements (Hobsbawm, 1992) and intellectual developments (Kedourie, 1966). Consequently, this project will primarily rely on the main aspect and assumption of ethno-symbolism – the nation and nationalism being a result of a long historical and social process.

Furthermore, this dissertation needs to address the terminological confusion in relevance to nationalism and the state (Connor, 1994). Next, this chapter will move towards identifying processes that allow nationalism to develop, in order to provide a working definition of a nation that will inform the argument of this project. The relation between ethno-symbolism and ethnonationalism can be explained from the historical perspective. As Smith (1987; 1991; 1995) argues, almost all nations contain ethnic cores and different circumstances and processes create different strains of nationalism, which create different identifications and attitudes. In this respect, some historical processes and circumstances might result in a civic version of nationalism – where the nation is perceived as a community of citizens (Smith, 1995) or a community of political freedoms and duties (Tazbir, 1982), thus defined largely in political terms; different circumstances might result in ethnicity being a criterion of nationality (Connor, 1994, 2004). Although most nations and nationalisms contain an ethnic element (Smith, 1987, 1991), the intensity of the ethnic criterion allows the identification of nationalism as either civic or ethnic. Finally, this chapter will move towards

applying all concepts and features of nationalism to Poland's historical experience in order to analyse how and in what circumstances it developed and what form it assumed prior to the communist takeover in 1945.

Towards a synthesis

Bearing in mind the complexity of the Polish case, this dissertation will attempt to synthesise the ethno-symbolist and modernist perspectives. This synthesis will be facilitated by arguments and claims of a theorist and ideologue who so far has been greatly underestimated as a voice in the discussion concerning nationalism. Polish nationalism, its features and objectives, cannot be fully understood without engaging with works of the chief ideologue (Czubiński, 2000) of Polish nationalism – Roman Dmowski. This dissertation will accordingly use his teachings in order to provide a specific context and better understanding of Polish nationalism. Dmowski was not only the eye-witness to the processes that shaped Polish nationalism at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, but also a theorist of nationalism. His early works (Dmowski, 1893/2007; 1904/2007) provide an intellectual bridge between ethno-symbolist and modernist perspective, and his later works (Dmowski, 1925/2007; 1927/2007) not only illustrate the Polish desire for an ethnically homogenous nation, but also perfectly summarise and even anticipate policies implemented after 1945. *Our Patriotism* (Dmowski, 1893/2007) and *Thinking of a modern Pole* (Dmowski, 1904/2007) openly argued about the importance of technological and industrial advancements and their direct relation to the spread of national consciousness. However, in these publications Dmowski also argues that human beings are born into a certain set of values and social organisations, which are a result of a long historical process (Dmowski, 1904/2007). Through these arguments, Dmowski provides an intellectual bridge between ethno-symbolist and modernist perspective. He analysed the unique situation that Poles found themselves in after 1795 (Dmowski, 1983/2007). In many cases, his arguments predate the claims made by contemporary scholars. A phrase “living the life of the nation” through literature and press (Dmowski, 1904/2007, p. 22) anticipates the arguments of Anderson and his “imagined communities” (1983). Arguments made about oppression of Poles by partitioning power, which ironically resulted in strengthening of Polish identity, are equivalent to failures that Connor (1994, 2004) attributes to any modern assimilation policies.

Importantly, by analysing the process of industrialization (1983/2007; 1904/2007) Dmowski emphasizes that before that process the nobility (*szlachta*) – a small portion of the entire

population – was the sole carrier of Polish identity. However, the process of industrialization, the economic interconnectedness with other states, caused the influence of nobility to fade and the national consciousness to spread across Polish society (Dmowski, 1904/2007). The process described by Smith (1987, 1991) as transition from lateral to vertical *ethnie*. In his analysis of the Polish case, Dmowski uses both modernist and ethno-symbolist perspective, although not consciously, as these had not yet been developed in his times. In his later publications (1925/2007; 1927/2007), he frames the political objectives of Polish nationalism – an ethnic state. He does seem to foreshadow Prażmowska's (2011) argument that the Polish-Lithuanian state was no longer a desired model, nor was it a feasible one. To a large extent, the notion of the new state with Polish majority was advocated and largely achieved by him – as the head of Polish delegation – at the Paris Peace Conference (Dmowski, 1927/2007). As such, Dmowski cannot be only viewed as a far-right nationalist ideologue (Curp, 2005), but also as an eye-witness, analyst and theorist who employed many processes to develop a specific analysis of Polish nationalism, while at the same time being a product of the circumstances that shaped Poles as a nation. His publications provide a useful insight and provide a specific, rather than a generic, analysis of nationalism. By bridging both ethno-symbolist and modernist approaches, Dmowski provides a broader perspective and justifies the analysis of the modern industrial and technological developments in the same vein as modernists do, while rejecting their main line of argument – the modernity of the nation and nationalism. The intellectual bridge provided by Dmowski will serve as the basis, in this dissertation, for the synthesis of ethno-symbolist and modernist arguments, which should provide a deeper understanding of the Polish experience and the form of nationalism that resulted from it.

Other literature

Dmowski's works provide an intellectual bridge between ethno-symbolism and modernism and its key argument of industrialisation as a trigger for the development of nationalism. This dissertation, following Dmowski's synthesis, will attempt to incorporate other elements of the modernist theory of nationalism and analyse processes in Poland, not only processes triggered in the late 18th century by the intellectual movement of the Enlightenment (Kedourie, 1966), but also by the first industrial revolution (Gellner, 1983). Thus the ethno-symbolist perspective stands in contrast to the proponents of modernism as an overarching explanation for the cause of nationalism. While ethno-symbolism is better suited

to the Polish case and in keeping with Dmowski's perspective, the thesis acknowledges the insights arising from modernism, thus providing a synthesis between two major schools of nationalism – modernism and ethno-symbolism. Such analysis should provide a better understanding of the historical process of nation-formation. While acknowledging the applicability of ethno-symbolism this thesis acknowledges Weber's argument that the "concept" of nation cannot in fact be defined in "empirical terms" (1948, as cited in Hutchinson and Smith, 2000, p. 5). Hans Kohn provides a definition of nationalism as "a state of mind, in which the supreme loyalty is felt to be due to the nation-state" (1965, p. 9). This definition appears difficult to justify in the light of Connor's argument that there in fact is a "remarkable lack of coincidence that exists between ethnic and political borders" (as cited in Hutchinson & Smith, 2000); opinion that is confirmed by other scholars such as Smith (1997; 1991; 1995), Anderson (1983), Hobsbawm (1992) and Seaton-Watson (1977). Therefore, this dissertation will follow and adopt Connor's (1994; 2004) argument that nationalism is to a large extent a psychological phenomenon, as Kohn (1965) argues, but it cannot be defined as a sense of loyalty to a nation-state, simply because such polity is a rare occurrence. Instead, in similar sense to Connor, this dissertation will identify nationalism as one's loyalty to a nation, while loyalty to the state should be identified as patriotism (Connor, 1994). For the sake of clarity, it is useful to emphasize that nationalism is synonymous with patriotism only if the political borders are congruent with ethnic ones. Furthermore, in order to identify the presence of nationalism, it must be "a mass – not an elite – phenomenon" (Connor, 2004, p. 36), when a particular group (most often ethnic) identifies itself as a nation (Connor, 1994). The ethno-symbolist framework and Connor's (1994, 2004) terminological clarifications provide a working definition of a nation, which will be utilized for the purposes of this dissertation in order to guide and facilitate the argument. Connor defines the nation as "the largest group that can be influenced/aroused/ motivated/mobilized by appeals to common kinship" (2004, p. 37). This chapter will augment the above definition and identify "the nation as the largest group that", as a result of historical, cultural, social (Horch, 1993; Smith, 1986, 1991, 1995) and economic processes (Gellner, 1983) "can be mobilized by appeals to common kinship" (Connor, 2004, p. 37) and that has, or aspires to acquire, some degree of political agency (Suzman, 1997).

Components of nationalism

Having clarified the appropriate terminology and provided a working definition of a nation, this chapter will now move towards identifying the key components of nationalism and the processes that facilitated its spread in order to later apply these to Polish history. This will result in identifying the historical development and the ultimate form of Polish nationalism itself. Modern scholars have categorized nationalism into two main groups – ethnic and civic. The latter is based on political rights and citizenship and largely confined to most developed nations of Western Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. By contrast, ethnic nationalism is rather xenophobic and focused on ethnic ties (Lecours, 2000). The prevailing argument is that the more developed West created a more open, political, version of nationalism, while the more backward East (including Germany) remained with more traditional, thus backward, ethnic version (Deutsch, 1969). Such an approach is criticised by Shulman, who argues that “Western civic nations are more ethnic than is usually recognized, and Eastern ethnic nations are more civic” (2002, pp. 555-556). Calhoun (1993, as cited in Hutchinson & Smith, 2000) goes even further, claiming that ethnicity and nationalism can never be fully separated. Ethnically neutral nationalism exists only in states Connor identifies as “nonhomeland”, which are a product of the migration that overwhelmed certain indigenous populations – most notably the United States and Australia (1994, p. 91). Furthermore, Connor (1994), alongside Smith (1986; 1991; 1995), cites the ethnic tensions within Great Britain (mainly in terms of Scotland but also Wales), tensions between Bretons and French, the rise of Catalan and Basque consciousness in Spain and finally the tensions between the Flemish and Walloons within Belgium. These examples effectively prove that, apart from migrant states like the U.S, nationalism is almost never devoid of ethnicity; however, the strength of ethno-national bonds and their political goals may vary considerably (Suzman, 1997).

Thus a nation most often possesses an ethnic core. Smith (1986; 1991; 1995) consequently argues that nations are more developed and organized forms of *ethnies* that in historical processes assimilated less populous or developed ethnic groups. The French term *ethnie* is defined as “human grouping, which possesses homogenous familial, economic and social structure, thus its unity lies in community of language, culture and group conscience” (Larousse.fr), or more simply an ethnic culture. Consequently, then, traits and characteristics of *ethnies* will be manifested by nations as they develop. Indeed, Smith emphasizes that ethnicity is “mythic” and “symbolic” (1986, p. 16), and rests on “cultural rather than

biological or kinship differences” (1986, p. 21). Hence culture, or ethnic culture to be precise, constitutes one of the components of both nation and nationalism. Following Smith’s argument, each ethnic culture, subject to different historical circumstances, will develop different historical memories, myths of origin and symbols (1986, 1991). Each *ethnie* develops in different circumstances; therefore, each ethnic culture will produce myths, heroes and symbols that will have an idiosyncratic meaning (Smith, 1986; 1991). National emblems are the most obvious examples of such idiosyncrasy – a crowned white eagle on a red background will immediately be recognized by a Pole as Polish national emblem, while other nationals might identify this symbol with difficulty or not at all.

Alterity

The idiosyncratic nature of ethnic cultures means that respective members will easily identify individuals similar to them and those who differ. Indeed, Smith argues that “distinctiveness remains a sine qua non of the nation” (1991, p. 70). His argument is supported by Schleisinger, who argues that nationalism is “always situating <<us>> in relation to <<them>>” (1987, as cited in Hutchinson & Smith, 2000, p. 84). This argument is strengthened by Musial and Wolniewicz (2010), who highlight that a certain degree of xenophobia is crucial in creating and maintaining ethnic or national bonds. The formation of dichotomous national pairs such Poles and Russians (Smith, 1987, p. 39) is probably the best proof that nations or ethnic groups in most cases “define themselves in terms of the other” (Howard, as cited in Hutchinson & Smith, 2000, p. 1634). For such a differentiation, and resulting identity, to occur, some individuals need to be excluded from an ethnic or national community, as in the case of creoles being excluded by Spaniards (Anderson, 1983) or two distinct cultures must come in direct contact with each other, be it through trade, migration or military conflict (Smith, 1986; Connor, 1994). Taras further argues that there is a “symbiotic relationship between national identity and alterity” (as cited in Taras 1998, p. 86). While exclusion, differentiation and xenophobia can be identified as the most dangerous features of nationalism, they are the most powerful factors in uniting ethnic groups and forming nations.

Means of differentiation

One of the most immediate and obvious tools of differentiation is language, a differentiation which has its roots in antiquity and early middle ages – ancient Greeks had their barbarians, peoples whose speech they could not understand (Smith, 1986) and medieval Slavs had their *nemtsi*, a term analogous to the ancient one (Horch, as cited in Hutchinson &

Smith, 2000). Smith (1986; 1991) dismisses the importance of language, as linguistic barriers are relatively easy to overcome. Anderson (1983) focuses on the rise of vernaculars as a medium of widespread communication, although he argues that it fails to be a significant differentiating factor, using the case of Latin America and the U.S, which both use European languages – English and Spanish – yet have formed polities different and independent from their respective colonial metropolises. Indeed, outside Europe, language might not act as a differentiating factor, while in Europe, and especially in Eastern Europe, language is closely connected to ethnicity. According to Anderson (1983), the Reformation and the invention of the printing press were the crucial starting points for the ascendancy of respective vernacular languages. The former emphasized the translation of the sacred Christian scripture into respective vernaculars, thus showing the way for these vernaculars to become the medium of intellectual exchange, while the latter allowed for greater efficiency of reproduction, assuring that ideas would be more widely and easily disseminated. Furthermore, as Anderson argues, printed and easily disseminated vernaculars created “languages of power” (1983, p. 45), which were used by state apparatus in everyday life; these indeed served as a unifying factor, since effective administration requires effective communication, which in turn demands a coherent medium for such communication to occur, thus binding and unifying the various administrative centres of a given state with its centre. This thesis will later attempt to demonstrate that language is one of the key components of Polish nationalism.

Another tool for ethnic differentiation is religion, due to its universal appeals (Smith 1987; Anderson, 1983). The links between religion and ethnicity or nation are often ignored. However, Smith points out that “nationalism takes its colour from its context” (1991, p. 79) and in certain contexts, religion is closely linked to ethnicity and nationality, though most often as a result of an historical process. Jews, Poles and Irishmen are probably the best examples. The latter two lost their statehood, in varying circumstances, and have been subject to foreign domination, which in both cases followed a different strain of Christianity (Prażmowska, 2010). While the Irish fell under Protestant English control, the Poles have been divided between Protestant Germans and Orthodox Russians (Czubiński, 2001). Their experience of foreign domination, coupled with religious differences, resulted in strict adherence to the Catholic Church, which subsequently became an important part of national identification. Jews have always been perceived to be an alien element in Christian Europe, and their very identification as a nation that has a special covenant with God lies at the very foundations of Jewish identity (Smith, 2003). It is justifiable to disregard religion as an

overall indicator of nationality; however, in certain circumstances, religion becomes one of the most prominent identifying factors, as this thesis will later demonstrate in relation to Poland.

Hitherto, the argument has focused on an analysis of different aspects and arguments in scholarly debate concerning nationalism and its key components. The ethno-symbolist theory of nationalism allowed through the process of analysis to identify the main components of nationalism as a historical phenomenon. The most prevalent is ethnicity, which provides a basis for nation formation (Smith, 1986; 1991; 1995) with only few exceptions of migrant states (Connor, 1994; 2004); thus, nationalism almost always contains an ethnic element; however, through the processes of globalisation it also contains a civic element as almost all countries, through appropriate legislation, allow citizens of other states to acquire their citizenship (Shulman, 2002). These ethnic cores in the process of transforming into nations developed their distinct and peculiar cultures with idiosyncratic myths, symbols and values (Smith, 1986). Arising from different paths of cultural development is self-identification (Connor, 1994) through differentiation, exclusion (Smith, 1986, 1991; Schleisinger, 1987; Howard, 1995) or xenophobia (Musial and Wolniewicz, 2010). This cultural differentiation, depending on context, can be connected to language or religion. Although these are secondary products of national/ethnic culture, they constitute a powerful unifying tool – in terms of administration and power, as it is in case of language (Anderson, 1983) – and should never be entirely dismissed when investigating particular nationalisms. It is also important to note that these nationalities in their current form are finite; as Kohn argues, they are “products of the living forces of history, and therefore fluctuating and never rigid” (1965, p. 9) - elements evolved in changing circumstances as did the groups that created them. Therefore, nations constantly change and reinvent themselves, when faced with new circumstances, and elements of their identity and culture may vary significantly (Smith, 1991).

Analysis of modern developments through the ethno-symbolist perspective

Although ethno-symbolism is the main theory guiding this argument this dissertation aims to synthesise ethno-symbolist perspective, with other – namely modernist – arguments in order to understand the process of nation formation. Indeed, one of the main proponents of ethno-symbolism, although dismissing the main claims of modernist approach (modernity of nationalism, nation and state) provides a justification for the processes it describes by

pointing out that “modernisation and communications have increased the intensity of ethnic group” (Smith, 2004, p. 58). Consequently, as mentioned before, this chapter will move to analyse claims of modernist theorists of nationalism and the ways in which they offer additional insights to fuse with ethno-symbolism. Ernest Gellner (1983) argues, alongside Daniele Conversi (1998; 2008), that the industrial revolution of the 18th century changed the mode of production and the challenges that arose from that change were at the roots of nationalism.

Industrialisation

Gellner’s synthesized argument is provided by Conversi in the form of a simple diagram: “modernity->industrialism->mass dislocation->homogenization>nationalism” to which he further adds universal military conscription (2008, p. 1303). As the result of modernity, industrialism arose; industrialism in turn caused mass dislocation, resulting in homogenization; homogeneity in turn produced nationalism. Gellner’s and Conversi’s argument disregards any historical processes and experiences that shaped populations of particular states. Additionally, one Gellner’s first arguments in his major work on nationalism is that “the circumstances in which nationalism has generally arisen have not been normally those in which the state, as such, was lacking, or when its reality was in serious doubt” (1983, p. 4). Such an argument dismisses, by the term “generally”, the nationalisms of most Eastern European, Asian and African countries, as these have often been a part of the political and economic systems of other nations, limiting the formative process of nationalism to a few Western industrialized states. In the same vein, Conversi argues that industrialization destroyed the social bonds of the agricultural society and nationalism replaced those as a new form of “social cohesion” (2008, p. 1289).

The new mode of production demanded social mobility, as crucial for the formation of a nation, as it replaced previous universal religious pilgrimages with secular ones within the framework of the state (Anderson 1983). Displacement created the need for “generic training” (Gellner, 1983, p. 27), which in turn caused states to launch mass, standardised education programs (Conversi, 1998). As a result of that previously elite high cultures became standardised national ones (Gellner, 1983) with the assistance of mass-reproduced print language (Anderson, 1983). Indeed, such a view is confirmed Roman Dmowski, who in many cases predates Gellner’s, Smith’s and Anderson’s ideas. Dmowski argued that industrialization and developments in communication triggered an enormous change in Polish

society (1904/2007), in the exact manner that Gellner, Anderson and Conversi describe. However, Dmowski argued that “entering one’s life, one comes to its developed form, to a developed organization, these forms and that organisation are, however a result of effort of many generations” (Dmowski, 1904/2007, p. x). As an eye-witness of these changes, Dmowski was clearly aware of the importance past experiences and developments to nations.

What Anderson (1983) understands by imagined communities, Dmowski expressed as “living the life of the nation” (1904/2007, p. 22). Homogenization, as viewed by Gellner (1983) and Conversi (1998, 2008), is for Dmowski a “recent development” and a result of the “democratization of the political regime and democratization of culture, or its spread to all segments of the society” (1904/2007, p.22). The process of standardization of high culture is not “inventing new” or “obliterating pre-existing” cultures, as Gellner argues (1983, p. 49). It is a process which Smith describes as transformation of a “lateral *ethnie*,” where only the elites have access to high culture and possess national consciousness, to a “vertical *ethnie*” – one in which the elite culture and national consciousness penetrate every segment of the society (1991, p. 53). Such an argument is strengthened by Hayes who asserts that only peoples sharing “a community of language and historic traditions would have the means and inclination” (1931, pp. 23-24) to undergo such processes. Nations cannot be created *ex nihilo*: the elites developed cultures, industrialization provided the technological means, previously lacking, to disseminate culture and to replace the elites as the bearers of national consciousness with the masses.

Post-Versailles political settlement

Hobsbawm, like Gellner and Conversi, stipulates that “the basic characteristic of a modern nation ... is its modernity” (1992, p. 14); while repeating the industrialisation argument, he also provides a new perspective. According to him, nationalism was given its ideological framework by the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination, and a political one by the Treaty of Versailles. Indeed, the post-World War I political settlement divided the world into a collection of national states. Wilsonian principles of self-determination assume that each nation deserves its own state – they did encourage the formation of nation-states by a presumption that nation should be congruent with its state, which is identical to the modern definition of nation-state (Connor, 1994). Hobsbawm therefore aptly analyses the consequences of such an ideological assumption, elevated to an international political order after 1918. He claims that “the logical implication of trying to

create a continent neatly divided into coherent territorial states inhabited by ... homogenous population, was mass expulsion and extermination of minorities” (1992, p. 133). Indeed, mass expulsions and exterminations occurred during and immediately after World War II. It is impossible to argue that the post-Versailles political settlement did not greatly facilitate nationalist struggle and reveal all its dangers (Nairn, 1977), although ethno-national claims, supported by military actions, were achieved before, in the case of Belgium, in 1830, and the Balkan states in 1878 (Smith, 1995, p. 104).

Another contribution to the understanding of nationalism is provided by Elie Kedourie, who describes nationalism as “a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century” (1966, p. 9) and which “divides humanity into separate and distinct nations” and “claims that such nations must constitute sovereign states” (1966, p. 73). It is apparent that Kedourie’s argument reflects quite accurately the international regime in its current form. It also allows us to understand the origins of the Wilsonian principles, mentioned by Hobsbawm (1992). However, what Kedourie’s argument fails to acknowledge is the fact that, prior to the development of the doctrine, there existed a large number of sovereign polities, both in and outside Europe. This division was not yet formalized and completed; nevertheless, it was a result of a long lasting process (Smith, 1987; 1991; Horch, 1993). Late 18th and 19th century philosophers saw the beginning of the industrial revolution and were the first to observe and analyse the consequences of the changed mode of production (Gellner, 1983). Kant and Fichte, cited by Kedourie (1966), were most likely developing their ideas as eyewitnesses to the occurring changes, like Dmowski in Poland (1893/2007; 1094/2007). Furthermore, without the technological means provided by the industrial revolution, “the doctrine” would not have the means to be so widely disseminated. Nationalism is not the product of philosophers, nor is it the product of modernization. As Smith emphasizes it is a “process, not an event” (2004, p. 57). This process occurred in changing circumstances, where industrialization and the Enlightenment with its philosophy were among many other variables.

The previous part aimed to outline and analyse the main features and characteristics of nationalism. It also looked at the processes that allowed it to gain such an important role in the modern world. A variety of approaches, theories and concepts (only but a few most prominent, due to the limits of this dissertation) demonstrate that concepts of nationalism and nation are extremely complex ones. They developed across centuries (Smith, 1987; 1991;

1995; 2003; 2004), although technological advances initiated in the 18th century (Gellner, 1983) greatly accelerated their development, spread and importance, to the degree that the current international regime favours and aspires to nation-states (Hobsbawm, 1992). The identified features of nationalism, combined with technological, economic and political developments, will now be applied in the case of Poland and its historical developments, in order to analyse and demonstrate the development of Polish nationalism, its context and its characteristics, all resulting from Poles' historical experience.

Polish “ethno-history”

In accordance with the ethno-symbolic perspective understanding, an analysis of Polish nationalism would be severely limited without knowledge of nation's historical experience, what Smith calls “ethno-history” (1995, p. 62). It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a detailed summary of Polish history. This chapter will now utilize previously outlined concepts to identify crucial events and processes that shaped the national consciousness of Poles; consequently, this summary will be selective, focusing only on relevant aspects, events and processes.

The first official document identifying the Polish state is known as *Dagome iudex*, in which a Prince “Misca” offers a polity identified as “Schinesghe state” under the protection of the Holy See circa 991 (Labuda, 1999, pp. 160-161). Various Polish historians agree that the identity of the prince is, at least in the document alone, obscure, but sufficient to identify him as the first historical (Christian) ruler of Poland (Jasienica, 1960/2007; Stomma, 1993) and emphasize that from the very beginning, territories of present day Poland had strong ties with the church. Schinesghe, however, as Jasienica (1960/2007; 1963/2008) argues, appears on the political stage as a centralised, feudal monarchy. The process of unifying the state prior to the Christianisation is not historically documented; thus any detailed analysis of that process would by default be speculative. Labuda (1999) identifies six major tribes occupying the lands between Oder and Bug prior to 991: Polans (Polanie) in nowadays Greater Poland; Pomeranians (Pomorzanie) in Pomerania; Masovians (Mazowszanie) in Masovia; Silesians (Slezanie) in Silesia; Vistulans (Wislanie) in Lesser Poland; and Landians (Ledzianie) east of Lesser Poland. The unification of these tribes into one state resembles the process outlined by Smith (1986): just as Franks expanded their influence over other tribes and eventually created a polity, which derived its name from their

tribal one – France – Polans united their neighbouring tribes and created their polity – Poland in the 10th century.

Throughout the 10th and 11th centuries, the new polity was engaged in military struggles to maintain its territorial integrity (Prażmowska, 2011). These wars were mainly fought against Poland's western neighbour, the Holy Roman Empire, which was constituted mainly of Germanic tribes (Jasienica, 1960/2008). At that period Poland drew heavily from Western Christian civilization and was definitely a part of the universalistic Church; therefore, a peculiar, national culture, with its vernacular language, was largely absent, as in the rest of Europe at that time (Smith, 1986). However, according to Connor (1994, 2004) and Horch (1993), differentiation began to shape the feudal elites of Poland from the very beginning of its Christian history. In the west, the polity of Polans bordered with Germanic tribes of the Holy Roman Empire; although both were part of the universal Catholic world, the linguistic difference was blatantly apparent. Horch (1993) speaks of *nemtsi*, a group that cannot be understood by Slavs; *nemtsi*, or in Polish case *niemcy* was a word literally derived from “niemy” meaning “mute”, thus signifying linguistic differences that made communication impossible (Borys, 2005, pp. 361-362). In this region and context, language became a differentiating factor from early 10th and 11th century and was strongly equated with ethnicity, which was further deepened by military clashes (Smith, 1986, 1991). Ethnic differences, as Howard (1995) argues, are created when one group is confronted with another. Such a situation occurred gradually in Poland from 13th century, with an influx of German migrants encouraged by Polish rulers in order to modernise and strengthen urban centres (Jasienica, 1960/2007; Prażmowska, 2011). The inhabitants of Poland were exposed to German colonisers, who eventually became a dominant urban element (Jasienica, 1960/2007).

During the period of turmoil in the early 14th century, German patricians decided to rebel against a Piast prince, Ladislaus the Elbow-high, whose ambition was to unify the politically fragmented state. This rebellion, known as the Mutiny of Mayor Albert of 1312 (bunt wójta Alberta), aimed to unite Lesser Poland with the Crown of Bohemia (Stomma, 1993). The mutiny failed to achieve its objective and Ladislaus recaptured the city. The entering Polish troops in search of German patricians, who were branded as traitors, were identified by a shibboleth, according to Krasinski Chronicle, consisting of four words – lentils, wheel, grind, mill (*soczewica, koło, miele, młyn*), Stomma argues that this was a

blatant equation of language with ethnicity (1993, p. 57). As demonstrated, ethnic differentiation, although not yet national, occurred along linguistic lines. Unique conditions and prolonged exposure to others, coupled with conflict, sharpened the ethnic divide, even if only among the Polish elite.

In the east, Poland bordered the Kievan Rus, which although culturally, linguistically and ethnically similar, followed the Eastern rite of Christianity (Jasienica, 1960/2007). In this case religion coupled with military clashes, mainly conducted by Boleslaw Chrobry (Prażmowska, 2011), combined to serve as a differentiating factor, although the severity of military clashes, at least in the Middle Ages was not as apparent (Jasienica, 1960/2007). The initial clashes most likely left an imprint on Poles as an ethnic group; however, during that period of history those encounters with the “others” (Howard, 1995), were not always frequent and significant enough to create a sharp divide. Such a sharp ethnic division might, especially in the context of ethno-symbolism, evoke national identification; however, as Stomma argues, Piast princes “could not anticipate future developments of centuries to come. Thus they fought not for a Polish nation state, or even ethnic-Slavic one, but for a strong politico-administrative organism, whose ruler could influence events in civilised, Christian Europe” (1993, p. 16). It would be indeed hard to justify the notion that medieval Polish rulers thought in national categories, as these had not been fully developed at that time. Nevertheless, ethnic differentiation along linguistic and religious lines occurred rather early in Polish history and as such cannot be underestimated as a force contributing to Poland’s later nationalism.

It is sufficient to state that Poland, until the late-14th century, followed a similar path to other European states in terms of its political and cultural developments (Jasienica, 1963/2007). The polity was faced with an unusual challenge in 1386 when Polish monarch Jadwiga married the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Jogaila, who at his christening took the name Ladislaus (Jasienica, 1963/2007). This marriage initiated a long lasting union between Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, finalised by the Union of Lublin in 1569, which created a multicultural, multiethnic and multi-religious state (Tazbir, 1982, p. 50): a state that recognized its own diversity, by assuming the name of the Republic of Both Nations (Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodow or simply Rzeczpospolita – recognizing initially the two – and commonly, although imprecisely, called a Commonwealth). Zernato (1944, as cited in Hutchinson & Smith, 2000) re-traces the use of the very word nation and argues that in the

early modern period, it was used to signify people subject to polity; thus, even though there were more groups within the federation, there were only two polities, the Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which provides an adequate explanation of the very limited national recognition at that stage.

These developments were coupled with the period of Renaissance and Reformation (Tazbir, 1982) during which the vernacular languages became a medium of thought exchange and dissemination of ideas on a large scale by the printing press (Anderson, 1983). Thus, initially such factors inspired an unprecedented cultural development (Tazbir, 1982), although as the more advanced, Polish culture dominated and the nobility constituting the political elite in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania became rapidly and almost completely Polonized (Jasienica, 1963/2007). The unique dynastic situation, caused by the extinction of the Jagiellonian dynasty, which led to the elective monarchy (Jasienica 1963/2007) allowed the nobility to acquire unprecedented political freedoms and privileges. The high culture and the “community of privileges” (Tazbir, 1982, p. 61) warranted that the nobility became the carrier of “national consciousness” (Tazbir, 1982, p. 53). In terms of Smith’s argument, it is possible to observe that by that stage, a lateral *ethnie* (1991, p. 53) was formed. It created a unified set of values, that had not yet spread across all the segments of the society and one that “could accommodate, without slightest difficulty” (Hobsbawm, 1992, p.74) the religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity. Yet it is important to mention that such a model was commonplace in still-agricultural and feudal Europe (Smith, 1986). As the momentum of the Reformation waned, the counter-Reformation managed to become the dominant religious movement. Jasienica (1967/2007; 1967/2007a) identifies these developments as damaging and ultimately weakening the state, overlooking the important fact that, by the very nature of its diversity, the Republic was susceptible to calls of unification provided by counter-Reformation (Tazbir, 1982, p. 50; Seaton-Watson, as cited in Hutchinson & Smith, 2000), thus again elevating Catholicism to a dominant force within the state.

Although increasingly Catholic in nature, the Republic was still to a large extent a political and cultural community rather than a collection of different ethnicities. The concept of the “political Pole” (Tazbir, 1982, p. 57) was prevalent among groups of the federation, as in Royal Prussia, which, German in culture and speech, was always politically loyal to the institutions of the state (Tazbir, 1982; Jasienica, 1967/2007a). The rather abrupt erosion of the political community and the “community of privilege” had its beginning in early 1650s.

Historically, the period between 1648 and 1670s was a period of almost constant war for the Republic (Prażmowska, 2011): first a civil war with Orthodox Cossacks (1648-1654), then wars with Orthodox Russia (1654-1655 and 1660-1667); Protestant Sweden (1655-1660), Cossacks supported by Muslim Crimean Khanate (1661-1671), and finally with the Ottoman Empire between 1672 and 1676 (Jasienica, 1967/2007a). Those conflicts, as Tazbir argues, “incited a feeling of solidarity in a nation surrounded by aliens” (1982, p. 67); therefore, just as the Irish were surrounded by Protestants, Poles came to identify themselves in terms of their Catholicism (Hobsbawm, 1992). As previously mentioned, military clashes with other groups inspire division along ethnic lines (Smith, 1986) and if such clashes are combined with religious differences, the ethnic divide occurs along religious lines as well, reinforcing the role of religion within a given group: hence the ever-growing significance of Catholicism. The importance of Catholicism to Polish self-identity is probably best illustrated by the siege of Jasna Gora, a Catholic monastery, by Protestant Swedish army in 1655, which according to Jasienica (1967/2007a), was of very little strategic importance, but an attack on a place of religious importance and its successful defence assumed a mythical quality within Poland, representing the struggle of “us” Catholics against “those” Protestants. Jasna Gora provided not only a compelling unifying myth, but also a locus, tangible proof, of struggle (Smith, 1986). According to Smith (1986, 1991), Polish nationalism cannot be understood without understanding the significance of that myth.

The exposure to the “other,” moreover, was embedded in the state’s very political system. As an elective monarchy, the Republic, drew its monarchs from abroad (Jasienica, 1963/2007; 1967/2007; 1967/2007a). Out of its 11 rulers between 1572 and 1795, the Republic of Both Nations was ruled by a Frenchman, a Magyar, three Swedes and two Germans (Prażmowska, 2011). Less than half were elected from within the state, counting among them three Poles and one Polonized Ukrainian (Jasienica, 1967/2007a). The foreign monarchs, their foreign consorts and courtiers can also be counted among “others” (Howard, 1995). They did not have the same scale and power of the wars that occurred in the 17th and the 18th centuries: nevertheless, they served as the constant reminder of “otherness” to the nobility – a carrier of national consciousness (Tazbir, 1982).

Another period, vital to the development of Polish nationalism, occurred just before the Republic of Both Nations ceased to exist and was divided among neighbouring powers – Russia, Prussia and Habsburg Empire – in 1795 (Prażmowska, 2011). The philosophy of the

Enlightenment heavily influenced Polish nationalism. In 1740, a school called Collegium Nobilium was founded. Its aims were to educate sons of wealthy nobles in accordance with new philosophical trends developing across Europe, but mainly in France and British Isles (Jasienica, 1972). Therefore, the development of the Enlightenment philosophy with its emphasis on education and political powers of masses (Kedourie, 1966) has its Polish equivalent. Moreover, the 18th century emphasis on education was adopted in Poland much earlier than other states and the Committee for National Education – a first ministerial body dealing with state-wide education – is probably the most obvious example (Jasienica, 1972/2007). The administrative centralization (Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1992) culminated in the 3rd May Constitution of 1791 – which transformed the former federation into a unitary state (Jasienica, 1972) and aimed to create a national army, which Conversi (1998, 2008) identifies as one of the important homogenizing tools of the state. These events and processes that occurred in the Polish-Lithuanian state are worthy of notice, if only to prove that in most cases political, social and philosophical developments in the Republic reflected processes commonplace in the West. However, due to its political and military weakness, the Republic of Both Nations, failed to defend its sovereignty against its neighbouring powers and consequently ceased to exist with the third partition of 1795 (Prażmowska, 2011). It would be purely speculative to discuss the pattern of development, bearing in mind the unifying reforms of the 18th century, how the state would integrate and unify its diverse population had the Polish-Lithuanian statehood not been extinguished. Instead, Poles previously occupying the most important role became minorities on the territories of respective partitioning powers, being subject to their administrative, educational and economic unification. The example of Polish Enlightenment can be seen as an intersection between ethno-symbolism's historical perspective and modernist claim of Kedourie (1969), who emphasized the importance of the development of nationalist philosophy originating from the Enlightenment. In this case, historical development, from the ethno-symbolist perspective, can be synthesised with a modernist claim.

Loss of statehood is probably one of the most important factors that shaped Polish national identity and consequently, its nationalism. Paradoxically, the loss of statehood exposed all Poles to encounters with others differing in language, religion and political system (Howard, 1995). The almost immediate struggle to regain statehood, firstly alongside Napoleon, then in consecutive national uprisings of 1830, 1846 and 1863 (Prażmowska, 2010) served as a strong unifying force – becoming a national endeavour (Dmowski,

1893/2007). It would suffice that these, coinciding with loss of statehood and absorption into other political entities (Protestant Prussia and Orthodox Russia), sharpened the ethno-religious and linguistic identity and already a strong one as a result of the turbulent Polish history.

For Gellner (1983) and Hobsbawm (1992), three factors are responsible for the rise of nationalism: industrialization, which demands mobility and uniform training, education that provides it and causes homogenization, which in turn produces nationalism; Conversi (2008) adds the expanding military apparatus. In the Polish case, as of the period 1795-1918, there is only one of those prerequisites – industrialization (Prażmowska, 2010). Since the state did not exist, it could not create education systems or raise an army, as these prerogatives laid with the partitioning powers. Although both Prażmowska (2010) and Hobsbawm (1992) point out that Polish industrialists did not identify themselves as Polish, but rather Jewish or German, their nationality in this case is inconsequential: the nationality of the masses of the workers is of consequence, and these were predominantly Polish. Thus, industrialization provided the need for mobility and generic training. Mobility undermined localism (Mann, 1993, in Hutchinson & Smith, 2000) through “secular pilgrimages” (Anderson, 1983, p. 56) and the generic technical training provided by education systems of the partitioning powers. In this instance, it is possible to see where the ethno-symbolist and modernist theory intersect – industrialisation was a historical process affecting an ethnic group, namely Poles, while industrialisation, by undermining localism and demanding mobility, allowed the standardisation and dissemination of an historically based national identity. In case of the Polish experience, the national education system and the national was provided by assimilation policies – Russification and Germanization; as Connor argues, “assimilation always sharpens ethnic divisions”; Dmowski had already noticed this response, stating that “by attempts to exterminate us [Poles], they [partitioning powers] did us a favour of historic significance” (1904/2007, p. 79). The “national education” was provided, especially after the failure of the 1863 national uprising, by Polish mothers (Prażmowska, 2010). After the failure of the uprising, many men were either exiled to Siberia, as repression, or chose voluntary exile in the West, while women were left in the country and charged with the “sacred responsibility to maintain Polishness” (Prażmowska, 2010, p. 20), teaching language, history and customs. This, in turn, elevated women to a mythical status of “Mother Pole” (Prażmowska, 2011, p. 149) – a repository of national values and knowledge, who allowed the national identity not only to prevail, but to strengthen (Prażmowska, 2011, p. 159)

Among the several further issues that arose from the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian state was the fact that other ethnic groups (mainly in territories taken by Russia) responded identically as Poles to the unifying policies of the Tsarist empire; Ukrainian national consciousness was strengthened and the ethno-religious divide warranted that Ukrainians had their own national aspirations (Prażmowska, 2011); Lithuanian consciousness was also sharpened by Russian occupation. Thus all former groups that inhabited the Republic of Both Nations followed the same path as other minorities of the Russian empire – they developed their own national aspirations (Bilenky, 2012), which Poles were not always willing to recognize (Prażmowska, 2010; 2011). National efforts to resurrect the state were somewhat torn between aspirations to recreate the state in its pre-partition borders and the need for an ethnically Polish state (Bilenky, 2012). Bilenky argues that the lack of the idea of Polish borders was the main issue of the 19th century Polish national movement, and while ethnic borders were advocated in the West, the Eastern border was hard to define and often overlapped with other national aspirations (2012). Bilenky does neglect the fact that the settlement pattern of Poles and Germans was complicated; it did not, however, even remotely reflect the complexity the eastern border would cause. Dmowski (1904/2007) argues that ethnic settlement in the east was one of the biggest challenges of the Polish national movement, as there were large Polish communities as far east as the Dnieper river, encircled by Ukrainians and Byelorussians, and large Ukrainian settlements within historical boundaries of medieval Poland – the Lesser Poland, that led him to conclude that “ethnic border of the state was impossible” (1925/2007, p. 17).

With that strong sense of identity influenced by ethnicity, language, faith, and foreign domination, Poland entered the 20th century, still divided among the Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian empires. The collapse of Russia and Austria-Hungary and the defeat of Germany in 1918 allowed Poles to regain their independence, which was proclaimed on 11 November 1918 (Prażmowska, 2010). The most urgent issue for the Poles was new state borders, since in the course of 19th century the pre-partition polity “ceased to be a model for a future state” (Prażmowska, 2010, p. 3), mainly because of other national aspirations (Bilenky, 2012). Dmowski argued for the largest possible extent of Polish borders, in the East, that would allow the new state to maintain internal stability (1925/2007, p. 22). It is important to notice that the Polish eastern border was finalised by the Riga Treaty of 1921 (Prażmowska, 2010); thus, Polish leaders operated within the international system created by peace conference at Versailles, which promoted the idea of a nation-state and self-determination

(Hobsbawm, 1992). The underlying logic of the Wilsonian principles was the creation of political borders coinciding with ethnic ones (Kedourie, 1966). With that principle in mind, political leaders of ethnically diverse regions had two options – either to conquer all territories containing settlements of a given national/ethnic group, or to engage in ethnic cleansing and resettlement schemes, to expel foreign groups and bring in their fellow nationals within the given territory (Hobsbawm, 1992). Polish leadership engaged with a somewhat moderated, as Dmowski (1925/2007) argues, version of the former. This warranted that one third of the inhabitants of the new Polish state were ethnic minorities (Prażmowska, 2010, p. 102). The long awaited and fought for independence, when finally achieved and asserted, further intensified “national sentiment” to an extent where the rights of ethnic minorities were entirely disregarded in favour of political objectives of Poles and their new state (Prażmowska, 2010, p. 106). The re-creation of the Polish state post-1918 presents an example of the political aspect of the modernist theory. It complements the ethno-symbolist perspective and allows an understanding of the strength of ethnic nationalism experienced by Poles who voiced their aspirations to create a nation-state – an ethnically pure and homogenous Poland. This desire was best demonstrated by Dmowski’s claim:

Polish state is a catholic state. It is so not only because the overwhelming majority of its population is catholic, and is not catholic in that or other per cent. From our perspective, it is catholic, in full meaning of that term, since our state is a nation-state, and our nation is a catholic nation, (1925/2007, p. 37)

This claim articulates the Polish eagerness to create an ethnically homogenous state – a nation-state, by all modern standards and definitions (Connor, 2004). This claim was made, however, when ethnic Poles constituted 69% of citizens of the II Republic of Poland and served more as an expression of ambition and aspiration; such a claim made ten years after the interwar Polish state fell victim to Nazi and Soviet aggression would just be a confirmation of the existing order of things.

By examining features of nationalism and the processes that allowed it to spread and acquire a dominant role in the modern world and then applying them to Polish historical experience, this chapter is now able to identify the main elements that shaped Polish national identity prior to 1939: Catholic faith, language and foreign domination. The sharp ethnic consciousness resulting from a tumultuous history highlights Polish nationalism as centered around ethnicity, thus being effectively ethnonationalism in to a full extent of the definition

of that term (Connor, 1994). This provides the basis for the analysis of the actions of the post-1945 communist governments which, equipped with modern technologies (Schleisinger, 1983, in Hutchinson & Smith, 2000) and political means (Deutsch, 1969) and with an international political regime favouring a nation-state (Hobsbawm, 1992) for the first time in Polish history actively, consciously and purposefully engaged in social engineering (Conversi, 2008) aimed at creating a unified, ethnically and culturally homogenous state. Policies of ethnic cleansing, industrialization, launching national education schemes, “polityka historyczna” – “politics of history” (Ochman, 2013, p. 22) and propaganda aimed to fashion a new Polish national identity, based on Polish ethnonationalism and a desire for a nation-state.

Chapter III: Rejection of the Soviet model

Introduction

As shown in Chapter II, Polish national identity that developed throughout the centuries had proved extremely durable. It was further strengthened by the Soviet-German, and from 1941, solely German occupation of the country (Jankowiak, 2004). By early 1944, the new regime began establishing itself in Poland, with the formation of the National Council of the Homeland (KRN), which was dominated by communist activists (BS, KRN/1). The people who ruled the country for more than four decades were predominantly ethnic Poles (Szumiło, 2014, p. 298). Given the strength of Polish nationalism, the mind-set of the Polish communist leaders was crucial in shaping the post-war nation. As Zuzowski claims, “nationalism can express itself through democracy, fascism and communism” (2008, p. 453) and nationalistic elements can be found in most regimes (Kamusella, 2010). Even internationalist communist leaders, such as Georgi Dimitrov, the secretary of the Communist International, in his instruction to Comintern, stipulated that communism must be presented as “a national liberation movement” (in Gontarczyk, 2006, p. 352). The fusion of the communist and nationalist ideologies among the leadership was achieved in the USSR (Zuzowski, 2008, p. 460), but otherwise “whenever the internationalist ideology of the communist movement clashed with nationalism, it invariably suffered defeat” (Zuzowski, 2008, p. 458) and the fall of communism in Poland illustrates this rule. Nevertheless, the communist leaders embarked on this ideological project all across the Eastern Europe. Polish communists used nationalism instrumentally (Zaremba, 2002), and consequently, they could never find a balance between ideology and nationalism. Thus, what proved successful in the Soviet Union was doomed to fail in Poland, with the nationalist element largely suppressing the ideological one (Curp, 2006), but only after periods of tension, expressed in this thesis as the problem of dual identity.

This chapter aims to analyse the tension between nationality and ideology that drove Polish communist to reject the full Soviet model of a totalitarian state – based on their nationalist sentiment – while still implementing the some of the key elements of the ideological doctrine, such as a centrally planned economy and the use of a repressive apparatus in order to maintain power. By examining the actions and attitudes of the Polish communist leadership towards the Soviet Union and its economic and political model, this chapter will demonstrate that Polish communist government never fully fitted a description of communist, notably given by one of the Polish comrades – Stefan Staszewski, who claimed that a communist is “a man who unequivocally believes the party. Unequivocally, meaning

believing it [the party] indiscriminately (... A man who has developed an adaptability of mind and conscience to accept the dogma that the party is never wrong, although it's wrong all the time, to which it admits at the beginning of every new stage" (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 253-254). The relations and attitudes of Polish communists were, as this chapter will attempt to demonstrate, far more complex than the Polish historiography admits and although they "broke with the Polish political tradition" (Eisler, 2014, p. 47), they never fully embraced the **Soviet** model of communism and sought to establish a model of a socialist state that would reflect Polish circumstances.

During the period investigated in this dissertation, the Polish Workers' Party/Polish United Workers' Party saw three different leaders: Władysław Gomułka (1943-1948); Bolesław Bierut (1948-1956) and Edward Ochab (20 March 1956 – 21 October 1956) and then Gomułka for the second time from 21 October 1956 (Eisler, 2014). In order to proceed, it is important to provide a biographical overview of these people, who laid the foundations of the communist regime in Poland. They were all born and grew up before Poland regained independence in 1918 and were all from quite early on in their life engaged in left wing movements (Eisler, 2014). Bierut was actively engaged with the Communist Party of Poland (KPP) right after its creation in 1918 (Eisler, 2014, p. 62), Gomułka and Ochab joined the KPP in the second half of the 1920s. Both Gomułka and Bierut attended the International Leninist School in Moscow, while Ochab, the only one with higher education and knowledge of the ideology, did not need any ideological or educational preparation (Szumiło, 2012). For their communist activities, they all were imprisoned by the interwar Polish government and spent the year of 1938 in Polish prisons. That proved crucial for the future cadres of the Polish communist party. In 1938, Stalin summoned the communist leadership to Moscow where he announced the dissolution of the Communist Party of Poland and executed or exiled most prominent members. Those serving terms in Polish prisons at that time would emerge as future leaders of the party (Eisler, 2014). Most Polish communists spent the war in the USSR, and only came to Poland in 1944 (Czubiński, 1995). Such summarised biographies are typical of most Polish communist activists and their origins caused significant distrust and even open hostility among the Polish society immediately after the war (Czubiński, 1995).

Relations and attitudes towards the Soviet Union

Numerous Polish communist activists underwent ideological and practical training in the Soviet Union between the 1920s and 1940s (Eisler, 2014). There they became intimately familiar with the Soviet project. Many perished in the Great Purge and only small portion of the pre-war KPP returned to Poland after the war (Czubiński, 1992, p. 48). These experiences influenced the attitudes of the Polish communists, an attitude which can be characterized as an outward praise and secretive, sometimes even open, defiance of the Soviets. After 1945, many Polish communists, like long-term prime minister of People's Poland Józef Cyrankiewicz, believed "that Soviet domination of Poland was a foregone conclusion and the issue was merely one of how extensive this would be" (Prażmowska, 2004, pp. 192-3) and they were fully aware that they would have to operate within the confines of Stalin's instructions. Those few who survived the Great Purge carried the memories of the GULag and the everyday Soviet reality with them back to Poland. Celina Budzyńska (see Appendix F) remembered the shock caused by the blatant disparity between the propaganda and the reality, recalling that "from KPP press I knew of those or other achievements, of an enormous zeal, enthusiasm, but how it truly was in the Soviet Union, about the cruelty of the revolution, about misery and famine, no one has really talked about" (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 17). Many prominent Polish communist leaders, like Edward Ochab, were acutely aware of the conditions that surrounded their ascension to power and knew that in many cases they were powerless to stop the Soviets (as cited in Torańska, 1985, pp. 94-5). Nevertheless, Polish-Soviet tensions were visible from the very beginning of the communist rule in Poland and periods of tensions were frequent – 1947, 1948 and in 1956. However, other disagreements characterized the Polish-Soviet relations from the very beginning. By analysing these periods of tension, attitudes of both the Soviets and Poles this section will clarify the mindset of the Polish communist leaders.

The first tensions concerned the very beginning of the communist system in Poland – the establishment of the National Council of the Homeland (Krajowa Rada Narodowa – KRN) which, according to Kersten, was received in Moscow with suspicion, since Stalin had plans to establish the Polish National Committee (Polski Komitet Narodowy – PKN) as the representative body of the Polish communists (1986, p. 40). The *fait accompli* on the part of Polish Workers' Party in Poland caused Stalin to abandon the PKN concept and throw his support behind the KRN. However, this backdown added to his suspicions concerning the loyalty of Polish communists (Czubiński, 1992). Post-war Polish-Soviet relations were also

frequently concerned with the faith and return of the surviving Polish communists who fell victims to the Great Terror. Staszewski emphasizes that from 1945 onwards Bierut made frequent trips to Moscow asking for return of the surviving Polish communists, lost in the vast territories of the Soviet Union (as cited in Torańska, 1985). Budzyńska claims that Bierut was “naïve enough to think that they were still alive” (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 64); nevertheless, she claimed that “Bierut was guilty of many things, I do not want to diminish them ... but still, from all the leaders of fraternal parties only he dared to intervene to Stalin for the release of ‘the enemies of the people’. And to him we owe our lives” (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 66). Staszewski pointed out that these trips lasted until the late 1940s and after one of them, Bierut came back concerned and frightened (as cited in Torańska, 1985). According to him, during his last intervention on behalf of imprisoned former KPP members, Bierut talked, as usual, with Stalin and Beria. Asking the routine question Bierut heard Stalin ask Beria “Lavrientiy Pavlovitsch, where are they?” and Beria was supposed to answer that he is still looking for “them”, apparently that was a “comedy he [Stalin] played every time”. However, on that occasion, after Bierut left Stalin’s office, Beria supposedly snapped at him: “Why are you such a pain in Josif Vissarionovich’s arse? Fuck off! I will show you that you can do much worse [than Polish communists in Siberia]” (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 283). That conversation alone demonstrates that the relations between were not as “cordial” and “fraternal” as Bierut claimed on one of his press conferences held on 27 May 1946 (AAN, Archiwum Bolesława Bieruta, sygn. 254/IV, t. 3, p. 3).

The fate of Polish communists who fell victim to the Great Terror was not the only issue that put a strain Polish-Soviet relations; there were at least three other causes: deportations of Poles, plundering, dismantling and removal of factories from the Recovered Territories to the USSR and the question of borders. Edward Ochab claimed that post-1944 the Soviets deported thousands of Poles to the USSR (as cited in Torańska, 1985, pp. 94-95). On top of that, the Soviets treated the territories taken over (at least officially) by Poland as their war booty and dismantled numerous factories and train lines and relocated them to the USSR. Asked if they could not protest, Ochab answered that Polish leaders “could not do much” (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 99). Gomułka was “furious” with such dealings (Eisler, 2014, p. 350). Even Jakub Berman, the infamous supervisor of the security apparatus and a hard line communist, claimed that “our consent or protest had no meaning” (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 574). Berman confirmed that the political agency and real influence of Polish leaders was severely limited concerning all aspects of the post-war settlement. He

claimed that the Polish leadership could do nothing about the plunder of Poland's economic resources and deportation of Polish citizens.

Polish leaders added that even the question of Poland's eastern border was rather difficult. They knew they could not count on any major alterations, only minor ones, like a part of Białowieża Forest, where Prime minister Osóbka-Morawski made miniscule gains by convincing Stalin that "wisents [European bisons] are neither Poles nor Belarussians" (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 565). On another occasion, as Leon Kasman recalls, during the "struggle with cosmopolitanism", which was a wave of anti-Semitic persecutions unleashed by Stalin, the Soviet ambassador – Popov - was insistent that Poland follow suit. After yet another visit, Bierut snapped:

"You know what comrade Popov, I was not born to be the Secretary of CC [Central Committee of the party], I'm a typesetter by vocation and at any moment I can stand behind the type case." Popov was frightened, informed Moscow and the next day they dismissed him" (as cited in Torańska, 1985, pp. 893-894)

That clearly demonstrates that even Bierut, arguably one of the most "loyal executors of Stalin's orders", (Eisler, 2014, p. 132) was prepared to step down as a leader rather than mimic a Stalinist anti-Jewish purge in Poland. Yet another occasion in 1950s, recalled Stefan Staszewski, concerned agriculture. Khrushchev was going through a phase of "maize obsession" (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 296) and demanded that 2 million hectares should be allocated for its cultivation in Poland; "for peace and quiet they shoved in the plan not 2 million but five hundred thousand hectares, from what approximately hundred thousand were cultivated" (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 299). As this example illustrates, Polish-Soviet relations often resembled a game of deception on the part of Polish communists; indeed, from Torańska's interviews with Polish communist leaders (1985), it is possible to observe a significant dichotomy between the official fraternal relations with the USSR and the fear of it they display in their interviews, both during the Stalinist era and under Khrushchev.

Moreover, it is possible to observe that these relations were a peculiar combination of horror and comedy; still they did not shake the *modus operandi* between the Soviet Union and Poland. In the period this dissertation covers, there were three instances where the rather fragile equilibrium was destroyed and it was re-established with considerable difficulty: in 1947 during the conference of communist parties in Szklarska Poręba; in 1948 during the

leadership crisis within the PPR; and in 1956 during an internal struggle for power within PZPR, which almost resulted in Soviet military intervention (Eisler, 2014).

The Szklarska Poręba conference was primarily called for the establishment of the Communist Bureau of Information to replace the Comintern dissolved during the war (Kersten, 1986). The conference coincided with criticism for “lack of internationalism” that Poland was receiving across the Soviet Bloc, for refusing to meet the quota of coal production, sold at significantly lowered prices to Soviet Union (Eisler, 2014, p. 216). Notwithstanding the criticism, the Poles proceeded as the hosts of the conference. Its proceedings were communicated by Stalin to Gomułka and Berman, who recalled:

Its proceedings significantly deviated from the version given by Stalin to Gomułka and I, Gomułka began to get nervous. ‘Stalin has fooled me; we will vote against establishing of the Information Bureau’. I was terrified. I realized the consequences will follow if Poland votes against. We would have to either close or postpone the proceeding. I tried to reason with Gomułka: understand it is a blatant breach in the entire scheme and understand what it would mean for Poland to break away, undermine the unity of the bloc! That would mean that Poland betrays and jeopardises the Soviet Union... I don’t have to say what adversities would have fallen on us (...) Our team would have gone k’tschortu [to hell] naturally, replaced by a horrifying team, better not to think how horrifying (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 623).

With great difficulty, Berman prevented Gomułka from an open confrontation with Stalin. He went back to Warsaw and convinced the Central Committee of the party to instruct their first secretary to vote in favour of establishing Cominform (as cited in Torańska, 1985). The issue of the location of the Cominform was then discussed and Warsaw proposed as the location. Gomułka feared that it would “limit the autonomy of the Polish [communist] party” (Berman as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 629). In this instance, yet another game of deceptions and excuses followed on the Polish part. Gomułka out-maneuvred the Soviets, using arguments that locating the Cominform in Warsaw would undermine Poland’s position in applying for foreign loans and would greatly undermine the progress of establishing better political relations with the West (Eisler, 2014; Berman, as cited in Torańska, 1985). This particular political manoeuvring by Gomułka illustrated his reluctant attitude towards Stalin. He saw the Cominform as yet another tool of Soviet domination in Poland. His reaction, initially impulsive, was tamed by his fellow party members and replaced by a strategy of excuses. His

initial reaction and the actions that followed illustrate his major objective – to prevent any further Soviet encroachment. The Cominform was initially located in Belgrade and, after Yugoslavia's break with the Eastern Bloc, in Bucharest (Eisler, 2014). It is important to note that the most prominent party members were acutely aware of the consequences risked by outward defiance. In his interview with Torańska, Berman criticised Gomułka not for attempting to defy Stalin but because “he could not protect the Polish national interest without brutally provoking a conflict with the Soviet Union” (1985, p. 630); Berman criticised the method but not the objective. He believed Gomułka to be too open in his insubordination, while at the same time implying that Polish dealings with the Soviet Union, and Stalin in particular, warranted extreme caution.

1947 was also the year of the parliamentary election that served as a propaganda tool for legitimising power of the party. The entire enterprise was rigged and the Democratic Bloc dominated by the Polish Workers' Party won an overwhelming majority in the Polish Sejm (Czubiński, 1992). Subsequently, the democratic opposition like the Polish Peasant Alliance (PSL) was destroyed and the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) merged with the PPR (Prażmowska, 2004). This merger signalled the point where the Sovietisation of Poland entered a new stage and Poland began to replicate the Soviet mono-party regime. The speech Gomułka gave at the uniting congress of the Polish Workers Party and the Polish Socialist Party attracted controversy and criticism from across the Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union in particular. It further triggered a struggle for power within the party leading to Gomułka's fall from power and his subsequent imprisonment (Eisler, 2014). Contrary to similar events in cases of Laszlo Rajk in Hungary (1949) and Rudolf Slánsky in Czechoslovakia (1952), the political charges did not lead to execution (Eisler, 2014) and Gomułka was eventually cleared of any charges and returned to power in 1956.

It is important to analyse the speech that Gomułka gave on 3 June 1948 at the Plenum of the Central Committee, prior to his fall from power; it does in some places strike openly nationalist and anti-Soviet tones. Gomułka began his speech by criticizing Rosa Luxemburg and SDKPiL (Social-Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania) and then continued to a very important passage, almost ethno-symbolist in its meaning:

Poland, contrary to many oppressed nations, had a tradition of seven centuries of independent existence. That fact must have had shaped aspirations and the psyche of the Polish nation, and thus the Polish working class, different than the aspirations of

those nations, which were not independent across their history (in Koseski, Szaflik & Turkowski eds. 2003, p. 174)

Gomułka recognised the specific circumstances that shaped Polish national identity and implied that the issue of independence was a very sensitive one in Polish society. In a subsequent passage, Gomułka openly praised nationalism and criticised attempts of the KPP to abandon from Polish independence in exchange for the revolution:

Struggle for independence is one of the most beautiful traditions of the PPS, which we must lay at the foundations of the united party (...). The KPP, formed from uniting the SDKPiL and PPS-Left did not entirely divest of false attitude towards the national question represented by the SDKPiL. The KPP did not see any other way to solve the issue of the social liberation of the working class than the struggle for Polish Soviet Republic (...). The slogan on national self-determination, when used correctly, becomes the driving force for the struggle of national and social liberation (as cited in Koseski, Szaflik & Turkowski, 2003, p. 174).

Thus, Gomułka did not want to abandon the Polish national question for the communist revolution; rather, he wanted to use the revolution to further advance the national cause and yet again he voiced his opposition to the Soviet encroachment of Poland. Other Polish communists reacted extremely negatively and swiftly to Gomułka's stance. Berman, for example asked by Torańska what was so "horrible" in the First Secretary's speech answered: "that we need to value the independence traditions of the PPS" (1985, p. 631). The reaction of the PPR's Central Committee was almost immediate. On 4 June 1948 it passed an instruction obliging the First Secretary do get the CC's approval for any future speeches and publications (as cited in Koseski, Szaflik & Turkowski, 2003, p. 177) and on 2 September a resolution concerning "the right-wing and nationalist deviation and means to combat it" (as cited in Koseski, Szaflik & Turkowski, 2003, p. 184). Gomułka was replaced by Bierut as the First Secretary in 1948; in 1949 the portfolio of Recovered Territories, held by Gomułka, was abolished and he and his wife were arrested on 2 August 1951 on Bierut's personal order and imprisoned in the Ministry of Public Security villa in Miedzeszyn (Eisler, 2014, p. 142). Such tensions and disagreements among top regime officials illustrate not only an interpersonal struggle concerning the doctrine; they illustrate the struggle between nationalism and ideology, highlighting the dual identity of Polish communists.

The case of Gomułka, as Józef Światło, senior official in the security apparatus, claimed, was “the most important event in the post war history of the party” (HIA, DSM, sygn. 73, scan 419). Being an insider, he provides very important information explaining why Gomułka’s show trial failed. Its failure was closely connected with the past lives of communist leaders (namely Bierut and Berman), that Gomułka as a first secretary was acutely aware of, as well as the interpersonal relations of the high leadership. As Światło argued, “there is no trust among the members of the political bureau. They are held together by mutual blackmail. Everyone holds compromising documents on one another” (HIA, DSM, sygn. 73, scan 409). That was probably a very important reason that prevented the staging of Gomułka’s trial: Bierut and the Politburo were afraid that it could “turn into a scandal, Gomułka would not just be a defendant, but also a prosecutor” (HIA, DSM, sygn. 73, scan 426). The pressure from Moscow, however, triggered an investigation, which failed; neither Gomułka nor his associates pleaded guilty to charges against them. The “rightist-nationalist” deviation was nothing else but “a drive to become independent from Moscow And Moscow had to destroy that deviation” (HIA, DSM, sygn. 73, scan 423 and 420). Even under the immense pressure from the Soviet Union, Polish communists were not ready to stage Gomułka’s show trial. They feared he could expose them and could not obtain any compromising testimony. Importantly, they did not resort to falsifying evidence or testimonies or to the use of torture, which was a common practice across the Soviet Bloc (HIA, DSM, sygn. 73, scan 422), which serves to illustrate their reluctance to Stalinist methods. The issue of Soviet pressure and “mutual blackmail” also serve as examples of dual identity – geopolitics and compromising pasts held Polish leaders in check, accentuating tensions within the party.

The very fact that one of the most prominent party leaders fell victim to the apparatus of repression demonstrates that despite Polish opposition to Stalinist practices, strong pressure existed for sovietisation (Esiler, 2014, p. 143). The show trial, followed by execution, widely practiced under Stalin, failed in Poland (Eisler, 2014, p. 147). It is notable that the most prominent Polish communist leaders did not entirely believe in Gomułka’s guilt. Further highlighting the opposition of Polish communist leaders to the use of show trials was Ochab’s comment concerning the Soviet trials of Rajk and Slánsky, which he described as “shameful exaction of confessions from broken people, who in the spotlight testified that they took part in Tito’s conspiracy and all of them claimed to have conspired with Gomułka” (as cited in Torńska, 1985, p. 116). He then added that “in the case of Gomułka, probably both

Berman and Bierut were convinced that these were Beria's provocations" (1985, p. 118). Gomułka's restitution to power demonstrates that such trials were not treated seriously and he was not the only communist in Poland targeted by "the struggle with right-wing nationalist" deviation. The trial of Waclaw Komar is best summarised by a short exchange between Ochab and Torańska:

Ochab: Wacek was fitful sometimes. He could say that Soviet garrisons in Poland are unnecessary.

Torańska: Are they not?

Ochab: No, they are not, but one does not say such things (1985, p. 122-123).

The repression apparatus targeted many other prominent Polish communists, apart from Komar and Gomułka, Marian Spychalski and Michał Rola-Żymierski (Minister of National Defence and Marshall of Poland) were removed from their posts but a show trial was staged only in case of Waclaw Komar (Szwagrzyk, 2005, p. 23-24) and he escaped capital punishment (Eisler, 2014).

Collectivisation and nationalisation of the industry

Polish-Soviet tensions occurred not only on the political domain but also in the economy and the enforcement of communist ideology. In the USSR, collectivisation and nationalisation were ruthlessly enforced, leading to millions of casualties as a result of famine, executions and deportations (Courtois, 1999). Between 1927 and 1940, the percentage of collectivised farms grew from 0.8% to 96.9% and all arable land became state property (TSU, 1972, p. 240). Similarly, in Poland the communists advanced agrarian reform that was announced by the PKWN on 6 September 1944. That decree nationalised all private agricultural farms larger than 100 hectares (Dz. U. 1944 nr. 4 poz. 17, p. 8), instead of all arable land, as in the USSR. An interesting fact is that the decree left the question of land belonging to the Catholic Church as a matter for the Constitutional Sejm. Granting land to landless peasants was one of the most important communist policies and the new authorities almost immediately began to introduce the reform (Czubiński, 1992). However, the question of the "squirearchy" (wealthy landowners, members of the nobility) and attitudes towards them differed in Poland significantly from those that were dominant in the Soviet Union. On one occasion, Bierut summarised his meeting with the USSR leader:

Com[rade] Stalin told if our task is to eliminate the entire class, that then it is not a reform but an agrarian revolution and this sort of revolutions should not be done in full sanction of the law or handled with kid gloves. Such revolutions must be conducted using revolutionary methods. Com[rade] Stalin could not observe such revolutionary methods on our part and he criticized us for it (as cited in Esiler, 2014, p. 106)

On other occasion, when Stalin found out that none of the “squirearchs” was imprisoned he told Bierut: “What sort of communists are you?” (as cited in Eisler, 2014, p. 107). The agrarian reform was implemented not without turbulence and resistance, yet the brutality of its implementation was a very moderate by Soviet or Eastern Bloc standards (Czubiński, 1992).

The nationalisation of industry also proceeded on different lines in Poland compared to the soviet model (Prażmowska, 2004). By 1946, attempts to mimic the Soviet model began. *A Bill on nationalisation of the substantial branches of economy* passed on 3 January 1946 (Dz. U. 1946, nr. 3 poz. 17). In 1947, three bills were passed and they provided the legal basis for the subsequent nationalisation. The first was the Ordinance of the Council of Ministers in terms of the overtaking of enterprises by the state issued on 30 January, which instructed local authorities in terms of procedures associated with nationalisation (Dz. U. 1947 nr. 16 poz. 62). Then in June, the *Bill on Combating Dearness and Excessive Profits in Trade* was introduced; it set out the state controlled pricing modelled on the Soviet system (Dz. U. 1947 nr. 35 poz. 218). Finally, the Sejm passed the *Bill on Citizen Tax Commissions and Social Inspectors* on 2 June 1947, which aimed to establish strict fiscal control over the economy (Dz. U. 1947 nr. 43 poz. 219).

The nationalisation of the industry began immediately after the *Bill of Nationalisation* of 1946 and gradually intensified. In 1946 there was only one list of nationalised enterprises (M.P. 1946); in 1947 there were 15 publications specifically dealing with nationalisation of enterprises (M.P. 1947); in 1948 the government published 30 such lists; the following year that number swelled to 46 (M.P. 1949), falling to 39 in 1950 and to 24 in 1951 (M.P. 1950; 1951). By the end of the first six-year plan, the nationalisation of the industry was largely completed, as the list of nationalised enterprises became sporadic and irregular. To envisage the scale, the author of this dissertation calculated how many private enterprises the government seized in the first year of the six-year plan and that numbered 412 various private

enterprises and 223 mining fields nationalised in just one year (M.P 1950 poz.8; 49; 50; 87; 107; 111; 160; 170; 183; 223 225; 229; 230; 239; 241; 242; 332; 343; 359; 365; 420; 508; 528; 583; 618; 620; 650; 696; 718; 901; 1072; 1151; 1253; 1394; 1556; 1594; 1595; 1596; 1636; 1637; M.P. 1951 poz. 53; 54; 70; 71; 110; 331; 332). The scale of nationalisation was enormous; yet it was far from complete. There were still privately owned artisan shops, shoemakers and farms. During the ethnographic study, W.W recalled that in Wałbrzych “for hats and gloves we had Ms. Müller, there were few shoemakers in the central square and numerous seamstresses, if one could get his hands on some textiles, they would make anything you wanted” (08.02.2016). Tokarski (2015) argues that in 1947, 60% of Poland’s GDP was generated by the private sector; later on, that number decreased significantly, but throughout private artisan shops continued to make their contribution to a state controlled economy. Thus, the Polish government was not overly zealous in the process of nationalisation, nor were they enthusiastic about economic plans spanning particular number of years (in case of Poland, six). The first six-year plan was described by Berman as “neither particularly brilliant, nor implemented consistently” (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 598).

The issue on which the Polish communists continued to differ most apparently from their Soviet counterparts was collectivisation; the attitudes varied from outright rejection in the case of Gomułka to a cautious scepticism in the case of Berman and Minc (Esiler, 2014; Czubiński, 1992). In this respect, Poles were unique in the Eastern Bloc. Stefan Staszewski recalled a conversation with a journalist from Prague concerning collectivisation, which is worth quoting in full as it demonstrates the Polish attitude towards the issue and its striking difference from the rest of the Soviet Bloc:

Journalist [J]: What will you do with your kulaks after collectivisation?

Staszewski [S]: I don’t understand the question – what collectivisation?

J: But sooner or later you will have to implement collectivisation and the issue of kulaks will arise, what will you do with them then?

S: You know comrade; I think no one here has deliberated on this.

J: No one!?! Poland is a country with a limited geographical area. How many peasant farms does she have?

S: Up to four million.

J: Simple then, you have 400 thousand kulak farms.

S: What sort of calculation is this? I don't understand.

J: We have concluded that 10% of peasant farms are kulak farms, you need to have approximately similar amount, so that amounts to 400 thousand kulak farms, so at least half-a-million to be resettled or arrested. Where will you resettle them?

S: We have never discussed such a problem. Firstly, we have never wondered how many kulak farms we have, secondly – the definition of a kulak here is completely different and we don't have kulaks that you defined as capitalist and thirdly – no one here has no intention of arresting or resettling half-a-million or a million people because that would be madness" (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 281

This conversation encapsulates the mindset of a majority of Polish communists. They were reluctant to implement the Soviet-style collectivisation in Poland and, as Staszewski claimed, they had no intention of resettling or arresting such a large number of people – who were Poles. This nationalist response can be paralleled with the ethno-nationalist policies of ethnic cleansing, since the communist government had every intention to and in fact did resettle approximately 3 million Germans from Poland between 1945 and 1949 (Nitschke, 2002). Nothing better illustrates the dual identity of Polish communists than Staszewski's conversation. In the case of collectivisation, Berman claimed that only 10% of the farms were collectivised, but after 1956 all the "cooperatives" (notably Polish communists did not use the Soviet terminology in the matter) disbanded. This data is confirmed by Paczkowski, who gives a total value of 8% (2005, p. 126). He further argues that the Polish authorities did not unleash dekulakization on such a scale as the Soviet Union: they institutionalised chicanery against private farmers, but essentially they allowed them to operate relatively freely.

The issue of power, terror and persecution

Alongside the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries, Poland created its own security and repressive apparatus. USSR had its NKVD/KGB, the GDR – Stasi and Poland had the MBP (Ministry of Public Security) that administered the UB (Security Office). The MBP was incorporated within the PKWN, which meant that the repressive

apparatus grew and consolidated from the very beginning of the regime (Szwagrzyk, 2005). The initial number of security agents is estimated at 2.5 thousand, which swelled to 33 thousand by 1953 (Szwagrzyk, 2005, p. 20). In the initial stages of the regime's consolidation, it was directed at the anti-communist underground guerrilla formations such as Liberty and Independence (WiN), with the situation within Poland bearing marks of a civil war (Eisler, 2014; Prażmowska, 2004). However, the scale of terror was significantly smaller than in the Soviet Union or other countries of the Soviet Bloc (Kemp-Welch, 1999). Moreover, Poland saw the use of Soviet advisors on an unprecedented scale coupled with the penetration of all the party and army strata by NKVD and GRU (Eisler, 2014). Józef Światło claimed that there was a dual administration with the security apparatus, Soviet and Polish; thus, almost every department in the Ministry of Public Security had its Soviet administrator (HIA, DSM, sygn. 73, scan 408; see Appendix F).

Between 1944 and 1948, the regime sought to consolidate its power but without alienating Polish society (Czubiński, 1992). Initially the terror and secret executions were directed only at the armed resistance, although two amnesty bills significantly reduced their number without bloodshed (Dz. U. 1945 nr. 28 poz. 172; Dz. U. 1947 nr. 20 poz. 78). The struggle with the so-called "cursed soldiers" was a bitter and bloody fight; it has been estimated that approximately 30-40 thousand men took arms against the new regime; 8-10 thousand died in combat and 21 thousand died in UB prisons (Pietrzak, 2012). The terror and invigilation was also directed against the civilian population and Szwagrzyk estimates that there 5.2 million portfolios concerning the "suspicious elements", meaning the potential enemies of the regime, which constituted one third of the adult population of Poland (2005, p. 20). The new regime also created a vast network of prisons and labour camps consisting of 179 different prisons. 9000 people served terms for political charges in 1953 (Szwagrzyk, 2005, p. 25). This number, however horrific, is proportionally small when compared to the estimates given by Appelbaum, who estimates the total number of GULag victims to be approximately 28.7 million people (2003, p. 518). However, it is vital to emphasize that the regime and its leaders, however moderate in their use of terror, frequently asserted their claim to power and expressed willingness to stop at nothing in order to maintain it. This will to power is evident in a speech delivered by Gomułka on 18 June 1945, at the session of the Provisional Government of National Unity, in which he claimed that "once we have acquired power, we shall never hand it over..... You can cry that the blood of the Polish nation is being spilled, that NKVD rules Poland and that shall not make us deviate from our path" (as

cited in Koseski, Szaflik and Turkowski, 2003, p. 11). The totalitarian character of the new regime could not have been outlined more clearly. As already mentioned in this section, the regime brutally thwarted any signs of armed resistance by 1948. Civilians were not also immune to the use of brutal force, as soon as they challenged the regime. A challenge erupted in June 1956 in Poznań and the regime responded violently, which resulted in many civilian casualties (Esiler, 2008, 2014). After a brutal assault on the revolting civilian population, the regime sent a clear message outlining the consequences that would follow any revolt against the regime. In a radio speech delivered on 29 June 1956 (three days after the revolt in Poznań) Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz announced that “[a]ny provocateur or a mad man, who dares to raise his hand on people’s government [władzę ludową] can be assured that the people’s government will chop that hand off” (Archive of the Polish Radio, 1956). The regime in deed deviated from the soviet model and the excessive use of terror; however, it would not restrain itself once challenged by the population.

Yet another important issue concerning the repressive apparatus in Poland was that it was almost saturated with Soviet advisors in Poland, although they were “not as insolent as everywhere else” (Berman as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 582). Furthermore, there were many Polish communists directly supervised by the NKVD in the civilian/party administration (Berman, as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 585-589) and large number of the GRU agents in the army (Cenckiewicz, 2011). Furthermore, Poland was the only country where alongside the Soviet advisors there were citizens of the Soviet Union serving, called POPs (Performing the Duties of a Pole), who were dressed in Polish uniforms and were presented as Polish personnel, even though they rarely spoke Polish (Eisler, 2014, p. 208). The very fact that the Soviets deemed it necessary to be directly involved in the structures of the Polish state demonstrates their deep distrust of the Polish party and additionally the weakness of the communist party, which failed to mobilize a sufficient number of people to effectively run the state and army apparatus. The terror and persecutions in Poland cannot be dismissed as insignificant as they targeted every social group (Szwagrzyk, 2005). But it is vital to remember that the main impetus of the Polish repressive apparatus was directed at the armed resistance, unlike the USSR where terror was all-encompassing. Additionally, the communist leaders in Poland were aware of their unpopularity and weakness and feared that if they unleashed terror on the same scale as the Soviets, they would mobilise the entire nation against them (Czubiński, 1992).

Relations and attitudes towards Poles

Polish communists, predominantly Poles themselves, knew that the task of ruling and building socialism in Poland would be a very difficult one, if not impossible. Gomułka even said that “[t]he Russian nation is obedient, Germans disciplined; Poland is difficult to govern” (Turlejska, 2010). In this respect, he was always able to correctly determine popular attitudes towards the regime. In one letter he wrote to Moscow in 1944, he said that “even if the Brotherhood of Saint Anthony” announced a similar programme to PPR “it still would have been dubbed as Moscow’s agents who were paid by Moscow’s money with the aim to bring the Polish nation to Stalin’s heel” (as cited in Kersten, 1986, p. 37). They were acutely aware of their unpopularity, weakness and isolation from the society. They were aware that “all the time” they “were a foreign body regardless of our intentions” (Budzyńska as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 72). Their attitudes vary from awe to an outward resentment. Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski (long time Minister of Defence, Prime Minister and later the President of Poland) almost admired Polish resistance to communism, which is illustrated by the following excerpt from Torańska’s interview:

Jaruzelski[J]: Yakubovsky told me one time what he saw in Czechoslovakia. The mob on the street was yelling “to hell with Soviet Union” and the loudest one is this tall, ginger, young man. Ja podshot k-niemu (I approached him) – recalls Jakubovski – i skazal, ya tyebiya kak gvozdz v zemlyu zabiya (and said, I will slam you like a nail in the ground). And he began to shout: da zdastvoytet Sovyetskiy Saiuz (Long live the Soviet Union).

Torańska[T]: Funny?

J: No, no, for Yakubovsky that change in attitude of the young Czech man wasn’t funny. It was a proof of the power of the army.

T: And what are you laughing at?

J: I really like Czechs (...) but can you imagine such a change of reaction in Poland?

T: Yes. I can imagine.

J: I can’t (as cited in Torańska, 2006, p. 50).

This story, however, concerning the events of 1968, demonstrates the attitudes of the Polish communist leaders towards their own compatriots. They knew the use of force would act not as a deterrent, but as a unifying factor on Poles. That knowledge helps explaining the fact that the armed resistance was dealt with quite brutally, but repression and persecution of the civilian population was exercised with a significant degree of caution (Czubiński, 1992). Polish communists also understood the power and the intensity of Polish nationalism; Berman compares Poland to a “Pandora’s box” from which it is “easy to release evil spirits [of nationalism], but difficult to put them back” (in Torańska, 1985, p. 738).

Conclusion

The communists who ruled Poland after 1944 were conflicted in regards to the communist project as implemented in the Soviet Union. They believed in the communist project, or at least in socialism – Berman, Bierut, Gomułka, Ochab, Budzyńska (Eisler, 2014; Torańska, 1985) saw the social and economic changes in Poland that occurred after 1944 as positive. But it becomes apparent that they attempted to balance Polish nationalism with the ideological dictates of communism and a less repressive version of totalitarian power. Gomułka’s rehabilitation probably best illustrates this phenomenon and explains why he was so closely associated with the notion of “the Polish way to socialism” (Eisler, 2014). Additionally, all post-war Polish leaders had new and understood the Soviet project and they rejected its full application. Leon Chajm, undersecretary in the Ministry of Justice (see Appendix F), claimed that “the Stalinist scenery was no different to the Hitlerist one” (in Torańska, 1985, p. 438); then he adds that they planned “to do it differently, to do it better” and then expresses the doubt in the very system he supported (1985, p. 457). It is vital to remember that the fear of the Soviet Union was equally prevalent among the Polish communist elites as well as in wider society. Consequently, the power of the Soviet Union created a dichotomous mind-set among the communist leaders. As Staszewski put it, many things were done for “peace and quiet” (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 299). Although it might sound rather bizarre, they realised that the geopolitical condition was “forced” on them and they had to adapt to the demands of Soviet leaders since “there was no other perspective” (Ochab as cited in Torańska, p. 95 & 100).

Their beliefs and national identity proved difficult to balance and although communist regimes are often instrumental in their use of nationalism in order to advance the communist cause (Zaremba, 2002; Zuzowski, 2008), it is possible to observe that in Poland

that scheme was reversed and that nationalism frequently competed with the communist ideology and after 1956 “nationalistic elements” were clearly visible within the regime (Staszewski as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 358). That did not naturally mean the regime turned from a socialist to a nationalist one, although nationalism assumed primacy over the ideology. Yet in the first 12 years of the regime, the elites struggled between nationalism and ideology. This struggle warranted that the regime failed to produce a coherent narrative; the elements of communism were intertwined with nationalist rhetoric. The situation the Polish leaders found themselves after the war caused them to develop a dual identity – the official ideological one and the private, anti-Soviet and more nationalist one. With that mindset, they began the socialist project in Poland and their activities affected every aspect of social, political and economic activity of the Polish nation. Their dual identity permeated in to the society, which, owing to its pragmatism, also developed a dual identity – the official compliant with the new regime and the private, cultivating the traditional Polish national values, customs and traditions, which were in stark opposition to the regime. Zuzowski claims that “national communism is an oxymoron” (2008, p. 461) and that translated to Poland where the values of the new regime were antithetic to Polish nationalism. From their attitudes and actions, it is possible to observe that they were ideologically unconvinced and often openly opposed to Stalin’s methods. Officially, they didn’t even praise communism; they advocated socialism (Czubiński, 1992), understood by them most likely as a centralised and planned economy, where the state holds only the most important assets (Julia Minc as cited in Torańska, 1985). Their economic policies and failed collectivisation, which was not strictly enforced, permit the conclusion that they neither wanted to antagonise the society nor was communism their ultimate goal. Nevertheless, the Polish project was from the very beginning fraught in contradictions and inconsistencies. Geopolitics of forceful alliance with the USSR greatly limited Polish Workers’ Party’s ability to determine the internal policies. Therefore, a centrally planned economy was introduced, which, however, was moderated by the failure to collectivise the agricultural production, visibly contradicting the Soviet model. Communists’ awareness of lack of legitimacy on one hand resulted in open appeals to Polish nationalism in order to placate society. On the other hand, that lack of legitimacy resulted in creation of a quasi-totalitarian apparatus of power that held them in power. Such tensions ultimately doomed the project to either fail or be overtaken by nationalist element, which effectively happened after 1956 (Esiler, 2014). This perspective will allow for better understanding of mechanisms behind the Polish-socialist policies of nation-building and their outcomes.

Chapter IV: Expulsions and ethnic cleansing

Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter II, the Poles had long developed a strong ethnic-based identity. When the communist party came to power in 1944, backed by the Soviets, they faced a challenge of legitimacy. This chapter aims to address the complex issue of the ethnic-cleansing that followed the communist takeover in Poland after 1944. In regards to the overarching question guiding this dissertation, this chapter will examine the dichotomous identity of Poland's national leaders in terms of their support of ethnic cleansing, which stood in stark contrast to socialist/communist ideology promoting internationalism and "alliance and honest friendship between the nations" (BS, KRN/1, p. 5). It is important to note that the post-war ethnic cleansing came about as a result of a complex interplay of national and international interests that effectively facilitated the process of forced removal of Germans among other groups. Remarkably, all parties involved in the redrawing of the post-war political order were interested in the creation of Polish ethno-state: the Western Allies, the USSR and the Poles themselves (Nitschke, 2000). This chapter will first need to examine the reasons why each of the aforementioned agents supported the Polish nation state. Furthermore, this chapter will analyse the appropriate legislation that reflected the desire for an ethnic state and the respective bilateral and multilateral treaties that facilitated the population transfers (Curp, 2005, 2006). Finally, this chapter will examine the internal population transfers that aimed to strengthen the appearance of the ethnic homogeneity.

The Polish Workers' Party embarked on the fully nationalist project in order to "strengthen the appeal of the communist government" (Service, 2012, p. 532). Service (2013) and Zaremba (2002) both analyse the use of nationalism and nationalist rhetoric. However, both argue for the instrumental use of nationalism in order to gain legitimacy. There were three major factors that influenced the project of homogenization of Poland. Firstly, Poles, through their post-1795 history, established a strong ethnic identity, which resulted in a desire for a nation state. That desire had been strengthened by the German occupation of 1939-1945. The communist party launched a project of creating a nation state, which aimed to respond to Polish nationalist drives, thus lending the government legitimacy it lacked.

In order to better demonstrate the scale of the post-war ethnic cleansing, it would be useful to present and compare the ethnic structure of Poland according to the 1931 census and the data that was presented to the Council of Ministers in 1950:

Table no. 1 – Poland's ethnic composition

| 1931 Census | | 1950 Data (Mironowicz, 2000, p. 94) |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ethnicity | Number of people | Number of people |
| Poles | 21 835 000 | 24 400 000 |
| Ukrainians (and Lemkos) | 3 250 000 | 100 000 |
| Jews | 3 113 900 | 180 000–240 000 |
| Belarusians | 995 000 | 110 000 |
| Germans | 734 000 | 140 000 |
| Lithuanians | 100 000 | 10 000 |

The scale of the ethnic cleansing is clear from the table above. The overall number of minorities did not exceed 1 million, while in 1931 they constituted almost a third of Poland's population. The territorial settlements of the pre-war minorities are best illustrated by the following map:



Figure 1 – Ethno-linguistic map of Poland (Source?)

The strong ethnic nationalism and a desire for an ethnic state (Prażmowska, 2010) caused the new Polish state and government to begin the nationalist ethnic-cleansing project as early as



Figure 2 – Eastern Europe post-1945(Source?)

1944. The approximate numbers illustrate how enormous that project was and the number of affected people from different ethnic groups previously living within Poland (see Appendix F). The table on page 4 suggests that the Germans were not the largest group targeted by the ethnic cleansing, but as Figure 2 demonstrates, the post-war borders of Poland changed considerably. The lands populated by Ukrainian, Belarussian and Lithuanian minorities were annexed by the Soviet Union, leaving only a small portion of the pre-war Belarussian,

Ukrainian and Lithuanian population within Polish borders (Mironowicz, 2000). For the loss

of significant portions of her territories in the East (so called Kresy), Poland was compensated with the German territories of Silesia (Schlesien), West Pommern (Pommern) and Masuria (part of Ost Preussen), which were populated by approximately 3.5 million Germans in 1945 (Nitschke, 2000, p. 27)

Ethno-symbolist motivation for ethno-centric sentiment of Poles

The ethno-symbolist theory of nationalism argues that national identity is formed through time and encounters with the “other” (Smith, 1991; 1995). This helps to explain the phenomenon observed by Hobsbawm (1992), namely the rise of nationalism after any military conflict, especially the global ones of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945. The campaign of 1939 resulted in the defeat of the II Polish Republic and its partition between the Third Reich and the USSR (Prażmowska, 2010; 2011). The hostilities and resulting occupation encompassed the entire territory of pre-war Poland, thus exposing every single Pole to either German (between 1939 and 1945) or Soviet (between 1939 and 1941) “otherness”, coupled with “brutal wartime” (Service, 2012, p. 531) policies of the occupiers. The experience helped galvanize Polish society along the ethno-religious line. Scholars agree that after World

War II, the peaceful coexistence of ethnic minorities within Poland (as well as in other countries of Eastern Europe) was simply impossible (Nitschke, 2008; Curp, 2001; 2006; Douglas, 2012; Mironowicz, 2000; Demshuk, 2015; Martin, 1998; Zaremba, 2002; Pasierb, 1969). Thus the view that the expulsions of Germans “fell on the communist government” (2012) are easier to understand. This view also explains the consensus between the Polish Workers Party (PPR) dominated Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) and the London Government in Exile (the government of Poland that fled the country in 1939) concerning the ethnic structure of post-war Poland and the nation-wide cooperation of the Church and all Poles in the endeavour to expel all the minorities from the Polish territory. Based on that general sentiment, the PPR embarked on the nationalist enterprise to make Poland a nation-state. Such a decision was dictated by the communists’ desperate need for legitimacy and indeed acted as a tool to rally the masses behind the new government (Mironowicz, 2000, Zaremba, 2002).

The heightened ethnic identity of Poles can be observed from 1939 onwards and there was a nation-wide consensus that Poland should become an ethnic state (Nitschke, 2000). All across Polish society, from the Government in Exile residing in London to the Soviet backed the National Council of the Homeland and Polish Committee on National Liberation, and all political parties agreed that there should be no minorities in the post-war Poland (Nitschke, 2000; Mironowicz, 2000; Curp, 2006; Douglas, 2012). This heightened national identity influenced the PPR and all the satellite parties that constituted the KRN on New Year’s Eve of 1943 (BS, KRN/1). In fact, the KRN deputies engaged in an outright nationalist, and in many cases chauvinist, discussion. For example, Deputy Jankowski, on the very first session of the KRN, claimed that “[u]nbelievable terror and barbarity of the enemy are enforcing, day by day, the hatred of the occupant by the [Polish] Nation” and that Poland was to be a result of “hard and decisive struggle with hordes of Hitlerist occupant, struggle for life and death” (BS, KRN/1, p. 4-5). Declarations such as the one made by the representative of the People’s Guard – one of the communist anti-German partisans – depute Turski that exclaimed “Long live the Free and Independent Poland ... death to the German occupants” (BS, KRN/1, p. 12) aptly expresses the nationalist fervour of first sessions of the KRN.

With the advances of the Red Army, declarations became more specific expressions of intent. On 4th session of the KRN, the chairman of the PKWN, Edward Osòbka-Morawski declared that

“in the course of the current war, among the masses of Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians, there has matured a decision to return to the borders of their fatherlands, dwell and live among their own compatriots (...) we believe that by this means we will solve a centuries old question of nationalities within our country (BS, KRN/4, p. 2).

On the 31 December 1943, Bolesław Bierut, the president of the KRN (and a head of the Soviet sponsored state), began to make territorial claims of behalf of Poland, which had a strong anti-German sentiment:

the East Prussia – the natural habitat and a stronghold of most dangerous class in Germany – the Junkers, which had always been the pillar of imperialism and German reaction, must, in the name of peace and the security of all world be turned from the seat of conflict, to a bridge linking the peaceful nations of Eastern Europe with sea. (BS, KRN/6, p. 28)

It is possible to observe in the above quote Bierut’s attempt to fuse the nationalist and anti-German rhetoric with the ideological vocabulary of communism. However, many of the KRN sessions often turned into a chauvinist anti-German spectacle. With the advances of the Red Army and the imminent fall of the III Reich, the revanchist sentiment escalated and tone of the PPR became even more anti-German. For example, deputy Sommerstein in his speech on 4 May 1945 claimed:

“The entire German nation, which profited from these crimes, which willingly took upon itself the mission of the *Herrenvolk* [the master nation], which did not effect a single protest against the most abhorrent crimes in the history – must return all it took, must repair all it destroyed, must provide a full satisfaction and cure the wounds it inflicted to all nations that cherish peace and freedom. (BS, KRN/7, p. 141)

Finally, discussion about the Germans in the KRN assumed a dehumanizing language, which was used to wind up the state apparatus in the actual process of the expulsions; this is exemplified by depute Odorkiewicz’s exclamation “we need to get rid of this German ulcer, radically ... remove it” (BS, KRN/7, p. 191). These nationalist and often chauvinist claims have very little in common with the communist or even socialist ideology and are the expression of the sentiment prevalent in Polish society in 1944/1945. Similar opinions were voiced towards other ethnic groups within Poland, like the Ukrainians:

From the 3rd partition of Poland the population of the counties along the Bug (...) was subject to mass Russification and with time they lost their orientation concerning their national affiliation. It is not surprising then that in 1939, when the hitlerist hordes with fire and sword, were destroying Polish villages, this population stood alongside the aggressor. (...) For this reason the Polish Government is conducting a resettlement action of that population that was repeatedly forced to support the UPA hordes, so to settle them on territories left by the German population and to allow for their peaceful economic and national development. (AAN, MAP sygn. 778, p. 18)

As can be seen from the above comments, nationalism almost completely overpowered the ideology of fraternal communism. These documents also clearly identify the main ethnic enemies – Germans and Ukrainians. Germans were perceived to threaten the Polish nation's biological existence (Nitschke, 2002), while Ukrainians (namely Ukrainian nationalists represented by UPA) were perceived as German collaborators and responsible for massacres of Poles in Volhynia during the war (Kasianov, 2006; Pasięka, 2015). As mentioned before, this exposure to the “other” (Smith, 1988, 1991), coupled with the threat to the very existence of Poles as a nation (Czubiński, 2000; Mironowicz, 2000) heightened an already strong Polish ethnic identity. Pre-war Poland, however repressive to her minorities (Prażmowska, 2011), never fully embraced Dmowski's teachings about assimilation or outright expulsion. The horrors of the occupation, however, elevated Dmowski's vision of an ethnically homogenous Poland to a central position in Polish society and politics (Behrends, 2009), such that a Polish ethno-state was not only perceived as a desired model for Poland, it was perceived as the Polish *raison d'état* (Kacprzak, 2010a). The formulation by PKWN of policies outwardly hostile and discriminatory to Germans was supported across the entire political spectrum of Polish politics (Kacprzak, 2010b, Pazik, 2013).

Soviet national policies as templates for Eastern Europe

Having explained the motivations and sentiments of Poles towards the end of the World War II, this chapter can now move towards the Soviet motivations for advocating a Polish ethno-state. The Soviet Union, like its predecessor the Russian Empire, was an ethnically, religiously and linguistically diverse country (Pipes, 1974, 1990). Terry Martin rightly observes that the USSR never wanted to transform itself into a homogenous nation. However, he does emphasize the fact that from as early as 1920s, the Soviet authorities either

encouraged migration of respective ethnic groups to their national republics, raions and oblasts or actively removed Russian settlers from non-Russian territories, thus creating a patch-work of compact ethnic settlements within the Soviet Union (Martin, 1998). These ethnicities were later subject to forced re-settlement and following a period of “ethnic proliferation”, subjected to Russification (Martin, 1998, p. 825). By 1945, Russian nationalism was fully endorsed by the USSR, which subjugated other ethnicities to it (Kunicki, 2012). Since, as previously established, the USSR was the only dominant power in Eastern Europe, it naturally applied its national policies to their new territorial acquisitions. Therefore, the expulsions of Germans and other ethnic minorities can be seen through the context of the Soviet instruments of power as the expulsions were launched simultaneously in all Soviet dominated states, mainly Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania (Mironowicz, 2000).

International consensus

From the Teheran Conference in 1943 onwards, there was an international agreement that the post-war Poland should become an ethnic state. The conference that involved the main Allied leaders – Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt – was the first inter-Allied meeting that took place and aimed to formalize the post-war political order in Europe (Zaremba, 2002). The Allies supported the expulsions as they saw these as the only way to maintain peace. On 15 December 1944, Winston Churchill made a speech to House of Commons where he expressed the support for the border change and expulsions resulting from it. It is worth quoting the most important points:

I cannot feel that the Russian demand for a reassurance about her Western frontiers goes beyond limits of what is reasonable or just...I cannot believe that such an offer should be rejected by Poland. It would, of course, have to be accompanied by the disentanglement of populations in the East and in the North. The transference of several millions of people would have to be effected from the East to the West or North, as well as the expulsion of the Germans—because that is what is proposed: the total expulsion of the Germans—from the area to be acquired by Poland in the West and the North. For expulsion is the method which, so far as we have been able to see, will be the most satisfactory and lasting. (Churchill, 1944 in HANSARD, vol. 406).

Roosevelt agreed with Churchill on the expulsions, on the grounds that a previous population transfer between Greece and Turkey was successful and. Indeed. had stabilized the situation in the region (Sherwood, 1948).

The Soviet vision of Poland, presented in Teheran, was, as argued by Bilenky (2012), a result of centuries of Russian political imagining that had placed the Poles between the Oder and the Bug. In the Soviet system “Poland’s mission was to be a Slavic borderland against aggression from the West” (Beherend, 2009, p. 449). And national policies, owing much to the strong Polish ethnic identity, demanded an ethnically homogenous Poland, which would not have been weakened by any ethnic rivalries.

Implementation of expulsions

The issue of factual and historical representation of the expulsion of minorities has been widely covered by scholars. Thus, the aim of this dissertation is not to provide a detailed historical account of the events. The ethno-symbolist perspective will be used to analyse the dual identity of Polish communists, who embraced the nationalist cause over communist ideology. Indeed, the process of demographic engineering launched in by the regime is the most graphic example of its susceptibility to Polish nationalism. This chapter will provide only an overall view and the timeline of the expulsions that created the modern Polish ethnic state. The expulsions themselves can be divided into four stages: 1) the military expulsions – until the fall of 1945; 2) the post-Potsdam expulsions warranted by international treaties – between 1946 and 1949; 3) the so called “Aktion Link” between 1950 and 1951 that aimed to reconnect families separated by the war and the resettlement process; and 4) the voluntary German migration between 1952-1958 (Nitschke, 2000, p. 226). The peak population transfer was achieved in 1946, when total number of 1 649 088 Germans were removed from Poland (Nitschke, 2000) out of the estimated 3.5 million (Nitschke, 2000, p. 27) who had lived in the post-war Polish territory. There were effectively three routes that the German repatriates were to follow: a sea route “A” from Szczecin to Lübeck; rail route “B” from Szczecin to Bad-Segeberg and route “C” from Kaławsk (Kholfurt – pre-1939; nowadays Węgliniec) to Marienthal (Retecki, 2010, p. 48). By 1949; the Potsdam phase ended and the forced resettlements ceased and the Germans were allowed to either stay in Poland or voluntarily emigrate to the FRG or GDR, under “Aktion Link” or on their own volition (Curp, 2006).

Agencies

Before this chapter moves forward; it will explain the role that the main state agencies played in the ethno-nationalist project of ethnic cleansing. The first was the Ministry of Public Administration (MAP), the equivalent of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Mironowicz, 2000). Its main objective was to identify the location and the population of the main ethnic groups that the communists wanted to expel. It coordinated the resources, like trains, wagons, and police forces, needed to conduct ethnic cleansing, and regulated the schedule of the expulsions. The second office was created in 1944 and was called the State Repatriation Office – PUR – (Dz.U., 1944, nr. 7, poz. 32) and its main objective was to create staging areas across new Polish territories in which repatriates (both ethnic minorities and Poles) were supposed to be provided with basic supplies and care before being sorted according to their destination and embarking on their respective trains, buses or ships (Dz.U., 1944, nr. 7, poz. 32). The third agency was the Ministry of Recovered Territories (MZO), created in November 1945 (Dz.U., 1945, nr. 51, poz. 295). The main task of the MZO was to organise the resettlement of Poles coming from abroad (or within Poland) to the territories taken from Germany. It was responsible for distributing abandoned German property and estates. The overarching task was to link the administration and the infrastructure of the Recovered Territories with the rest of Poland. The People's Army of Poland (LWP) alongside with the Citizen Militia (MO) were charged with enforcing the expulsions, escorting the representatives of minorities to local staging areas and protecting the trains or other means of transport that were carrying Germans or ethnic minorities from within Poland (Mironowicz, 2000).

General Legislation

It is apparent that the policies and legislation passed by the government are the clearest representations of its ideological standpoint and objectives. Therefore, this chapter will now move to analyse the policies, international agreements that the Polish Committee of National Liberation/Provisional Government developed. The population transfer needed meticulous organization and supervision. Therefore, soon after the last “Republican Accord” has been signed, on 7th October 1944, PUR was established (Dz.U., 1944, nr. 7, poz. 32). Under the Article 1 the PUR was responsible for: a) repatriation of the population from the territories of other states to the Polish territory and b) regulation of the planned influx of the repatriates. This Act laid the framework for the population transfer that was to be conducted

on Polish territory. Its main stated objectives were to bring Poles scattered during occupation to Poland. The creation of PUR is important as it served not only to repatriate Poles, but later on all other minorities that were left within the new Polish borders, as well as Germans. Until the end of 1944, the PKWN did not engage in any legislation concerning population transfers or ethnic minorities and, on 31st of December 1944, it was dissolved and replaced by the Provisional Government (Dz.U. 1944 nr 19 poz. 99). With the signing of international treaties confirming the new Polish borders, the government issued a *Decree on Administration of Recovered Territories, creating the Ministry of Recovered Territories* on 13 November 1945 (Dz.U. 1945, nr. 51, poz. 295). Emphasizing the temporary character of the Ministry and placing the PUR under its jurisdiction, the decree specified the administrative competence of the MZO (Dz. U. nr. 51, poz. 295, Art. 1-3).

Expulsion of ethnic groups: Germans

Legislation

The next legislation, passed on 28th of February 1945, was a *Decree on exclusion of hostile elements from the Polish society* (Dz.U. 1945 nr 7 poz. 30). Although its initial articles dealt with the rehabilitation process of Polish citizens who were forcibly enlisted on III or IV of German national lists (Deutsche Volksliste hereafter DVL), Article 18 of this Act specifies that on “all territories of the Polish Republic forcibly incorporated to the Third Reich and on the area of former Free City of Gdansk,” all property of citizens of the Third Reich and people of German nationality, regardless of their citizenship status, should be confiscated. Although historians like Nitschke (2008), Curp (2006) and Douglas argue that the expulsions had no legal grounds before 1946, Gosenwinkel (2009) argues that the post-war legislation on the dispossession laid the ground for the expulsions themselves. The legislation specified that the *Reichsdeutsche* (Germans living within Germany) and the *Volksdeutsche* (Germans living outside German borders) were not to be at any point part of the society within the new Polish state. Deprived of their material possessions and stripped of any legal rights, they were dependant on the government. This provided an opening for the expulsions themselves. In fact, the openly chauvinistic and anti-German policy was implemented while the hostilities had not yet been finished highlighting that the *Decree on exclusion of hostile elements* served two purposes. The first was a signal that the government intended to punish the traitors – those who have been enlisted on the 1st and 2nd DVL, and that it intended to punish the perpetrators – who at that time could be clearly identified as

Germans. This policy was a rallying tool for the government and in the immediate post-war reality could effectively serve as a unifying tool for the Provisional Government (Zaremba, 2002).

Inconsistencies, resulting most likely from lack of legitimacy, can be observed as soon as April 1945, when the government officially relaxed its policy towards the traitors identified in *the Decree on exclusion of hostile elements* – those enlisted on the 1st and 2nd DVL. On 14 April 1945, the ordinance of the Justice Minister specified the conditions for rehabilitation of those enlisted on the 2nd DVL or placed in a group privileged by the occupant (Dz.U. 1945, nr. 12, poz. 70). The limiting of the scope of the initial persecution clearly illustrates that communist-dominated Provisional Government, by relaxing the initially passed laws, wanted to broaden its support base. On the 8 May 1945, World War II was officially over and new national celebration – National Celebration of Victory and Freedom – was officially established (Dz.U. 1945, nr. 21, poz. 116), which yet again appealed to nationalist sentiments.

On the 28 April 1946, the *Citizenship of the Polish State on the Recovered Territories Act* was passed (Dz. U. 1946, nr. 15, poz. 106) and followed by the *Decree of Exclusion of Persons of German Nationality living on the Recovered Territories*, passed on 13 September 1946 (Dz. U. 1946, nr. 55, poz. 310). There was a significant delay between the February agreements and the September decree, which can possibly be explained by the legislative delay accompanying any international agreements and the overall difficult task of rebuilding the war-torn country. Nevertheless, the September decree yet again clearly showed the nationalist inclination of the Polish Government.

Implementation of the expulsions

With the official end of hostilities, the newly liberated Eastern European began the process of ethnic cleansing, thus initiating the largest forced population movement in the European history (Douglas, 2012). It is important to note that the expulsions did not originate in Poland, but in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak government advocated the forcible removal of Germans from its territory as early as 1943 and immediately after the end of war it began the ethnic cleansing, that in many ways inspired the Polish Provisional Government (Nitschke, 2000). In fact, the best proof of that, as well as the chauvinist and extreme nationalism the PPR embarked on, is the order of the commander of the 2nd Army of the People's Army of Poland given on 24 July 1945:

[T]reat them the same way they treated us. Many had forgotten how they dealt with our children, wives and the elderly. The Czechs could act in a way that the Germans [sic] fled their territory. It is necessary to carry out the task in a most harsh and decisive manner, so that the German [sic] would not hide in various buildings, but so it would flee on its own and after arriving on its soil was thankful to God that it's still alive. We should not forget that the Germans [sic!] will always be Germans [sic]. When executing your task do not ask but give commands. (CAW, LWP, sygn. III/6015, p. 135)

This order demonstrates how intense was the nationalism the communist authorities wanted to embody. The second apparent thing is the use of the word “German” and referring to Germans as “it” followed by various offensive adjectives. Such a form was observed by the author of this dissertation in various archives and various documents right until 1947. Most of these documents were not available to the public at that time, but it is possible to assume that this propagandist and deeply chauvinist language had at least two purposes – to dehumanize the Germans and to wind up the state apparatus that was to rid the new Polish state of Germans, although it is worth noting that the attitude of Polish communists was a “derivative of a general vision of foreign policy adopted by Stalin” (Nitschke, 2000, p. 43).

Indeed, the first set of German expulsions – the so called “wild” expulsions initiated and carried out by the army – were the most disorganized and were marked with brutality (Kordan, 1997). But due to Allied objections they were halted in July 1945 for the remainder of the year the resettlement was conducted on a voluntary basis (Nitschke, 2000, p. 142). There were examples of Germans, like Paul Eggers, who organized bus transports to Germany for the purposes of resettlement (Pasierb, 1969, Scans 5 and 5a). In fact the expulsions carried out by the army were largely unsuccessful, as the Germans made their way back to the territories taken by Poland. Additionally, brutal expulsions conducted in Czechoslovakia caused the German population to flee to Polish/Soviet occupied Silesia about which J. Goryński informed the MON on 9 August 1945 (AAN, MAP, sygn. 2471, p. 25). The effectiveness of the policy was probably not the main concern of the Polish government; it was the expression of intent. By forcibly driving out some Germans, the communists signalled to the West that they intend to keep the territories they co-administered with the Red Army (Zaremba, 2002) and to the Polish nation that they would fulfil the need of the Poles to live in an ethnically homogenous nation.

The outward expression of nationalism and officially anti-German policies fulfilled their purpose, at least initially. These policies united the nation behind the new authorities and even the institution that was to be the main source of the opposition for the regime in the future. The expression of that support and Church's complicity in violence directed against the German population are encapsulated in the letter of Stanisław Adamski – Bishop of Katowice – to the Ministry of Public Administration from 27 July 1945:

I have informed the Wrocław curia about the determined stand of the Polish Government, that in Poland there will not be a German minority at all and that Poland, will not allow even those Germans that opposed Hitlerism, to stay. I have informed them as well that Poland, giving up large territories in the East, in order to rid herself of minorities, will receive in return western lands, formerly Polish lands, as a restitution for injustices done to Polishness across centuries. As far as the abuses go ... I am afraid that cases that cannot be hidden, might cause serious difficulties on the international arena as well as the peace conference. (AAN, MAP, sygn. 79, p. 6-7)

It could hardly be possible for the high-ranking Church official to be more in tune with the line the new government adopted. Indeed, the abuses were frequent, but as Douglas (2012) argues, these were moderate in comparison to the abuses the German population suffered in other Soviet-dominated countries. Adamski's letter demonstrates, however, that the nationalist line adopted by the communist-dominated government was a very powerful tool in uniting the society and gaining support for the regime. Another demonstration support for the regime in this matter can be provided by the interviews conducted for this project. E.H claimed that "Poland deserved these lands for what she had lost [in the East] ... the Germans deserved it [the expulsions] for what they did to us" (Personal communication on 18.02.2016). Almost all interviewees (except M.W) agreed that expulsion of Germans was an appropriate measure conducted by the government (Personal communications between 05.02. and 23.02.2016).

With the halting of the military expulsions came the period of the Potsdam peace conference. The international framework for the expulsion of Germans from the Soviet controlled part of Europe was signed on 2 August 1945 and was specifically outlined in Chapter XIII of the Potsdam Agreement which established the Combined Repatriation Executive (CRX) and in terms of Poland it assumed the repatriation of 2 million Germans to the Soviet Occupation zone and 1,5 million to the British Zone. The respective agreements

between Poland and the Occupation zones were signed on 14 February 1946 (Kacprzak, 2011, p. 76). Although these agreements granted Poland the new territories, the fact remained that in Silesia, Pomerania and Masuria there existed two administrations: Polish and Soviet. They often competed with each other for authority and clashed in their approaches to the German population.

Soviet military administration and strengthening of the anti-German sentiments

The war and a brutal German occupation galvanized the Poles as a nation and resulted in a strong anti-German sentiment. This sentiment was reflected in the state legislation during the last stages of the war and immediately after the end of the hostilities. It is important to emphasize the role that the Red Army and the Soviet military administration, in cooperation with the Polish government, played in administering the Recovered Territories (Douglas 2012; Nitscke 2000), played in strengthening of the anti-German moods among the settlers, who were to take place vacated by the Germans. The Red Army officers were often engaged in outward support for the Germans – Bolesław Bierut notes that, in Słupsk County, “a certain Tarasov would not allow the repatriates [Poles] to settle because he got attached to the Germans” (AAN, Archiwum Bolesława Bieruta, sygn. 254/IV, v.1, p. 90). In a similar vein, the Government Representative in Lębork, Władysław Szcześniak on 10 July 1945 informs the Polish authorities “in the area the cases of Soviet soldiers or officers throwing out Poles and setting Germans [sic] become more frequent”. (AP Sz, UWSz, sygn. 167, p. 28). The new Polish authorities exactly knew what often caused Soviet hostilities; the Director of Polish Railways, Pietraszkek, informed the KRN that Poles are often removed, in order to get rid of any potential witnesses to the Soviet practices of dismantling and transferring of factories and equipment to the USSR (AP w Szczecinie, UWS, sygn. 223, p. 15). It was the practice of the Soviet military administration to “reclaim” the Germans – meaning to use them as a free or cheap labour force, which was quickly adopted and formalized by Polish authorities, though mainly on account of the insufficient number of qualified workers within Poland (AAN, MAP, sygn. 764, p. 1 and sygn. 2471, p. 26). Soviet policies demonstrate that Polish nationalism could also be aggravated by external factors, obstacles in expulsions posed by the Soviet administration contributed to the anti-German (and to a large extent anti-Soviet) attitudes, which reflected the treatment the expellees received from the regime officials and general population.

Treatment of Germans

Highlighting the intensity with which the Polish Workers' Party implemented the expulsion policy was the often-brutal treatment of Germans. Major Boothby, from the British Occupation Zone, on 27 May 1946, issued an official complaint about the "inhuman" treatment of the "repatriates" and threatened that the British administration would no longer accept the resettled Germans if the conditions on their journey were not improved (AAN, MZO, sygn. 563, p. 61); remarkably, there is no trace of similar complaints from the Soviet zone. Indeed, the thefts and abuses committed on Germans were a plague throughout the entire process of the population transfer (APWr, UWWr, sygn. V/474, p. 107; AP Sz, UWSz. Sygn. 3425, p. 111; AP O, WUO. sygn. 83, p. 182; AAN, MAP, sygn. 761, p. 79). It is important to note that most of these abuses were committed either by the soldiers, officers of the Citizen Militia, or the Security Office. There were abuses committed by the civilians but these did not assume the scale of those committed by the state officials. Regardless of the post-war anti-German sentiments, the cases of the decent treatment of Germans did happen (Nitscke, 2000) and these also have left a trace in the documents. For example, four German citizens, Kurt Bender, Alfred Dietrich, Werner Elias and Erwin Fuch, wrote on 2 May 1946 to thank those "responsible for the repatriations" claiming that they will "remember the kindness shown and help received" (AAN, MZO, sygn. 563, p. 49). In many cases, as the MBP notified the MAP, Poles played an active role in hiding the Germans who wanted to avoid "repatriation" (AAN, MAP, sygn. 761, p. 50-54). This shows that although a very strong and chauvinist nationalism was endorsed and promoted by the state, which resulted in violence against Germans, the post-war situation in Poland was much more complex than many historians (de Zayas, 2006; Curp, 2006 and Douglas, 2012) acknowledge.

With the signing of these agreements, Poland became a part of an international system aiming to create nation states in the Eastern Europe; although the Potsdam Conference officially ended the Versailles International Regime, it retained the "Wilsonian interpretation of national self-determination" (Levene, 2000, p. 28) and further strengthened the international system that favoured the nation-state (Hobsbawm, 1992). The state apparatus, with MZO in particular, was prepared to conduct what Lehman calls an "unparalleled process of demographic engineering" (2010, p. 286). The process and detailed numbers have been already described by historians (Nitschke, 2000; Curp, 2006; Douglas, 2012); therefore, this dissertation does not aim to provide a detailed account of the process of the resettlements of Germans. It is enough to state that the vision of Poland completely free of Germans failed to

materialize, by the end of the resettlement program in 1949 because between 125 to 160 thousand Germans remained within Poland. However, that was a number that would not threaten the integrity of the new Polish state. The initial nationalistic legitimization was accomplished by 1948 (Zaremba, 2002); therefore, there was a gradual relaxation of the nationalist rhetoric, one that allowed the new *Citizenship Act* of 8 January 1951, which, under the provisions of Article 3, effectively granted Polish citizenship to the remaining German population (Dz. U. 1951, nr. 4, poz. 5).

Ethnic cleansing of Byelorussians, Ukrainians and Lemkos in eastern provinces and Codename “W”

Legislation and treaties

The first international agreement that Polish Committee of National Liberation signed after it was constituted on 21/22 July 1944 (Dz.U. 1944, nr. 1, poz. 1) was the agreement with the government of the USSR, signed on 27 July 1944 and resulting in cessation of all Polish territories seized by the USSR after 17.09.1939 (AAN, PKWN, XIV/17, p. 15–21). These territories, known as Kresy, (Vilnius, Lwów and Stanisławów areas) were a patchwork of Polish settlements intertwined with settlements of ethnic minorities (Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians). In Kresy, ethnic minorities actually constituted the majority of the population. By ceasing territories east of the river Bug, Poland removed the majority of Lithuanians, Belarusians and Ukrainians inhabiting her territory; although reduced in number, the minorities still remained in eastern provinces. Although demographically less significant, these minorities often questioned the legitimacy of the new Polish state and in many cases were engaged in armed resistance to the regime (Mironowicz, 2000). From this border settlement stemmed the so-called “Republican Accords” between the PKWN and Ukrainian, Belorussian and Lithuanian SSRs, submitted on the 4th session of the KRN. The first two were signed on 9th of September and the latter on 22nd of September 1944 (BS, KRN/4, p. 363-376). The main principle of these agreements, under Article 1 (between PKWN and all concerned SSRs), was the “voluntary” evacuation of these ethnic populations (BS, KRN/4, p. 363). These documents demonstrate that the expulsions were started as early as 1944. These treaties laid the groundwork for the population transfers and were probably most crucial documents signed by the Polish Committee of National Liberation, the expulsion of Germans

who followed overshadowed their source and legal basis that began to form almost immediately after the creation of the Polish Committee of National Liberation. It is also important to emphasize that population exchange between Poland and USSR was not reflected in any formal legislation.

Implementation of population transfers

The new border settlement with the Soviet Union and the “republican accords” signed between Poland and LSSR, BSSR and Ukrainian SSR (AAN, PKWN, XIV/17, p. 15–21; BS, KRN/4, p. 363-376) settled the new border and warranted “voluntary” population transfers between the Western SSRs and Poland. These were summarized and restated in a new repatriation agreement between Poland and USSR, signed on 6 July 1945 (Marciniak, 2013, p. 129). The principle of “voluntary” repatriation did not work in practice and the Polish population was effectively forced out of USSR, and Belarusians and Ukrainians driven out of Poland (Mironowicz, 2000). There were cases where the Ukrainian population actively resisted the “evacuation” and there is a note to MAP from 19 September 1947, claiming that “in Jarosław there has developed a trade of public registers, where the Ukrainian population might buy a register verifying their Polish nationality, then they register in an adjacent county for resettlement as Poles” (AAN, MAP sygn. 780, p. 38). The total number of resettled population in that area between 1944 and 1946, as calculated by Sula was 1 247 417 (2002, p. 75). This number, however, includes Poles, Lithuanians, Belarusians and Ukrainians – meaning that was the total number of resettled people in that area, which left significant numbers of Ukrainians who managed to resist these policies. By 1946, the USSR was no longer interested in bilateral population transfers (Marciniak, 2013), leaving the Polish government with a still significant Ukrainian minority especially in the Lublin province. Yet again, this chapter does not aspire to provide a detailed historical account, since the factual recreation of these events are present in the historiography (Mironowicz, 2000; Żurko, 2000; Sula, 2002, Olchawa, 2007). In turn, this chapter will analyse these policies from an ethno-symbolist perspective, having in mind that the communist government of Poland had adopted a strong ethno-nationalist stance.

The nationalistic rhetoric and the war experience heightened nationalism and there was not only a strong anti-German feeling but heightened chauvinism as well. It is probably most adequately illustrated by a notification from 7 June 1947 by the Lublin Voivode, following the instruction of the Ministry of Public Administration issued to the local administration, which claimed that “the Polish Government conducts the resettlement action”

in order to protect the Ukrainian minority from prosecution from the Ukrainian Partisan Army (hereafter UPA - an anti-Soviet, nationalist Ukrainian Guerrilla; AAN, MAP, sygn. 778, p. 18).

The actions of the UPA, which was fighting the new communist regime, often targeted Polish civilians and burned villages settled by Polish repatriates from the east (AAN, MAP sygn. 778, p.1). In terms of winding up the state apparatus against the Ukrainian population, the regime used an identical rhetoric of dehumanization as in the case of the German population. County superintendent Bocian, in his note to Ministry of Public Administration, used the expression “Ukrainian hordes” (AAN, MAP sygn. 778, p. 4). Furthermore, it is possible to observe the use of “ukrainians” which parallels the previous “germans” (AAN, MAP sygn. 780, p. 2). As Mironowicz (2000) argues, the tensions between Poles and Ukrainians in the region fuelled by the struggle between UPA and the government forces. This caused a paradox in which the Polish anti-communist partisans clashed with UPA for the same reasons as the state troops. The situation, especially after 1946 when the USSR refused to conduct any further population transfers (Marciniak, 2013), proved increasingly difficult for a government claiming national unity and ethnic homogeneity, especially after one of the generals of the army – Karol Świerczewski – was shot dead during a clash with UPA troops on 27 March 1947, near Jabłonki (Bata, 1987, p. 181).

The death of Świerczewski triggered a government response that targeted the Lublin Voivodeship on 7 June 1947. The Lublin Voivode, following the instruction of the MAP, issued a notification to the local administration, which ordered the forced removal of the Ukrainians (AAN, MAP sygn. 778, p. 18). The forced resettlement of Ukrainians was not accompanied by any nationalistic legislation; in fact, the resettlement, codenamed “W” or “Wisła,” was a secretive endeavour conducted by the Ministry of Public Administration, the Ministry of State Security, and the Polish People’s Army. It is interesting that in the above explanation of the government action, the reason provided is quite openly nationalistic but the conclusion warrants “national” development of Ukrainians. It is important to note that the Akcja “W” was conducted in 1947 and it cannot be seen as an entirely nationalistic endeavour of the Polish government but as indicative of the advancing Sovietisation of the political regime in Poland.

Akcja “W” targeted not only the Ukrainians, but also a small minority living in the south-eastern part of Poland – the Lemkos. The resettlement of Ukrainians did not trigger any

negative response; however, the treatment of Lemkos caused a noticeable response from the Lemko émigrés, particularly in the United States. There is one telegram to the Prime Minister Osóbka-Morawski, signed by the chairman and secretary of the Lemko Association in New York, which condemns the forcible removal of Lemkos (AAN, MAP sygn. 781, pp. 2-3) and a memorandum of the American League of Russians and Carpatho-Russians in Philadelphia, in the same vein as the telegram (AAN, MAP sygn. 781, p. 19). Initially, forcefully resettled in the Recovered Territories, the Lemkos in general were treated more leniently than the Ukrainians. The earliest case in the archives concerns Jan Bartosz, a Lemko who was allowed to return to his previous place of residence on 30 June 1948 (AAN, MAP, sygn. 781, p. 35); in another case, Paweł Galik, after his official request addressed to President Bierut (AAN, MAP, sygn. 781, p. 40-42). The ministerial file is filled with applications made in a similar vein to Bartosz's and Galik's; many of them received the approval of the administration to return to areas they had been expelled from (AAN, MAP, sygn. 781, pp. 44-73). The Ukrainians were perceived as a real threat and therefore not allowed to return to their former homes, but Lemkos, a group considerably smaller and not engaged in the ethnic struggles fostered by Germans during the occupation (Mironowicz, 2000) were allowed to return.

Conclusion

The situation in the post-war Poland was a very complex one. The ethnic-cleansing scheme launched by the new government as early as 1944 was probably the most powerful and vivid manifestation of Polish ethnic nationalism in history (Kersten, 1967). In the case of the expulsion program, the two seemingly contradicting theories of nationalism – ethno-symbolism and modernism – complement each other in providing a better understanding of the Polish struggle for a nation state. Ethno-symbolism (Smith, 1998; 1991; 1995) allowed the author of this dissertation to provide the historical context and the explanation for the remarkable strength of the ethnic identity among Poles, both prior and post 1945. The modernist theory (Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm; 1992) allows the expulsions to be placed in a wider political and international context – namely the international political regime that favoured a nation-state and which originated from the Versailles settlement (Hobsbawm, 1992). Additionally, the teachings of Roman Dmowski (1904/2007; 1927/2007) provided an intellectual bridge between these two theories. Furthermore, his vision of an ethnically pure Poland and the means to achieve it was endorsed and implemented by the PPR in the shaping of the post-war Polish reality.

The issue of the dichotomous-identity (national-ideological) of the Polish communists also broadens the understanding of the processes that occurred after 1944. The fact that a *de facto* leader of post-war Poland (I Secretary of the KC PPR), Władysław Gomułka, became the Minister of the Recovered Territories and supervised the task of removing Germans from Poland in her new territorial shape (the role of Gomułka and his nationalism will be discussed in the identity chapter). It would be difficult to deny that Gomułka was entirely committed to the communist/socialist cause (Czubiński, 2000, Prażmowska, 2010). However, his nationalist tendencies and rhetoric were widely known and they did eventually lead to his fall from power in 1948, when he was prosecuted for “rightist-nationalist deviation” (Zaremba, 2002, p. 88), which signalled the official abandonment of the nationalist rhetoric and full Sovietisation of the Polish political regime. This brought the relaxation of anti-minorities policies (Mironowicz, 2000) and the intensification of the State-Church conflict (Zaremba, 2002) and the replacement of nationalism by ideology as the official rhetoric of the PZPR.

This chapter focused on the policies of ethnic cleansing, which are from any perspective, a purely nationalist endeavour. From the modernist perspective, ethnic cleansing and the homogenisation of the state population in terms of language, ethnicity and religion can be viewed as most outwardly nation-building policies (Deutsch, 1963; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1992). However, the issue is much more complex. The PPR in the years between 1944 and 1948 did not only embark on a struggle to build or re-shape a nation. The ethnic identity was galvanized by the World War II and the occupation; the multi-ethnic model of the II Polish Republic was no longer valid and the peaceful coexistence of Poles and ethnic minorities was impossible (Nitschke, 2000). On the other side, the power of the new Polish authorities originated from the Soviet Union and the Red Army and, therefore, the regime was perceived as a foreign one (Kersten, 1992). In efforts to legitimize their power, the Polish communists embraced the Polish ethnic-nationalism as a tool for gaining and keeping power (Zaremba, 2002). They even broadened their membership and included former extremely nationalistic activists like Piasecki (Kunicki, 2012). Nationalism and exploitation of anti-German sentiments were used as a legitimizing tool primarily (Zaremba, 2002).

With the gradual strengthening of the Soviet power in Poland, the nationalist rhetoric was gradually relaxed, to be completely abandoned in 1948 with the transformation of Poland into a Soviet-style mono-party system, after the merger of the PPR and the PPS into the Polish United Worker’s Party (Zaremba, 2002). The Sovietisation begun as early as 1946 when the new government rigged the referendum and then the parliamentary elections in

1947 (Czubiński, 2000). Having officially legitimized itself on the international arena and having the full might of the Red Army behind them in Poland, the communists no longer needed the nationalist rhetoric to gain support; as Zaremba put it, the party leadership decided that “Dmowski was not a Marxist after all” (2002, p. 73). Therefore, the closer to 1948, the weaker the chauvinist language of the Polish Workers’ Party. After the initial thrust of nationalism, which can be seen as a nation building policy and in fact satisfies the criteria for it, the party officials reverted back to ideology. That internal contradiction aids in understanding eastern national politics.

However, it is impossible to overlook the fact that the struggle for an ethnic state and the massive demographic engineering (Kacprzak, 2011) that followed in fact do carry a striking resemblance to a nation-building policy (Conversi, 2004), which aim to unify the society around the state and the government. Notably, the demographic engineering that the Polish communists engaged in was remarkably successful in uniting all the elements of society, even the Catholic Church (*vide* Bishop Adamski) that in later years would provide the main platform for the opposition, in a struggle for a common objective; (Prażmowska, 2010). As such, it is an undeniable contribution of the Polish communists to the shape of modern Poland and to Polish nationalism generally (Martin, 1998). Thus, this chapter has highlighted that, in the struggle for legitimacy, the communist government managed to transform Polish society. The transformation came at the cost of the largest forced migrations in history (Douglas, 2012, Lehman, 2010), but it rapidly and irrevocably changed the ethnic and religious structure of Poland (Kunicki, 2012). Although the expulsions and ethnic cleansing did not affect all representatives of ethnic minorities, as some were allowed to remain in Poland, the demographic transformation of Poland allowed it to approximate a nation-state model, while the number of ethnic minorities did not threaten the integrity of the new state (Nitschke, 2002). The demographic elevated the Catholic Church to a central position within the Polish society. The expulsions also managed to reintroduce Silesia and Western Pomerania into the Polish identity, reflected in the ethnographic study conducted by the author (Personal communications conducted on 05-07.02.2016; 10.02.2016; 18-19.02.2016; 20-22.02.2016) which were previously absent from the Polish political imaginary (Davies & Moorhouse, 2002).

Thus, in the period between 1944 and 1948, Polish national identity and aspirations were manifested in the ethnic-cleansing program established the modern Polish ethnic state. Underlying the dichotomous identity of the communist leadership was the attempt to use this

nationalist project to rally support for a regime that lacked legitimacy in the eyes of the vast majority of Poles. Even though the leadership abandoned its nationalist rhetoric after 1948, in order to re-focus on the creation of a communist society, the very existence of the new ethnic state would stand as a major obstacle to the larger ideological project, resulting in a deeply conflicting mindset among the Polish leadership. The issue of the post-war power struggle is a complex one, but it is justifiable to conclude that the strong Polish national identity in many cases was not overpowered by the communist ideology, even at the highest party posts. Thus the PPR could so easily embrace the nationalist rhetoric. The respective ethnic identities were too strong and made any peaceful coexistence impossible, and the ethnic cleansing so desired by many Poles was sanctioned internationally. Finally, the tool for legitimacy in this case of the Polish communists' activity proved to be both effective in rallying the society behind the PPR and in transforming the Polish society ethnically, linguistically and religiously, which had a most profound impact on the form of Polish nationalism and identity.

Chapter V: Symbolic nationalism

Introduction

Nationalism is probably most visibly manifested through a set of national symbols and rituals (Smith, 1991). In this matter, both main schools of nationalism – modernism and ethno-symbolism – agree that symbols, rituals and celebrations are an essential part of nationalism and statehood, although ethno-symbolists argue that traditions, alongside national identity, develop through history (Smith, 1983, 1991), while modernists claim that traditions and practices are “invented” (Hobsbawm, 1992, p. 1). Furthermore, the “invention” of tradition intensifies with rapid and dramatic social, political and economic shifts that weaken social bonds (Hobsbawm, 1992, p. 4). Hobsbawm’s interpretation appears to explain the invention of new rituals and practices in the post-1944 Poland, where the social, political and economic system was shattered in 1939 and reinvented according to Marxist-Leninist principles after 1945. However, the Polish example cannot be fully explained by the modernist approach – the traditions and symbols were not invented anew, but rather re-invented, re-emphasized and given new contexts and importance; the break from the pre-war traditions was not as blatant as it would initially appear (Osęka, 2007). By investigating national celebrations, national symbols and institutions that were re-invented during the period between 1944 and 1956, this chapter will argue that although this sphere of state activity was probably the most ideological, the Polish Worker’s Party and later Polish United Worker’s Party (Polska Partia Robotnicza –PPR; Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza – PZPR) still attempted to largely accommodate Polish nationalism, thus creating their dual identity

The emphasis will be put on the main national celebrations – 1st of May and 22nd of July; Labour Day and National Holiday of Poland’s Renaissance (Narodowe Święto Odrodzenia Polski) as well as the Fete of the Sea (Święto Morza) since these, alongside numerous other celebrations and holidays, were celebrated with the greatest pomp and ceremony. Next, this chapter will investigate the changes made to national symbols – the emblem and anthem – and to traditional Polish institutions. The reactions and attitudes of Polish society will also be investigated, as they help to assess the success of the regime’s re-invented, standardised and universalised rituals by which Polish communists attempted to spread their values. The dichotomous identity of Polish communists, investigated in the previous chapter, serves to reexplain the rather bizarre combination of nationalism and ideology that emerged through Polish national celebrations during the Stalinist period.

Rituals and celebrations

Pre-war Poland had two main national holidays: 11th November – the Independence Day which commemorated (and still does) the symbolic date of the declaration of Polish independence after the period of partitions in 1918; and 3 May – the anniversary of the Polish constitution passed on that date in 1791. In addition, the Polish holiday calendar was filled with numerous historical anniversaries and Catholic holidays (Osęka, 2007). The purpose of these celebrations was mainly commemorative, while in the post-war Poland national celebrations aimed to provide “occasions to applaud the leaders, expressing joy over the end of the war and stir hatred toward the enemies” (Osęka, 2007, p. 11). Additionally, unlike in pre-war Poland, participation in national celebrations was mandatory and strictly enforced (E.H. Personal communication on 18.02.2016). The ceremonial calendar in People’s Poland also swelled to include a large number of celebrations with the involvement of the state itself. Osęka provides a list, far from complete, but focusing on the most important state celebrations which constituted the new set of state sponsored rituals:

1 January – New Year

17 January – liberation of Warsaw (by Red Army)

27 January – anniversary of Lenin’s death

23 February – anniversary of the creation of the Red Army

8 March – Women’s Day

1 May – International Worker’s Day

6 May - Steelmaker’s Day

Mid-May to early June – People/Folk Holiday (Święto Ludowe)

1 June – Children’s Day

Last week of June – Fete of the Sea (Święto Morza)

22 July - National Holiday of Poland’s Renascence (Narodowe Święto Odrodzenia Polski)

Third Sunday of August – Aviation Holiday

First half of September – Dożynki (Harvest Festival)

- 12 September – Railwayman’s Day
- 12 October – Polish Army Day
- 7 November – anniversary of the October Revolution
- 4 December - Miner’s Day (Barburka)
- 21 December – Stalin’s birthday (in Osęka, 2007, p. 105-106).

However fragmentary, the list of new officially celebrated holidays appears impressive; numerous state sponsored (secular) festivities were most likely demonstrate Stalinism’s “horror vacui” but also aimed to compete with the Catholic calendar, although in the early years of the regime the Church participated in national rituals alongside Polish communist officials (Osęka, 2007, p. 104).

The holidays this chapter investigates are 1 May, 22 July, and Fete of the Sea. The first two were the most important from the ideological perspective and were most solemnly celebrated. The Fete of the Sea, present in the pre-war Poland, assumed importance combined with the new Polish borders and wider access to the Baltic Sea, which the regime used as a propaganda and legitimacy tool (Osęka, 2007). Most importantly, these celebrations had a universal and uniform adherence across Poland.

One of the most important celebrations followed by the regime was the International Worker’s Day. Marxist ideology and new “proletarian” (Berman, as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 599) character of the state demanded that labour and labourers occupy a central position in state rituals. First, it is important to re-create the main elements of the International Worker’s Day that emerged from the ethnographic study. On the day before (30 April), there were “festive academies [akademie – gathering of local community] (...) and speeches in Soviet style” (A. K. Personal communication on 13.02.2016). On 1 May, in the morning “everyone gathered on a square, the party secretary gave a speech and we left to parade in front of the tribune and there we yelled ‘Long live! Long live!’” (P. K. Personal communication on 10.02.2016). The parade itself was a true spectacle, as E.H. recalls:

For me the 1st May parade, because a child did not contemplate the political sense of Labour Day, was a holiday of joy. On this day, in the suburb I lived in there were glassworks and the director of these glassworks was an avid communist and he could mobilise all his resources on that day; he had sports and dancing sections, kindy and a

choir. All of this was mobilised by Sykus, which was his name, on that day (...). No one could beat Sykus in this city [Wałbrzych] in terms of quality and grandeur of this parade, in terms of variegation and all connected with it (Personal communication on 18.02.2016).

In larger cities, there were also floats representing various industries (PKF 46/13), banners and slogans like “Long live the Polish Worker’s Party” (PKF 46/13 – 1 Maja w Lodzi) as well as caricatures of Western politicians (PKF 49/19). After the parade was over, there were more informal dances and festivities and as J. K. recalls there was always free vodka and sausage at the end of the parade (Personal communication on 05.02.2016). That seemed to be a very important part of the celebrations as W.R recalls:

My mum worked with this man, Zbyszek Chmielewski in the PSS [Powiatowa Spółdzielnia Spożywców – County Consumers’ Co-operative] and he needed to make sure there would be sausages, he brought vodka to the butchers and they drunk it and made those sausages, stuffing them with toilet paper I think, since there always was a shortage of meat. But heads would roll if there wouldn’t be enough sausages for 1 May. (Personal communication on 13.02.2016).

The food and vodka were additional incentives for participation, since even the pomp and circumstance could not alone encourage mass participation. Official propaganda dubbed the 1 May celebrations as “spontaneous, traditional manifestations,” yet all interviewees mention the mandatory participation, which, if evaded, could bring serious consequences (Personal communications 05.02 and 22.02.2016). Osęka (2007) argues that these celebrations were centrally planned and were used as a tool for enforcing regime power.

The 1st May parades or demonstrations were also present in Polish political and social landscape before the war, yet the post-1945 communist government reinvented this holiday and placed it among the most important of national holidays. Ideologically, International Worker’s Day was always linked to broader left of the political spectrum, especially to communism, yet specifically in Poland, in the years of the new regime until 1949, 1 May started with a Catholic mass in in the official state celebrations (Osęka, 2007). Furthermore, this holiday that epitomised communist internationalism was never entirely free of nationalist elements. The instruction of the Central Committee of the Polish United Worker’s Party, issued on 1 April 1949, clearly enunciated the slogans and postulates of the 1 May celebration as “international solidarity and strength of our state” (emphasis in the original,

APSz, ZM i MRN w Szczecinie, WSP, sygn. 141, p. 9). Alongside the main claim of communist internationalism, there is mention of strengthening of the Polish state; such an ideological-nationalist combination is frequently found in aspects of the Polish communist regime.

If 1st May revolved mainly around ideological celebration, however, with nationalist elements, 22nd July, a national holiday that replaced the pre-war Independence Day of 11 November, contained elements of ideology but revolved mostly (at least formally) around national celebration – the re-establishment of Poland after WWII. In this instance, the people were not the main participants of the celebration but only the spectators. 22 July was mainly celebrated through official speeches and military parades and blatant displays of national military strength produced much more positive reception among the society (Osęka, 2007), as confirmed by the ethnographic study, where P. Z. claimed that “the army marched beautifully, in formation, I loved it” (Personal communication on 17.02.2016). The additional ritual, at least before 1949, were official galas held the night before, which included the singing of the national anthem and “Rota” (see Appendix G 1 and 2), as in Szczecin on 21 July 1947 (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1046, p. 111), which Osęka (2007) confirms was a common practice all across Poland. The main difference between 22nd July and 1st of May was voluntary participation: the regime encouraged it but did not, however, coerce Poles to attend (Osęka, 2007).

22 July had also one other purpose: it became “people’s holiday of joy and review of achievements” (in Osęka, 2007, p. 80) and the authorities made sure to link the new national holiday with launching or inaugurating new investments. In 1947 in Warsaw, 22 July was closely linked to the commissioning of new tractors and buses, bought in France, for the people of Warsaw (PKF 47/31). The following year, it was linked with the construction of the new party headquarters at Nowy Świat street in Warsaw, which was supposed to be “the most beautiful evidence of consolidation of the Polish nation” (PKF 48/31). In 1949, Poles literally received “a treat” since the confectionery factory Wedel or at that time 22 July Confectionery Factory produced “additional tonnes of chocolate and sweets” (PKF 49/52). Throughout the period, national celebrations commemorating the resurrection of Polish statehood after WWII revolved around propaganda and attempts to bribe the population with consumer goods and investments, rather than exciting the national spirit.

Yet another national celebration was strictly observed by the regime – the Fete of the Sea, which belonged to a repertoire of the pre-war Polish state (Osęka, 2007); the festival was, however, given new importance and context in the light of the new Polish borders and access to the sea. Right after the war, in 1945, it was celebrated in Gdansk on 29th June and 1st July (PKF 45/18; 45/19); the following year in Polish port of Gdynia on 8th June (PKF 46/25); but in 1947, the main celebrations were held in Szczecin between 27th; and on 29th June (Stettin) – in the Recovered Territories (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 826, p. 45). It is possible to observe that, unlike the two other national celebrations, the Fete of the Sea did not have a fixed date. The new context of this national celebration served to ascertain the Polish rights to the Recovered Territories, to promote the wider access to the sea, and to celebrate Poland becoming a “maritime state” (PKF 46/25). As such it was used as early as 1946, when the state organised a celebration called “We hold the guard on Oder” between 13 and 14 April 1946 (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 841). This celebration was inaugurated with sports events and the docking of Polish Navy vessels in Szczecin Port on 13 April, followed by a military parade, mass and blessing of the military banners the next day on Jasne Błonia (a large open and green space in north of the city centre) (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 841, p. 2-3). Notable was the presence of the Catholic Church in the state celebrations, which remained a common practice until 1949 (Osęka, 2007).

The celebration itself had a political motive that was discussed at a secret conference at General Lenartowicz’s (Commander of the Szczecin Army Division) house on 26 January 1946, where General Mossor, Deputy Chief of Staff instructed by the authorities, discussed the matter of “a manifestation that the local population should, together with the army, organise by mid-April at the latest” (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1053, p. 35). That statement alone sheds a light on the “spontaneity” of various manifestations organised in that period, which most often belonged primarily to propaganda activity. Similarly, in this case “the manifestation should encompass the largest possible portion of the society to ascertain that Szczecin and Pomerania were and are Polish territories. As a reason for the manifestation some date, from the period when Szczecin belonged to Poland, needs to be found” (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1053, p. 35). In this context, the national celebrations confirm Osęka’s (2007) claim that state rituals were a tool of power, both within and outside Poland.

Therefore, the elaborate celebrations held in Szczecin were tightly connected with the new narrative of the regime, specially the territorial aspect of it. The Fete of the Sea was celebrated over three days ,27, 28 and 29 of June 1947. The first day was the blessing of “one

of the largest hospitals in Poland” (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 826, p. 47), which fits the practice of presenting new major investments to the society discussed earlier. On the next day the schedule stretched between 13:30 and 21:00 and started off with sports events, ending with wreath laying on soldier’s graves: first the Soviet, then Polish (APSz, UWSz, sygn. 826, p. 49). On the 29 June, the celebrations started at 9:00 and were filled with official speeches (from the President), military and navy parades, sports events, and finally a bonfire and dancing that started at 22:00 (APSz, UWSz, WPS, sygn. 826, p. 51). It is apparent that such a complex and prolonged celebration aimed to awe the spectators and achieve certain propaganda goals – internally to display the power of the new regime, and abroad to re-emphasize the Polish claim to Szczecin. Only the first aspect is analysed in the official documents and Stefan Kosior, the author of the report, claims that although “many people abstained from participation ... in terms of propaganda the Fete of the Sea was quite successful” (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 826, p. 59 and 61).

Symbols and institutions

Yet another aspect of statehood is national symbols and traditional institutions. In this aspect as well, the new regime seemed to re-invent and re-emphasize, rather than invent anew. The resurrected Poland, after 1918, chose to formalise its coat of arms even before she established her borders and formalised the political structure of the new state. *The Bill on coat of arms and national colours* was passed on 1 August 1919. Under the provision of Article 1 paragraph 1, the coat of arms was to be “a white eagle with its head turned right (left for the observer), with wings raised upwards, golden claws, crown and beak in rectangular red field (template No. 1)” (Dz. U. 1919 nr. 69 poz. 416, p. 1 – see fig.H1). National colours were to be “white and red, in oblong parallel stripes, where on the top is white and red on the bottom (template No. 5)” (Dz. U. 1919 nr. 69 poz. 416, p. 1 – see fig. H2). In this form, the Polish coat of arms survived until 1927, when it was changed by Presidential decree (Dz. U. 1927 nr. 115 poz. 980 – see. H3). In 1927, the official state was established to the words of “Poland has not yet perished” (Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych 1927 nr. 1 & 2, poz. 60, p. 58 – see Appendix H).

When the communists began to consolidate their power from 1944 onwards, they needed to address the issue of national symbols. The coat of arms was changed by the National Council of the Homeland (Krajowa Rada Narodowa – KRN) and supposedly replaced by a “Piast eagle”, the term itself rather vague, since the large and fragmented Piast

dynasty did not possess a standard coat of arms (Jaworska, 2003). The eagle that appeared on official state documents and during official state celebrations resembles the design introduced in 1927, although the golden crown has been removed (see fig. H4). The official change of the national coat of arms came in 1952, with the passing of the regime's constitution where the national coat of arms was specified as "an image of a white eagle on a red field" (Dz. U. 1952 nr. 33 poz. 232, p. 370) and the formal template introduced with a *Decree on coat of arms and national colours of the People's Republic of Poland and state seals* (Dz. U. 1955 nr. 34 poz. 314 – see fig. H5). It is obvious that the changes introduced by the new regime did not break away from Polish traditional national symbols – no legislation or decree was passed to change the anthem or the flag; the eagle only lost its crown, but otherwise the design was identical with the pre-war one. The change was motivated by ideological reasons as the crown was associated with monarchy and the previous regime (Czubiński, 2000). Thus in the realm of state symbols, the party did not invent new ones, but chose to retain most, while changing the coat of arms.

Traditions are important in national narratives and so are traditional institutions of power and government (Hobsbawm, 1992; Smith, 1991). In this case, the communists presented a more radical approach. While still retaining some important traditional institutions, they abandoned others and created new ones at the same time. It is important to name these most traditional Polish institutions of government, the Sejm and the Senate, which together constitute the Parliament. These were developed and formalised between the 15th and 16th centuries (Prażmowska, 2011), where the Sejm was the Lower House and the Senate the Upper House. These two were re-instated by the interwar Polish state and embedded in its constitution of 1921 (Dz. U. 1921 nr. 44 poz. 267) and were retained despite any changes to the political system in 1935 (Dz. U. 1935 nr. 30 poz. 227). Another important institution was the Head of State. Poland ceased to exist in 1795 as a monarchy and was reinstated post-1918 as a republic; therefore, the republican tradition was in a very Hobsbawmian sense invented in Poland.

The issue of Parliament is probably the most important and it is vital to emphasize that from the very beginning, the communists broke away with the Polish parliamentary tradition. The first communist organ of power that constituted itself on New Year's Eve in 1943 was the National Council of the Homeland and was a self-proclaimed legislative body that *de facto* replaced the Sejm. Notably, the communists introduced a set of institutions that were a complete novum in Polish political tradition – the National Councils (Dz. U. 1944 nr.

5 poz. 22) and in this new system, particularly in its phrasing it is possible to observe the ideological influence of the USSR. The system of the Councils placed the KRN at the top; then there were provincial National Councils, county National Councils, then urban and communal National Councils (Dz. U. 1944 nr. 5 poz. 22, p. 27). The very term ‘council’ was imported from the Russian *совет* (soviet – meaning council) and the structure and hierarchy bear a striking resemblance to the system of soviets/councils in the USSR (Hahn, 1988). The system of national councils survived for the duration of the People’s Poland (Czubiński, 2005), while the National Council of the Homeland was abolished with the elections of 1947 and the Sejm was reinstated. The Senate, however, was abolished, which caused great tensions within the country, even though the communists did not dare to abolish it outright, but resorted to rigging the 1946 referendum. The falsified results of the referendum allowed communists to remove the Senate from Polish political landscape (Prażmowska, 2011).

The issue of the Head of State followed the reverse pattern – initially the post of the President was retained and performed by Bierut, who was also the Chairman of the National Council of the Homeland (Prażmowska, 2011). In 1952, the post of the president was abolished with passing of the new constitution and replaced by the Council of State, which was a collective Head of State (Dz. U. 1952 nr. 33 poz. 232). The institutions were changed but procedures remained almost identical with the pre-war ones. According to the 1921 constitution, the president is elected “for seven years with absolute majority by the Sejm and the Senate, joined into the National Assembly” (Dz. U. 1921 nr. 44 poz. 267, p. 614); similarly, the Council of State is elected by “the Sejm from its body on the first session” (Dz. U. 1952 nr. 33, poz. 232, p. 353). So it is possible that the new regime replicated the procedures of the interwar Polish state.

Polish communists, in the field of national symbols and celebrations, represent a rather mixed approach. They invented, or rather imported, some celebrations and institutions directly from the USSR; some symbols, like the coat of arms, were changed but still based on the previously accepted traditions and customs. Certainly the number of state sponsored celebrations significantly increased after 1944, but these were not a sign of communist “horror vacui” as argued by Osęka (2007, p. 104) but predominantly aimed to replace Catholic holidays so popular before the war. In many cases, the new regime picked up the previous state celebrations, re-invented their context and used them as a propaganda tool (vide the Fete of the Sea), but borrowing from the previous regime appears to be an attempt to prove continuity. Through their use of previous rituals, the communist government most

likely tried to demonstrate that only the social context changed after 1944, but not the national one. Strictly Soviet holidays were enforced and Polish leaders had a limited authority about the “revolutionary” holidays that came from the USSR (Osęka, 2007). Nevertheless, these, too, served their propaganda and myth-making purposes to establish a myth of liberation by the Red Army and fraternal cooperation with the Soviet Union. More importantly, the new set of celebrations aimed to serve as “a permanent history lesson” and was predominantly an instrument of power (Osęka, 2007, p. 114).

In the realm of traditional state institutions, Polish communists struggled between a break with tradition and a somewhat conservative approach. Initially, they abandoned the Polish parliamentary system (although just in name), only to restore it, but without the Senate. Bierut initially served as the President and even resided in the Belvedere in Warsaw, the traditional residence of Polish Presidents (Łukasiewicz, 1987). Then the collective Head of State was introduced in 1952, a clear break with Polish political tradition. The struggle between ideology and nationalism within the Polish communist party warranted that it could not fully embrace the USSR political model, so alien to Poles; nor could it unequivocally support the previous institutions. The shape of the People’s Poland, therefore, was a result of the uneasy compromise between ideology and nationalism, which created a hybrid of Polish traditional institutions and Soviet inventions.

Attitudes and responses

State celebrations and symbols occupied an important role in communist Poland (Osęka, 2007). As one of the interviewees recalled, they aimed to create “a new political identity” (E.H. Personal communication on 18.02.2016). Furthermore, the regime infused these celebrations with ideology and propaganda and in many cases assessed the degree of propagandist success, as in Szczecin (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn, 826, p. 59 and 61); however, as Osęka (2007) argues, communists themselves also fell victim to their own propaganda; thus, generally propaganda reports concerning major celebrations claim positive results. However, it is vital to emphasize that due to the internal struggle between nationalism and ideology, the values that the communist party aimed to instil “were not coherent, but a sort of collage” (Osęka, 2007, p. 55). They did introduce some new holidays and greatly expanded the existing state rituals, both for propaganda purposes and as a tool of power (Osęka, 2007). The new celebration calendar was, like the communist ideology itself, incompatible with Polish nationalism. Even if one looks at the fragmentary holiday calendar of People’s Poland

(Osęka, 2007, p. 105-106), it is difficult to find holidays that directly address Polish national pride (maybe except 22 July). Ideological form and incoherent content produced a mix of responses that ranged from cautious curiosity and awe to an outward rejection and mockery. This range of responses was present across all the sections of society (Osęka, 2007).

The internal struggle and lack of revolutionary zeal among Polish communists is apparent in their superficial approach to sentiments displayed during state celebrations. As Osęka argues, “no one expected Poles that they would truly love Stalin (or even respect him) – the authorities cared for one thing, that after shouting the slogan ‘Long live comrade Stalin!’ people would compete in expressing convulsive euphoria” (2007, p. 41-42). In most cases the authorities could not even achieve that superficial enthusiasm. Generally, people wanted to “get it over and done with” (J.K. Personal communication on 05.02.2016), especially during the 1 May parade, where participation was mandatory. Some, like A. K. and P.K, participated because “one could dance and have fun afterwards” and “drink a glassful with friends” (Personal communications on 10.02. and 13.02.2016). Others, like E.H. and T.T., participated because they were teachers and their participation was strictly enforced (Personal communication on 10.02. and 18.02.2016). Some like T.F. went because “it was fun for the kids” (Personal communication on 10.02.2016). Among all the interviewees, the author found only one that participated in the state rituals gladly and believed “that something could be improved, something introduced” (G.S. Personal communication on 17.02.2016). In most cases, the general attitude towards the new state celebrations was rather hostile. As J.K. put it “there were Polish flags on the street, but between them there were Soviet ones! That was a fucking disaster!” (Personal communication on 05.02.2016). In many cases, adults and children attempted various deceptions to avoid participating. In schools, for example, all pupils had to march in the parade and teachers were responsible for enforcing it. Before any school formed a procession, there was a roll call to check attendance and as J.U. recalled

I was always charged with carrying the red banner, probably because I was repatriated from Ukraine and that would look good, but after the roll call I handed the banner to my classmate, told him I needed to pee and run off into the park. (Personal communication on 13.02.2016)

W.R. managed to be excused from participating by forging notes informing the school about a deceased relative, which was one of the few accepted justifications (Personal communication on 13.02. 2016). P.K. recalled one of his work colleagues who “wouldn’t

drink a drop of alcohol, but was blind drunk twice a year – on 1 May and 22 July” (Personal communication on 10.02.2016). T.T. was a teacher and her job would be threatened had she not participated but “every now and then I’d let my pupils go for ice cream instead. Then I was really afraid and couldn’t sleep at night from fear of something bad happening, but they were always in one piece the next day” (Personal communication on 10.02.2016).

Civil disobedience assumed also another dimension – some were openly, or secretly, celebrating the pre-war national holidays like the 3 May and 11 November. J.K. recalled that every house was obliged to put out the flag for 1 May and then put it down the next day and there were

many who didn’t put a flag on 1 May, but would on 3 May. When the militia or other officials came and asked why they still have the flag on display they would always get an answer: we forgot to take it down after 1 May (Personal communication on 05.02.2016).

T.T confirmed the story, adding that “these were only the brave ones, the less brave would celebrate it quietly at home” (Personal communication on 10.02.2016). M.W. recalled that after the war he and other university students decided to organise their own celebration of 3 May refrain from participating in 1 May “because it was a Bolshevik holiday”. On the 3 May, M.W. and his colleagues began celebrating the pre-war holiday by attending the mass in the cathedral and then they “marched on the main street of Łódź, then they fired at us, but these were secondary details” (Personal communication on 20.02.2016). In Szczecin in 1947, someone posted anti-regime flyers in Polish and Russian a night before the celebrations (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1053, p. 89). Additionally, there were some who managed not to participate at all, like U.R. who nevertheless “liked to watch” the parades (Personal communication on 13.02.2016). M.S. was strictly forbidden by her husband, notably a member of the party, to participate in any state celebrations on the grounds that “it was more than enough that he [the husband] had to take part” (Personal communication on 13.02.2016).

The attitudes of the party members were not uniform either. Party officials were not always respectful of the state ceremonials and there were many incidents where officials turned up drunk or were the first ones to leave the celebration (Osęka, 2007, p. 168). In some cases, party officials publically mocked the system and the leaders. Osęka presents a very blatant example found in the archives; a party official in Gorlice, when presented with a large portrait of Bierut exclaimed “oh, this son-of-a-bitch is huge,” and then started singing a song:

“there’s a lettuce with small leaves, don’t you fuck a communist, ‘cause if Stalin will find out, he shall nationalise your ass” (2007, p. 178). It is probably difficult to obtain more blatant and serious mockery from a state official himself. J.K. claimed “that the lower in the ranks they were, the less they cared” (05.02.2016). There were definitely more reports of vandalising regime symbols on the part of the society rather than the party, but it is important to note that the new set of values was incompatible with Polish nationalism and the party members themselves were Poles, who often could not and would not identify themselves with the regime and its values and symbols (Osęka, 2007).

Conclusion

In terms of national celebrations and symbols’ it is possible to outline two major principles that governed this sphere of state activity in communist Poland: 1) the authorities were satisfied with outwards and superficial displays of support and enthusiasm; 2) wider society either occasionally boycotted the state celebrations or participated for very trivial reasons like free food and drinks. While such responses may not have been universal, they were nevertheless prevalent. In fact, it is difficult to find any elements of patriotic exaltation when one observes state celebrations in communist Poland. For the regime, it was tool of propaganda and power (Osęka, 2007). For society, it was another part of the new reality and the people needed to “adapt to it, otherwise it would be hard” (W.R. Personal communication on 13.02.2016). In the realm of national holidays, the communists were most daring when they banned two most important national days – 3 May and 11 November, mainly on account of these being anti-regime in their nature. They replaced these with a new celebration – 22nd July – and elevated the International Worker’s Day in a similar format to the Soviet Union (Osęka, 2007). In many cases, they re-instated the pre-war holidays like the Fete of the Sea, while others originating from folk and peasant traditions like Dożynki (Harvest Festival) were given official state ritual (Osęka, 2007). In this respect, the communists seem to have produced a collage of past-traditions and new practices. Such a collage reflects the wider dilemma about the dual identity of the communist government. It would have been impossible for the regime to be unaware of people’s lukewarm response to the cultural imposition of communist power, likely undermining their ideological convictions.

A similar approach can be observed towards national symbols and traditional institutions. Some, like the Sejm, were retained, although initially rejected and some rejected although initially embraced – like the Presidency. The regime dared not change the anthem

and also successfully adopted a strongly anti-German *Rota*. The national coat of arms lost a crown, which was a bourgeois symbol (Jaworska, 2003), but otherwise the design was identical with the pre-war one. Initially, the regime also incorporated Catholic practices that were so popular in the pre-war Poland. Yet another sphere of state activity presents the struggle between ideology and nationalism that was present the system from its very beginning. Once again, due to this struggle the regime failed to produce a coherent narrative. A bizarre collage of values dominated public life and was manifested through national rituals that failed to unite the society around the regime; yet again a society presented with a mixture of Soviet and Polish elements could not identify itself with them and effectively rejected them, retreating back to well-known Polish traditions. Lack of understanding, coupled with the intensity and often physical strain – the Fete of the Sea celebrations lasted more than 13 hours (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 826, p. 51) – encouraged people to either avoid participating in or to mock the rituals (Osęka, 2007). Geo-political conditions warranted that Poles would accommodate to the new regime, officially expressing support and consent, while privately opposing the regime. The dichotomous-identity that evolved within the Polish communist party was projected onto the entire nation.

Chapter VI: Education

Introduction

The education system under the post-war Polish political regime has been widely criticised in modern Polish historiography. Statements such as “blatant indoctrination” (Kamusella, 2010, p. 114), “manipulative functions” (Kałużna, 2014, p. 69) and “politico-ideological indoctrination” (Osiński, 2010a, p. 1) occur in the majority of the literature concerning the subject. Kosiński even argues that the education system was aimed to create the “new mentality” (2000, p. 12) of communism and Kosiorek analyses the authoritarian pedagogy of the state and all the risks that it caused, arguing that education was subdued to the needs of the state, overlooking the developmental needs of young people and social needs in general. (2007). Arguments outlining the successes and the positives of the education system introduced between 1944 and 1989 (Moraczewska, 2010) are rare; thus Polish education during the communist era also falls into the “black hole” of Polish history, a concept advocated by Czubiński (2000). The aim of this chapter is not only to analyse the ideological content of the Polish education system (and its outward rejection by society), but to examine the scope and impact of the communist government’s policies that created an education system described not only by adjectives such as “ideological” and “indoctrinating” but also “universal”, “compulsory” and “free”. This chapter will employ the elements of the modernist theory of nationalism (Conversi, 2004) to analyse the purpose of the Polish education system, and the ethno-symbolist perspective in analysing the failure of the communist government to instil the regime’s values (Smith, 1988, 1991).

From the modernist perspective (Gellner, 1989; Conversi, 2004), every state aims to gain a total control over the education system, which should provide a universal tool used to disseminate regime, state or national values. From this standpoint, education (Anderson, 1983) can be viewed as a nation-building policy (Conversi, 2000; 2004). Therefore, modernism assumes that the nation, with all its values and traditions, is secondary to the state, which can easily educate and disseminate its values through education. The ethno-symbolist perspective (Smith, 1989; 1991) assumes that the state is secondary to the nation and it cannot reinvent the nation, since nation formation is a historical process that proves extremely durable and resistant to change. Therefore, attempts to alter national identity are perceived as a threat, further strengthening national bonds (Dmowski, 1907/2007). This chapter will analyse the impact of the new education system introduced by the communist government and the Polish response to it. Additionally, it will analyse the consequences of a

universal and compulsory education system in creating access to national values, thus strengthening Polish ethno-religious national bonds in opposition to the regime.

Phases of the education system

The education system was in a constant process of development and redevelopment; Żaryn (2009) argues that there were seven development phases between 1944 and 1989. The first phase occurred between 1944 and 1950 and was concerned with post-war reconstruction and the creation of a new organisational structure for education, which was ideologically charged, but still operated on the basis of the pre-war system. The second phase was a model of an “honest, folk socialism and internationalism” (Żaryn, 2009, p. 122) and was observable between 1951 and 1957. The following phases of “the thaw”; “stabilisation of socialism and its continuation”; and “the compromise with Solidarity and the new wave” were still ideologically charged, but operated on the basis of the first and second phases (Żaryn, 2009, p. 122-123); furthermore, they are outside the chronological scope of this dissertation. Thus only the first two will be analysed.

The first phase was officially sanctioned by *the Decree on the Organization of the education in the interim period* passed on 23 November 1945. Under Article 1 of the Decree, “the Minister of Education can organize or allow to organize schools and courses not foreseen in the bill of 11 March 1932” and under Article 4 the Minister had the right to “stipulate the rules of employment of persons [teachers] and their fulfilment of vocational qualifications” (Dz. U. 1946, nr. 2, poz. 9). In practice, that meant that there would be shorter courses and lower expectations for education workers (except in the higher education sector), in order to re-build the cadres of teachers and academics who were decimated during the war. The attempts of the Polish Committee of National Liberation’s and later the Provisional Government’s attempts to reconstruct and expand the education system can be observed as early as 1944 with the creation of the Marie Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin on 23 October 1944 (Dz. U. 1944, nr. 9, poz. 42), which was followed by the creation of new universities like Silesian University of Technology (Dz. U. 1945, nr. 21, poz. 118); University and Technical University in Łódź (Dz. U. 1945, nr. 21, poz. 119-120); Mikołaj Kopernik University in Toruń (Dz. U. 1945, nr. 34, poz. 208); and Gdańsk Medical Academy (Dz. U. 1945, nr. 45, poz. 253). Furthermore, existing universities and tertiary education institutions in the Recovered Territories and Gdańsk were transformed into Polish state educational institutions (Dz. U. 1945 nr. 21, poz. 121 and nr. 34 poz. 207). In the span of one

year, eight new tertiary education institutions were created in the country ruined by war. The sheer number and scale of the PPR action shows that the new system education was to occupy a very important place. The importance of the education in the new Polish political reality is also reflected in the funding it received.

The education system was an “ideological front” of the new regime (Osiński, 2010b, p. 1) and was perceived to be one of its most important tools. Its importance is reflected in the budgets passed by the new government. In the first post-war *Budget Bill* of 1946, the Ministry of Education was awarded a total budget of 5 092 322 300 złp out of the total budget of 36 229 394 601 złp (Dz. U. 1946, nr. 50, poz. 284), thus constituting approximately 14% of state spending in 1946. In 1947, the education budget totalled 20 135 707 000 złp, 11% of the total state spending (Dz. U. 1947, nr. 50, poz. 257). The following year it was increased by approximately 16 billion (Dz. U. 1948, nr. 1, poz. 1) and between 1949 and 1950 was oscillating around 50 billion złp. (Dz.U. z 1949 r. Nr 022, poz. 151; Dz.U. 1950 nr 16 poz. 138). Education budget exceeding 10% of the total state spending can only be observed within the time frame that Źaryn (2009) outlines as a reconstructive one. This seems to confirm his argument that need to reconstruct the education system caused more state spending. After the first phase – between 1950 and 1956 – the education budget consistently oscillated around 9% of total state expenditure. (Dz. U. 1951, nr. 18 poz. 145; Dz.U. 1952 nr 17 poz. 101; Dz. U. 1953 nr 26 poz. 101; Dz. U. 1945 nr. 19 poz. 72; Dz. U. 1955 nr. 15 poz. 82; Dz. U. 1956 nr. 12 poz. 60); however, it is important to note that the Ministry of Education’s budget between 1946 and 1956 was consistently in the top 3 largest ministerial budgets, which further emphasizes the importance of education to the regime.

The first phase of reconstruction had its formal end in the abolition of the Ministry of Education and the creation in its place of the Ministry of Tertiary Schools and Teaching on 26 April 1950 (Dz. U. 1950, nr. 21, poz. 181). The preparation for the consolidated of state control over educating and socialising youth was observable in 1949 when the Minister of Education was granted all the prerogatives of the Minister of Work and Social Care in respect to school youth (Dz. U. 1949, nr. 27, poz. 175). Therefore, by 1950, the state monopolized the education and the upbringing of new generations. With that it entered the phase of intensified indoctrination and Stalinisation of the education system (Źaryn, 2009). This period lasted until 1956/7. As Osiński (2010b) argues, the softening of indoctrination post-1956 was caused by the de-Stalinisation process in the USSR itself and the Eastern Bloc;

however, it did not enjoy the ideological relaxation experienced by other areas of life in Poland.

The ideological charge

Ideology undeniably played an important role in the new education system and was present from the very beginning of the communist rule. In fact, one of its first tasks of the Education Department was to organize the celebrations for the anniversary of the October Revolution on the 7 November 1944 (difference in dates corresponds to the use of Julian calendar in Russia). The instruction given to the surviving education structures stated: “the anniversary being a very important public holiday of our ally is a moment when we can document our attitude towards our friendly State ... make all the necessary efforts so the 7 November is celebrated solemnly” (AAN, PKWN, Resort Oświaty, sygn. XIV/23, p. 6). However, the initial period (1944-1948), although ideologically charged, was also nationalist in orientation. Osiński claims that the 11 November (National Independence Day) in 1944 was to be celebrated in schools connected with the defeat of the III Reich (2010d, p. 20) and his claim is confirmed by archival research; the PKWN Education Department circular issued in pn 25 October 1944 instructed that 11 November “should celebrated exceptionally solemnly, because it is the first celebration ... after the 5 years of Hitlerist enslavement”. Moreover, “whenever possible celebrations should be preceded by a mass” (AAN, PKWN, Resort Oświaty, sygn. XIV/23, p. 10). Not only were old national celebrations fully embraced, but were connected closely with religious celebrations. Connections were also made to the 19th century Polish independence movement by highlighting the role that peasant and left wing organisations played. Such a case is observable in the instruction of Żanna Kormanowa, director of the Education Reform Department of the Ministry of Education, to regional education superintendents (Kuratorzy oświaty) from 6 March 1946, ordering them to organize in schools talks about the Cracow uprising in its centenary, and Edward Dembowski, since youth “have the need to familiarise themselves more closely with such important and so little known period of democratic struggle in Poland” (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 2, p. 23).

Contrary to socialist secularism (Moraczewska, 2010) the official teaching of religion was not abandoned (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 2, p. 75) and the Ministry of Education embraced the less ideologically charged and patriotic stance ordering schools to cooperate

with the Association for Care of Camps Organized During the Occupation (Towarzystwo Opieki nad Obozami z Czasów Okupacji – an institution that cared for survivors of concentration camps created by Germans on Polish territory) in order to “commemorate the victims” of the war and German occupation (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 2, p. 91).

Although important to the regime, ideological indoctrination in schools was relaxed with the formation of Provisional Government of National Unity (TRJN), which was a broader coalition of several political parties (Osiński (2010d). Coalition agreement warranted the replacement of the Stanisław Skrzyszewski (communist – Polish Workers’ Party) with the more moderate Czesław Wycech (Polish Peasant Alliance – party in opposition to communism), who was predominantly concerned with reforming and improving the Polish education system, rather than equipping the regime with a tool of indoctrination. The minister himself was connected with a party opposing communists. Thus he did not officially endorse the use of ideology and propaganda in education; however, the executive members of Ministry’s Departments – like communist activist Żanna Kormanowa, came from the USSR and had “an experience in reference to the sovietisation of children” (Osiński, 2010d, p. 16); this severely undermined Wycech’s position, making him unable to eradicate ideology completely from the new education system. Instances of treating schools as propaganda tools can be observed as early as 1946. In a circular issued on 15 May 1946, E. Schayer from the Ministry of Education instructs education superintendents that the Colorado potato beetle infestation and action to combat its effects “with appropriate explanation for the youth will have educational and socializing [uspołeczniający] effect. The Ministry instructs to organize such an action in every school” (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 2, p. 95). And indeed the anti-Colorado potato beetle action became embedded in the cannon of the Polish Anti-Western propaganda (PKF, 29/48; PKF, 25/50 PKF, 35/51; PKF, 36/53), inspiring hostility towards “the imperialist West”. In fact, the Colorado potato beetle originated in Colorado and at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries reached Europe, spreading to become a severe problem for Soviet Bloc countries; nevertheless, the infestation had nothing to do with sabotage from the West (Maharijaya & Vosman, 2015)

Ideological offensive intensifies

By 1947, the Polish Workers’ Party had consolidated its power over Poland; that year marks the intensification of the ideological offensive in the Polish education system that, nonetheless, was never entirely free of Polish nationalist underpinnings.

The moderate minister Wycech was replaced by Skrzyszewski, who assumed the post for the second time (Osiński, 2010c). From 1947 onwards, the main aim of the education system was to

transform Poles consciousness and to steer it away from a religious to a materialistic world view; creating acceptance and mustering support for Marxist-Leninist ideology, the socialist economy, the system of international alliances based on USSR dominance and a political system based on PPR/PZPR dominance. (Osiński, 2006, p. 2)

Since education was in the ideological frontline of the new totalitarian regime, it also received appropriate support and the attention of the secret police (Osiński, 2010b). The state assumed the total control of all educational publications (Wojdon, 2015) and embarked on construction of a coherent Marxist-Leninist historiography (Wojdon, 2012), making school an integral part of the “socialist state ritual” (Ciszewska, 2012, p. 5), while also trying to indoctrinate not only the students but also teachers, who were often employed on the basis of their political inclinations and created the situation where the teacher was “the representative of the regime” (Osiński, 2006, p. 3). A new political rhetoric was established to label the opponents of the new regime: “the adjective ‘bourgeois’ (morality, school, standpoint) was equivalent with the word evil and the adjective ‘socialist’ (morality, ownership, attitude towards work) with the word good” (Osiński, 2006, p. 4-5).

Soon after its consolidation of power, the Ministry of Education launched in the academic year 1947/48 a new subject “Poland and the contemporary world [Nauka o Polsce i świecie współczesnym]” and its main “educational objective [cel wychowawczy]” was to facilitate “the understanding of the new reality ... and emotional attachment to it” (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 311, p. 2). Furthermore, the new subject was to “strengthen the national awareness and attachment to Polish culture and its progressive traditions and discovering the relationship with all Slavic nations” and “to renounce the dichotomy between the group and the individual, through the fact that a socialized individual finds in the democratic system the most favourable conditions of development and actions within the framework dictated by social welfare” (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 311, p. 13). This clearly demonstrates and supports Osiński’s (2010a) and Kosiorek’s (2007) argument that young people were to be directed by the system and for the system and that collective needs would take the precedence over the needs of an individual, an ideology that contains elements of both nationalism and

Marxism. The teaching material in the new subject on Poland and the contemporary world included: “the German problem, elimination of Germans from Eastern Europe ... alliance with the USSR as the fundamental part of our new foreign policy ... dialectical materialism ... millenary struggle of the Polish nation with the German drive eastward” (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn 311, p. 19 and 100). At the same time, the curriculum aimed to reinforce “national awareness” and promote attachment to Poland and Polish culture. Such objectives, even though intertwined with ideological content, demonstrate nationalist underpinnings as well as values typical of nationalist regimes – patriotism and devotion to the state as embodiment of the nation. The content provides a rather bizarre mixture of Marxist-Leninist ideology and in this case often stands in stark contrast to “true spirit of internationalism, socialism and progress” (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 5, p. 38) that the new state tried to instil in Polish youth.

Regardless of inconsistencies, the new model of teaching constituted, as previously demonstrated, an enormous ideological weight. For understandable reasons, humanities were under the strongest ideological pressure (Osiński, 2010a). For example, year 6s (klasa VI) were learning the basic rules of Polish grammar on a following example:

Dear Friends from the USSR! We are writing to You from Poland. We want to get to know You better. We heard and read a lot about Your Great Soviet Fatherland, about Generalissimo Stalin, about heroic work and struggle of the Soviet nation and Soviet youth. We are grateful to the Red Army for liberating our country from the enemy. We are grateful to the Soviet nation for constant help in building and improving of our people's fatherland [ludowej ojczyzny]. We ask You to describe your life and work. We will be impatiently wait for your response. Best wishes from Poland. (the in Żaryn, 2009, p. 36).

The heavy ideological charge in the humanities did not, however, mean natural sciences were excluded from the ideological offensive. A ministerial command issued on 6 September 1949, at the height of the ideological offensive, clearly stated that the main goal of the state is to “create a scientific world view in accordance with Marxism-Leninism ... therefore modern physics not only does not disprove materialism, quite the contrary, it confirms dialectical materialism” and the new system should “consciously and deliberately [emphasis in the original] establish a scientific and materialist perspective among the youth” (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 5, p. 103 and 107).

In a centrally administrated and authoritarian education system (Kosiorek, 2007) the focus on ideology found its way to assessment where questions carried equal ideological weight as the curricula, if not heavier. In 1955, the cabinet of the Minister of Education outlined the new set of exam questions for Polish language [język polski] for years 6 to 11 (klasa VI-XI) and thus the year 7's were to explain "on the basis of A. Mickiewicz's poem <<To our friends the Muscovites>> [Do przyjaciół Moskali] ... the poet's attitude to the Russian nation" (AAN, MOśw, sygn. 22, p. 26). Year 8s needed to present "the poetic image of misery and revolutionary struggle of the proletariat in Tuwim's <<Polish flowers>> [Kwiaty polskie]" or give the examples of "Polish-Soviet friendship and fraternity in J. Newerle's <<Boy from the Don steppes>> [Chłopiec z salskich stepów]" (AAN, MOśw, sygn. 22, p. 29) and year 11s were to discuss "the awakening of class awareness in the countryside (found in novels of W. Wasilewska)" or analyse "the importance of B. Bierut's speech, on the opening of the radio station in Wrocław, for the development of Polish culture" (AAN, MOśw, sygn. 22, p. 36) Similar expectations of the students were outlined in the Ministry's instruction concerning the secondary education certificate exams in 1949, where four main points were emphasized:

- 1) Social and economic reforms and their pivotal role for Poland; 2) National Economic Plan and its importance for the future of the State; 3) The role of the Recovered Territories – as the basis of existence of Poland – and therefore the vital importance of their development and repolonization; 4) The importance of the unification of the forces of Polish democracy in Bloc of Democratic Alliances – as a basis of social normalization and the future of the State in contrast with the reactionary forces hostile to the new Poland and democracy (the underground and the London emigration). (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 3, p. 101)

Furthermore, students were required to be aware of "the new foreign policy of democratic Poland, international agreements if people's Poland, the German question as a perpetual threat ... especially to Poland and Slavdom ... common interests of Slavic nations ... economic cooperation and alliance with the USSR" (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 3, p. 101). It is possible to observe the strong ideological charge of these sentences, but altogether they present a rather bizarre mixture of ideology, nationalism/chauvinism and pan-Slavism, an uneasy balance between ideology and nationalism.

Reactions to the ideological offensive

In order to effectively conduct the new ideological offensive in Polish education, the regime needed to indoctrinate teachers. For this purpose, the Ministry of Education issued an instruction on 27 October 1949 ordering compulsory ideological education of teachers, who were obliged to be educated “in terms of a) Poland and contemporary world, b) social sciences, c) socialist pedagogic”; the process was finalised by an exam at which “the participants should demonstrate the knowledge and understanding of the following literature: 1) B. Bierut – Ideological basis of the PZPR; 2) Fundamental social issues [Podstawowe zagadnienia społeczne] – J. Siwek, ed.; 3) Collaborative work – Socio-economic news; 4) Kairow – Pedagogic” (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 2, p. 513-514). On top of that, the Ministry encouraged “ideological self-education” (AAN, MOśw, sygn. 14, p. 54). Quite logically, the ones directly responsible for the dissemination of regime values were to be selected and meticulously checked in terms of their ideological stance and the knowledge of “Marxist-Leninist classics” (AAN, MOsw, sygn. 14, p. 86).

However, a year after the ideological offensive, the Ministry evaluated the implications of the new education system and its Marxist-Leninist ideological basis. The results were unsatisfactory for the Ministry: “we need to say that the teachers felt the need to finally grasp <<that Marxism>> so frequently written and spoken of, which they knew little about. We cannot, however find in this attitude a true interest in Marxism-Leninism” (AAN, MOśw, sygn. 14, p. 88). Furthermore, if certain teachers “could convincingly justify materialism” that “did not stop him from being a practicing Catholic” (AAN, MOśw, sygn. 14, p. 90). Towards the end of the Stalinist period in Poland, the situation among the teachers from the ideological perspective was “disastrous,” as was the decreasing standard of teaching (AAN, MOśw, sygn. 28, p. 202). The teachers in some cases outwardly rejected the new ideological system and methods of teaching it, although there was a strict control over the content and teaching; in some instances, the teachers worked around it. J. K. described a following situation: “I had a history teacher in high school [in late 1950s], Professor [habitual way of addressing secondary teachers in Poland] D. On some occasions, he would enter the classroom and say ‘Today we will be doing what’s in the curriculum’ and on some days ‘Today we will be studying history’” (Personal communication on 05.02.2016). A primary school teacher interviewed (Polish language and literature – started teaching in 1949) was given “reading materials [czytanki]” about Feliks Dzierżyński and Lenin, knowing their indoctrinating content. She recalled:

I wrote the summary of the Dzierżyński reading on the board and told the pupils to write it down in their notebooks, in case of inspection, they would have a proof that we did what was expected. And indeed the inspectors showed up soon after, they checked the notebooks, ticked one reading and then asked about the Lenin one. I told them we didn't do that one. They wrote in their papers 'shameful omission' and then left. No unpleasantness followed. (T.T. Personal communication on 12.02.2016).

These examples demonstrate that teachers sometimes chose not to follow the guidelines, thus minimizing the ideological impact of the education system. Moreover, some inspectors responsible for enforcing the ideological content, as demonstrated in this case at least, proved to be unconcerned about the "omission" that had been made by T.T. Furthermore, the examples demonstrate that the indoctrination and propaganda on one side and strict (in theory) enforcement of it created a contradictory identity among people. T.T. did what "was expected", but her action suggests that she was against the educational propaganda and she did not force the students to familiarize themselves with the readings. The same attitude can be observed among the inspectors; officially, they made a note that one of the readings had not been done in T. T's. class; however, no action was taken against her for not fulfilling her duties as "the representative of the regime" (Osiński, 2006, p. 3). Similarly, Professor D. on several occasions followed the official curriculum, although on others he was "teaching history" (05.02.2016). The very wording suggests that D. was against the regime and he made a clear difference between "the curriculum" and "history". In a similar vein to T.T., he did what was demanded by the authorities, while not agreeing with it. This attitude minimized the impact of the ideological offensive launched by the government and reinforced their dichotomous identity, noticed by the Ministry (AAN, MOśw, sygn. 14), which attempted to reinforce ideological preparedness and compliance with the communist government's line; however, the results were far from satisfactory for the Ministry (AAN, MOśw, sygn. 28).

While teachers' reactions demonstrate the dichotomous identity of most Polish citizens (official compliance/private disagreement), students' attitudes varied from passive resistance to an outward defiance. The indoctrinating school curricula in the humanities was limited to memorizing dates or fixed interpretations presented by the regime and, in many cases, failed to interest the students. Additionally, the state limited students' activities and areas of interest. A notorious example was the introduction of Russian as a compulsory foreign language in schools. In the academic year of 1948/1949, only 40%, of total number of students learning a foreign language took Russian as a school subject. In the following

academic year, the Ministry observed that its encouragement and efforts in “promoting” (making compulsory) Russian as chosen foreign language “brought a colossal increase in the numbers of students learning Russian, with the simultaneous decrease of the number of students learning other languages” (AAN, MOśw, sygn. 14, p. 238). This action alone caused student opposition. R.G claims that it was “a tool of Russification” (13.02.2016) and J.K. adds “it became a point of honour not to learn it”. Further views expressed to this project confirm that the students outwardly rejected the indoctrination (Personal communications on 05.02 and 13-20.02.2016). However, it is important to take into the account that their recollections, made after the fall of the PPR/PZPR regime, might include some negative bias that impacted their interpretation of the past.

There is, however, one person who participated in the ethnographic study for this project, who provided a valuable perspective. E.H. started her state education in 1949, a year the regime saturated the education system with propaganda. E.H recalled:

I don't know how to call it, but it felt like after I went to school I suffered from schizophrenia. I was young and the adults did not include me in their conversations and they never spoke about the situation in the country when I was young. So I went to school, I remember I was so excited and loved learning new things. When I came back from school I wanted to share my achievements and what I had learned with my family. I tried to talk to my uncle, the only male figure in my house since my father had died during the war, and told him the news from the Soviet Union and all the good things that Uncle Stalin had done for our country; he went red with fury and snapped ‘shut up, child!’. I couldn't figure out what had made him so furious.
(18.02.2016)

E.H genuinely believed the propaganda disseminated by schools, yet even in her case the effect proved short-lasting for a very simple reason:

in 1954 my other uncle came back from the GULag, a human wreck, I will never forget the mindless look in his eyes. By then I was old enough to know, the family decided it was the time I heard their story. The reason for my uncle's fury was simple. He also was deported by the Soviets, but he came back in 1946. They told me all of the atrocities that our “greatest ally” committed on our people. I was shocked and devastated, but never again believed in anything they were telling us about the Soviets in school (E.H. 18.02.2016).

In the case of E.H, the family decided to wait until she was old enough, but in some other cases the family outwardly denounced the version of history taught at school; J.K., T.F., and R.G., were all informed by their parents about the brutality and illegitimacy of the communist government (J.K. 05.02.2016; T.F. 12.02.2016; R.G. 13.02.2016). The author encountered two people who were repatriated from the eastern parts of Poland taken by the USSR and, although young they clearly remembered “the horrors” of the repatriation and the “kindness” shown by the Soviet authorities; a long journey in a coal wagons (with no roof protecting passengers from cold, rain or snow); thus, from their own experience they knew that the official propaganda and version of history taught at school were false (T.R. and J.U. 14.02.2016). In fact, family socialisation was the reason for the failure of the regime to indoctrinate society. The millions who survived the war and lived in the post-war Poland could testify to the falsity of stories told in school. The education system, and the state as such, were no longer believed to be the carrier of national values and traditions. That role was taken by closest family and since the education system was perceived as a propagandist tool of the regime “young people turned to the Catholic Church for support and knowledge” (Osiński, 2006, p. 26) since this organisation was the only available alternative to the system. Paradoxically, the education system achieved the opposite result from the intended one: instead of “uniting the youth and the entire society around those extremely important tasks ... during the period of constructing the foundations of socialism” (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 2, p. 487), “true internationalism” (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 6) and positive “emotional attachment” to the regime (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 311, p. 2), the education system mobilized society against the values promoted by the state and unwittingly pushed it towards the Catholic Church.

The negative results of blatant indoctrination and visible decline in the standards of teaching produced yet another outcome - both the teachers and some party members began to criticize the use of propaganda in education between 1955 and 1956 (Osiński, 2006). On the wave of popular discontent and factional struggles within the party that led to a relaxation of the PZPR's grip on power, voices from within and outside the party called for reform (Czubiński, 1995). While the regime never fully removed the ideological content, from 1956 onwards the indoctrination worked on the basis of positive allusions to the system and its ideology, rather than making outright propagandist claims (Osiński, 2006). The regime was thus not only responding to its own internal nationalist inclinations, it was responding to open criticism and lack of “Marxist” practice in schools. It is possible to surmise that the clash of

the party with the popular rejection of its ideology exacerbated their own dichotomous identity, while the attempt at enforcement of the ideological strengthened nationalist sentiment within the society.

Illiteracy

The very important issue of literacy is often ignored by Polish historians (Osinski, 2006; 2010a; 2010b; 2010c; Wojdon, 2012; 2015; Żaryn, 2009). The efforts to combat illiteracy in post-war Poland are raised by Moraczewska, who claims that the regime achieved a formidable task of “popularizing the sterling national culture among the masses and democratize the cultural values in the broadest circles of the population” (2010, p. 121). Pre-war Poland had an overall illiteracy rate of 30% (Nowy Kurjer, 1935). However, establishing the rate of illiteracy among the ethnically Polish population overall might be difficult, since the data of 1931 considers the entire population. Illiteracy was most prevalent in the eastern part of the country, where most of the ethnic minorities lived (see Appendix H). Indeed, the universal literacy achieved through the efforts of the communist government is an undeniable and positive contribution of the party on Polish society. From the modernist perspective (Conversi, 2000; 2004), the achievement of universal literacy is a nation-building tool aimed at the dissemination of state promoted values. That would undeniably be the case with the communist government and its intentions for education. From the ethno-symbolist perspective (Smith, 1989, 1991; 1995), education is the process of the dissemination of the national high culture across all of the society which facilitates its transformation from a lateral *ethnie* to a vertical *ethnie*. That process might be facilitated by the state. However, as Smith (1989; 1991) argues, nation formation is a historical process that shapes the state, not conversely. The case of Poland does confirm Smith’s theory, since Polish culture developed long before the PPR/PZPR seized power, and the universal dissemination of national culture worked as a unifying factor for the Polish nation. However, the mobilization occurred against the regime, not behind it.

Poland, devastated by the war and struggling with some negative legacies of the previous regime, suffered from large illiteracy rates, especially among the adult population (Moraczewska, 2010). In the immediate aftermath of the war, the regime needed to focus on the reconstruction and enhancement of the existing education structures (Osinski, 2006). As soon as the situation in the education system was normalized, the regime turned its attention towards achieving high rates of illiteracy. On 7 April 1949, the parliament passed *the Bill on*

eradication of illiteracy. The Bill itself was not devoid of propaganda, since the Article 1 clearly stated: “in order to eradicate illiteracy, which is the legacy of bourgeois and squirearchy rule ... social duty of free tuition for illiterates and semi-illiterates is introduced” (Dz. U. 1949, nr. 25 poz. 177). The ideological rhetoric cannot, however, overshadow the aim – universal literacy, which can only be perceived as a desired and necessary effort (Moraczewska, 2010). The nation-wide action included the efforts of the entire education sector and the military (Dz. U. 1949, nr. 25 poz. 177, Art. 21, par. 1 and 2), which taught adults and children literacy skills in their area of residence. The effort to eradicate illiteracy received enormous government support and funding – its budget in 1950 is calculated to be approximately 3.5 billion złp. That number does not seem impressive, especially when compared to large ministerial budgets mentioned before. However, this program alone had a larger budget than the Ministry of Heavy Industry and the Ministry of Mining and Energetics combined (Dz. U. 1950 nr. 16 poz. 138), which were the crucial elements of the socialist economy (Czubiński, 2000). The enormous funding and effort resulted in the announcement Government Plenipotentiary to Combat Illiteracy. Stefan Matuszewski announced on 21 December 1951 the success of the campaign (Moraczewska, 2010, p. 124). The campaign was launched in 1949 lasted for approximately 2.5 years – rather a short period, demonstrating the determination of the authorities and serving as an example as their undeniable success, a decided positive.

The consequences of eradicating illiteracy were that every Pole had access to the national culture (Moraczewska, 2010). National culture certainly served as a factor that strengthened national bonds. Yet as Chapter II has demonstrated, Polish national culture and national values like strict adherence to Catholicism and ethno-centrism, were fundamentally incompatible with the new socialist/communist regime. Universal literacy allowed for the uncontrolled dissemination of national values; in this respect, both from the ethno-symbolist and modernist perspectives, the PZPR government initiated a successful nation-building policy. It facilitated the completion of the transformation of Poles from a lateral *ethnie* to a vertical one in which all the national culture and national values were easily accessible to every member of the society. Contrary to the regime’s expectations, the Poles as a nation rejected the communist values, symbols and myths. However, the strict control the regime enforced necessitated that Poles develop a dichotomous public/private identity. The public one was maintained for pragmatic reasons, to avoid, as T.T. phrased it, “unpleasantness” (12.02.2016), while the private identity rejected the regime. By eliminating illiteracy, the

regime effectively unified and further homogenized Poles, but in doing so it undermined its very own foundations.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the two most undeniable achievements of the Polish communist regime – free and universal access to education at any level (Kosiński, 2000) and the elimination of illiteracy (Moraczewska, 2010). The education system, however, was not established and expanded simply to educate the society – it was done to achieve a universal indoctrination and aimed at altering the Polish national identity, in line with the regime’s ideology. The indoctrination through education proved unsuccessful for four reasons: 1) Polish national identity was incompatible with the communist ideology; 2) the memory of the Soviet atrocities in Poland was still recent and vivid; 3) teachers and educators, especially in the immediate aftermath of war, were affected by these memories and did not enforce state promoted values; 4) the official history was verified by the memories and experiences within families. The regime was perceived as foreign and its attempts to indoctrinate the society were seen as attempts to “Russify” or “sovietise” the society – which can simply be described as attempts to de-nationalize Poles. That very fact and its perceived threat mobilized the Poles as much as any other external threat in their history. The state was no longer perceived to be synonymous with the nation, and values disseminated by the state were opposed. Paradoxically, the massive efforts in the education system proved futile. They failed to produce the “new mentality” (Kosiński, 2000); instead, they entrenched and magnified the features of Polish nationalism and national identity that developed through centuries – adherence to Catholicism and ethno-centrism.

Furthermore, universal access to education and universal literacy provided Poles with the means of universal dissemination of the national culture and values. That undeniably strengthened the national bonds, allowed access to the national ethos, myths, sages and heroes (Smith, 1989). In this respect, the PZPR allowed the Polish nation to access a unified set of values and facilitated its transformation into a nation in a modern sense of its meaning – one that has a unified and universal set of values and symbols (Smith, 1989; Conversi, 2004; Anderson, 1983). The post-war Polish government, in this respect, served as a facilitator of this process – it provided the means to universalize national values. The set of values it tried to instil, in place of the historic ones, was rejected and, moreover, perceived as a threat, which further strengthened Polish ethno-based nationalism. Additionally, the party

members themselves were Poles, and their national identity and set of national values identical with their compatriots. This nationalist sentiment found its way in several attempts to retain key parts of the Polish identity in the curriculum. Ultimately, the strength of Polish nationalism overpowered communist ideology. Throughout the period between 1944 and 1956, the PPR/PZPR used nationalist rhetoric, most openly until 1948, but even during the ideological offensive launched in 1949 that was to promote “socialism and internationalism” (Żaryn, 2009, p. 122), anti-German nationalism still resonated within the official doctrine as the “German issue” (APSz, KOSSz, WO, sygn. 3, p. 101).

The failure of the education system to become a nation-wide indoctrination tool is a complex interplay of circumstances, personal and national histories. The new propaganda was negatively verified by the national experience of the WWII; those who were directly responsible for educating youth neither believed nor enforced the official doctrine; the PPR/PZPR members struggled with the incompatibility of Polish nationalism and communist ideology; parents and the Catholic Church assumed the role of educators and carriers of the national identity. Indoctrination, if such cases were successful, was short-lasting, as the case of E.H. demonstrates. By sheer paradox, E.H. later chose the career of a teacher herself; her distrust of and opposition to the new system resulting from experiences of her family members, caused her to follow the path of T.K, who did “what was expected” while disbelieving the entire educational propaganda and not enforcing it. As a result of universal education and literacy, the communists strengthened Polish national bonds and unified the nation – not behind them, as they planned, but against them.

Chapter VII: Propaganda

Introduction

The communist regime in Poland invested considerable resources into propaganda activity (Osęka, 2007). From the beginning of its existence, it struggled to control all forms of media within the country and to achieve the monopoly on information in a similar vein to the communist regime in USSR (Czubiński, 2000). Such control was not only a trait of a quasi-totalitarian regime, but was to serve an additional purpose for the regime. The new political, social and economic system, new borders and different ethnic composition (with an overwhelming majority of ethnic Poles) implied that Poland was being reinvented anew and to this desire the top party officials officially admitted: they were building “new” Poland, which had no precedent in history (Berman in Torańska, 1985, p. 599). The new state, as previously demonstrated, re-engineered the ethnic composition, created new state rituals and symbols, and introduced a new education system. It also needed to produce new “myths” so essential to national narratives (Smith, 1991). Every regime has its founding myth; ancient Poland had its myth of a first Piast being chosen by people to be a prince (Labuda, 1991); the founding myth of the II Polish Republic was Piłsudski’s declaration of independence on 11 November 1918, upon his return from Magdeburg (Czubiński, 2000). Polish nationalism, through historical experience, developed “historical” foes, Germans and Russians, a sentiment immensely reinforced by the experiences of WWII (Zaremba, 2002).

The new regime that came after 1944, backed, and to a large extent, controlled by the Soviets, had to re-develop some traits of Polish nationalism and this was to be achieved by omnipresent propaganda; in fact, one of the interviewees claimed that “everything was propaganda” (E.H. Personal communication on 18.02.2016). The regime controlled the press and the radio (HIA, DSM, sygn. 158, scan 7-8). There were propaganda posters “all around the towns” (W.R Personal communication on 13.02.2016) and Film Chronicles screened in cinemas outlining the successes of the regime, however, “these [film chronicles] were quite popular, as they were not as pushy” (J.K. Personal communication on 05.02.2016). The aim of this chapter is to analyse all three aforementioned propagandist media (press, propaganda film and posters) and identify their goals, while demonstrating the legitimising use of nationalism in the initial period between 1945 and 1948.

The three major objectives that the regime’s propaganda aimed to achieve were to first and foremost establish and propagate the regime’s founding myth –liberation by the Soviet

Army achieved by the fraternal struggle of Poles and Russians against Germans. Secondly, the regime aimed to discredit the pre-war anti-German guerrilla forces – Home Army mostly – and introduce itself as the major force that resisted the German occupation. Thirdly, propaganda aimed to instil in society attachment to the so-called Recovered Territories as the ancient Polish and “Piast” lands, and finally to promote the new social, political and economic system. In these goals it is possible to observe the dual identity of Polish communists – most of these objectives derived from, and aimed to enforce, national sentiment. Socialism was praised, however; especially in the period between 1945 and 1948, it was strongly intertwined in the official propaganda with patriotism. With the growing pressure for the sovietisation of Poland, the regime abandoned nationalist sentiments in its propaganda; however, with the gradual erosion of the regime post-1953, nationalist elements gradually returned to the official narrative, to be finally re-introduced in 1956 (Eisler, 2015).

Friendship with USSR and hostility towards the West

As members of a Soviet-installed and backed regime, Polish communists from early on used propaganda to glorify the Polish-Soviet “friendship”. The USSR, Soviet Army and Joseph Stalin appear frequently, with a positive commentary – in many cases economic and military assistance – in communist-controlled media. The first number of newly established newspaper – the Workers’ Tribune (Trybuna Robotnicza, here after TR) on 1 January 1945 reported on the “USSR’s beautiful gift for Warsaw – 50 000 tonnes of flour,” an “expression of deepest and most sincere friendship of the nations of USSR to the Polish nation” (TR, 1945 nr. 1-1/12, p. 2). The next day, the newspaper openly played a nationalist and revanchist tune by using slogans like “the Great Revenge approaches” and “death to Germans [sic]” (TR, 1945, nr. 2-2/12). Such blend of praise of the USSR and hatred for Germans appears frequently in communist propaganda. The USSR “hurrying to aid the Polish people” by sending medical supplies (TR, 1945 nr. 3-3/12, p. 1) is contrasted with “devils from hell” and “servants of internationalist bourgeoisie [Germans]” (TR, 1945 nr. 3-3/12, p. 2). The same cheerful approach to the Soviet Union is expressed in early film chronicles, which reported on the signing of the Polish-Soviet treaty of mutual assistance where the Prime Minister Edward Osóbka-Morawski claims the pact was only “a formal acknowledgement of this friendship and cooperation that has been born and that grows stronger every day. Long live the eternal friendship of Polish and Soviet nations! Long live the great Soviet Union!” (PKF 45/8).

As the German defeat approached, the Soviet Union and the Soviet Army assumed a role not only of “friends” but also liberators that “saved Europe’s civilisation from fascist organisers of [anti-Jewish] pogroms” (TR, 1945, nr. 67-1/29). On the 5th May the TR published an anonymous account of a “first encounter” written by H.Z. where he claimed he immediately recognized a Soviet officer but “not from his uniform, or his beret, but from his face, his eyes that were good and cheerful” (TR, 1945 nr. 70-4/29, p. 3). The “cheerful” figure of a Soviet officer served to reinforce the image of USSR as a “stronghold of peace and freedom” (TR, 1945 nr. 255-7/30, p. 3). In 1946 the propaganda still officially praised the USSR and its army and proliferated the anti-German sentiment, but the new element was introduced – reports of crises and turmoil in the west, particularly in the US (TR 1946 nr. 3-3/31, p. 2; nr. 4-4/31, p. 3) and also mentions that the pope “prayed for germans [sic]” (TR, 1946 nr. 4-4/31, p.4). Britain was accused of “whipping up a majority with the use of the military, police and fraud” in the Greek elections (TR 1946 nr. 91—28/28, p. 1). Simultaneously, the newspaper criticized the Allies for objections concerning the treatment of Germans being resettled from Poland (TR, 1946 nr.3-3/31, p. 3).

In 1947, the October Revolution received substantial attention of the press for the first time in the regime press (TR, 1947 nr, 307-7/29, p. 1). In 1948, the regime propaganda was largely focused on the upcoming merger of the Polish Workers’ and Polish Socialist Parties; however, the Soviet Union was still praised as “the strongest guarantee of her [Poland’s] independence” (TR, 1948, nr.192-7/29, p. 5). In 1949, the TR dedicated the entire number to the Soviet Army on the anniversary of its creation (23.02), while in previous years it received only a small mention. From 1949 onwards, the propaganda became much more forceful and openly praising of Stalin, which was not the case between 1945 and 1948. Claims such as “Stalin is our leader and guide, thus our ideals, our ranks, invincible” (TR, 1950 nr. 200-1/45, p. 2) were made. Stalin also appeared on propaganda poster, alongside Bierut, with text claiming that “Polish-Soviet friendship is peace, independence and happy tomorrow of our Fatherland” (see fig. K1). At the same time, anti-Western propaganda assumed a sharper tone. On one of the posters, Truman and Eisenhower lean over *Mein Kampf* and the caption reads “teaching has not gone to waste” (see fig. K2). The visual outlay of these posters aimed to evoke certain feelings. Figures of Stalin and Bierut appear stately, against a backdrop of the Polish and Soviet flags, blue sky and a silhouette of the Soviet style skyscraper (most likely the future Palace of Culture and Science), while Truman and Eisenhower are caricatured, sharply contoured and sinister.

In 1949, Radio Free Europe was established and in 1952 the Polish section was created (HIA, Dokumenty Stanisława Mikołajczyka), which was also manifest in the regime's anti-western propaganda. On one poster, the radio transmitter is placed in the jaws of a dark sinister creature, wearing a German helmet with a swastika on it. The commentary reads "An idiot who listens with such bliss. Whom does he help? Our mortal enemies." On another poster, a speaker of Radio Free Europe's head is filled with contents of flasks labelled "blackmail", "lies", "mendacity", "gossip" and "slander" (see fig. K3 & K4). On the other hand, the regime-issued posters that encouraged people to read soviet magazines "as they facilitate the realisation of the six-year plan" and that "the Polish nation sees the Soviet Union as a bastion of peace and progress" (see fig. K5). A different poster from 1954 represents the Soviet Union as a white dove of peace (see fig. K6). Yet another feature in Polish communist propaganda was the Colorado potato beetle, presented as "provocation of warmongers" (the capitalist West, namely the United States, PKF 50/25) who sabotaged Polish crops.

The relationship with the USSR and hostility towards the West were presented mostly in the press and propaganda posters. The Polish Film Chronicles (Polskie Korniki Filmowe – PKF) do feature anti-Western propaganda; however, its intensity cannot compete with images presented in press or on posters. Similarly, the pro-Soviet propaganda was as J.K put it "not as pushy" in the Film Chronicles (05.02.2016). The Chronicles mention "stout-hearted fellows from Murmansk" (PKF 46/20), but the image of the USSR in those short documentaries seem to focus on industrial efforts in the USSR, like irrigation of the Karakum (PKF 48/04), Magnitogorsk industrial complex (PKF 47/04), monetary reform (PKF 48/05), fishing (PKF 49/29) or the re-building and expansion of Moscow (PKF 49/31). It presents an image of industrial grandeur, without a praising commentary in most cases. The ostentatious praise of the Soviet Union and Stalin can only be observed in a documentary concerning the death of Joseph Stalin (the longest documentary of that kind of the period – 26 minutes of running time) in 1953, where Stalin was called "our best and wisest friend" (PKF 53/11-12) and the Soviet Union depicted as a model for future developments in Poland. After his death, in honour of The Great Ensign of Peace and the Marshal of the Revolution (TR, 1951 nr. 50-23/32, p. 1), one of Polish industrial centres, Katowice, was even renamed as Stalinogród (City of Stalin).

The anti-Western and pro-Soviet propaganda was not the only lip-service to the USSR. Through the images and examples of Soviet help and assistance to Poland and through the portrayal of the sinister (often compared to Hitlerist) and warmongering attitudes of the

West, the communist regime attempted to legitimise and propagate the founding myth of People's Poland – a friendship between the Polish and Soviet nations that developed throughout the war and the subsequent liberation of Poland by the Soviet army. The positive image of the USSR and its army aimed also on minimising the negative attitude that resulted from a strong Soviet military presence in Poland.

Regime self-presentation

Patriotism and anti-German underground

As a foreign-backed regime, whose top members fled Poland for Soviet Union in 1939 (Esiler, 2015), communists felt alien, isolated and vulnerable to claims of illegitimacy. Thus, the official regime propaganda aimed to present the communist efforts in the anti-German struggle, while discrediting the major resistance movement of WWII in Poland – the Home Army (Armia Krajowa – AK). The communist paramilitary formation the People's Army (Armia Ludowa – AL) was a rather small and insignificant guerrilla force. Norman Davies claimed that it had never exceeded 100 000 troops (1999, p. 926), while Gontarczyk argues the entire communist underground totalled 5 000 men, and only about 3000 of them fought in the People's Army (2013, p. 339), while the Home Army at its peak enlisted 300 000 troops (Muzeum AK). Therefore, the regime attempted to inflate its role in the anti-German resistance movement. The most famous poster aimed to achieve that presented the comparison between the People's Army and the Home Army. The communist guerrilla force is presented as a “giant” and the Home Army as a “damn reactionary midget” (see fig. K7), implying that the communist guerrilla forces vastly outnumbered the Home Army and played a much bigger role in the resistance movement. The anti-German guerrillas did not cease to exist after the end of the war; they remained in conspiracy and fought the communist regime (Prażmowska, 2008). In an attempt to discredit these troops, communists presented them as Nazi collaborators who continued the Hitlerist tradition. On one poster, they are presented in German uniforms, wearing swastika bands on their shoulders and one of them even has an appearance of the most dreaded SS Totenkopf uniform. The press reported on “fratricide as a proof of bestiality of Polish reactionaries” (TR, 1945 nr. 190-3/30, p. 3) or that “reactionaries took orders from Germans [sic]” (TR, 1945 nr. 191-4/30, p. 2). Such attempts not only aimed to discredit the non-communist guerrillas; the top party officials during the period of up to 1943 supervised a special tasks unit, whose main purpose was to gather intelligence (movements, names and addresses) about the Home Army and deliver it to the Gestapo (HIA,

DSM, sygn. 158, scan 433); thus, these attempts can also be viewed as an attempt to divert attention.

At the same time, the regime's press published reports outlining the anti-German struggle of the communists giving an overall account (TR, 1945 nr. 6-6/12, p. 1) and in specific cases, like economic sabotage in Nowa Wieś (TR, 1945 nr. 7-7/12, p. 2). The TR often published slogans like "the PPR (Polish Workers' Party) – party of the working class, champion of national liberation" (1945 nr. 67-1/29, p. 5). The film chronicles celebrated the communist military effort of the Kościuszko Division (Soviet sponsored Polish division within the Red Army, formed on the USSR territory) at the battle of Lenino in 1945. These soldiers marched "straight towards Poland" and did not "soil the banner carrying our slogans: 'Honor and fatherland, for our and your freedom'" (PKF 45/30). At the same time, the regime praised labour and appealed to a sense of national solidarity through slogans like "every good Pole should cooperate on rebuilding the State" (TR, 1945nr. 71-5/29, p. 1) or "the reconstruction of the state in its new borders rushes thorough the blood of every Polish patriot" (TR, 1946 nr. 3-3/31, p. 3). It is possible to observe that the communists in the initial period appealed frequently to the national and patriotic sentiments of Poles, while at the same time presenting themselves as fighters for national liberation, inflating their role in liberating the country in an attempt to project the image of the regime being a patriotic "camp of progress" set against "the camp of obscurantism" (TR, 1946 nr. 115-26/28, p. 3).

Comparison with the pre-war regime and praise of socialism

The new regime, through its propaganda, attempted to discredit the government of pre-war Poland and justify and strengthen its position through comparisons with the previous regime that was always presented in a negative way. An essential part of that appeal was the post war reconstruction of Poland devastated by the war. The call for a rebuilding effort struck a patriotic tone from the very beginning such as when the film chronicles announced the rebuilding of the city of Białystok and claimed that "while the Polish soldier fights for motherland, you shall rebuild her!" (PKF 45/03). The claim was supported by the press, which announced that "we [the new government] shall rebuild [Poland] faster and more justly than others" (TR, 1945 nr. 72-6/29, p. 1). The rebuilding of Warsaw, nearly levelled to the ground after the uprising of 1944, was among the first announcements that the government had made in 1945 (PKF 45/04). The post-war reconstruction of Warsaw was indeed a great endeavour undertaken by the communists and, to boost national pride, the regime announced

that “the entire world admires Poland” (TR, 1945 nr. 301-23/29, p. 1) for her efforts. The rebuilding of Warsaw assumed a very important position in regime’s self-portrayal. On various occasions, like in the case of building the so called Marszałkowska Residential District (Marszałkowska Dzielnica Mieszkaniowa – MDM), the regime’s propaganda boasted that the MDM would house 45 000 people, 200 magnificent stores, 11 schools, 2 hospitals, 4 cinemas, 5 theatres, 3 stations of the underground rail”; new houses would have “all the features of modern house living”, all of course in stark contrast to pre-war Warsaw (PKF 50/36). In some cases, the regime propagated promises that it would not or simply could not keep, like the rebuilding of the Royal Castle announced in 1950 with intended completion in 1954 (PKF 50/26) (it only materialised in 1970) or construction of metro for “socialist Warsaw” (PKF 51/02), which was completed after the fall of the regime. Nevertheless, these grand projects appealed to national pride, like the Royal Castle, and allowed the regime to compare itself positively with the pre-war regime.

Such comparisons were not only present in the plain of large state projects. The regime used every opportunity to emphasize social achievements and improvements it introduced, which can be frequently observed in propaganda. In 1946, the regime announced that holidays in Spas was no longer “a privilege of the chosen few” (PKF 46/21). New practice “children colonies” were introduced and the regime quickly announced that “never before has childcare assumed such scale” since half-a-million children took part in these holiday excursions (PKF 46/26). State-sponsored seaside holidays for children became yet another occasion to discredit the pre-war regime since “many would spend their lives not even having a glimpse at the sea in previous Poland” (PKF 51/30). Such comparisons concerned every aspect of life in new Poland. Rzeszów, for example, “before the war was a neglected little town with narrow streets and awry houses” but in new Poland “old houses were demolished, in their place rise modern residential districts” and the city begun its rapid industrialisation (PKF 52/03). Electrification of the countryside was presented as yet another improvement unachievable in the pre-war Poland (PKF 46/36), which also failed to educate its population, leaving the communists to deal with “shameful legacy of capitalist rule”, which of course was dealt with swiftly and effectively (PKF 50/44). Even the workers previously neglected by the state got the care they deserved, like miners who had an unlimited access to Wincenty Pstrowski’s Preventorium for black lung disease. The chronicle emphasizes that in most cases patients were repatriates from France where conditions in mines were much worse and black lung disease rated six times higher (PKF 50/16).

The new regime presented itself in a positive light compared to the previous regime; national appeals appear frequently throughout the entire period between 1944 and 1956, even after the official nationalist rhetoric was abandoned by the party post-1948. Examples of improvements aimed to demonstrate not only the superiority of the socialist system over capitalism, to present it as a better alternative for Poles as a nation. However, while still carrying an ideological charge, official propaganda attempted to appeal to national sentiments and present the new system as one that aimed to advance and improve the national cause.

Recovered Territories

The post-war borders of Poland, as mentioned in previous chapters, were different from the pre-1939 ones. Poland lost a significant portion of her territories in the East and was compensated with German territories of Silesia, Pomerania and part of East Prussia. The recovered territories played a major role in the regime's propaganda. In order to justify these territorial changes, the regime resorted to references from Polish medieval history. These lands were presented as "anciently Polish" and "returning to the Motherland after centuries of German occupation" (PKF 45/05; 45/12). Rather than conquered, these territories were presented as "liberated" (TR, 1946 nr. 1-1/31, p. 2). References to ancient Piast lands were made with claims of Poland returning "to the sea" (PKF 45/07). On one propaganda poster, the figure of the first Polish king – Bolesław Chrobry (the Brave) – stands against a backdrop presenting new Polish borders with a commentary "we have not been here since yesterday, we used to reach far into the West" (see fig. K9). References to the Piast legacy (see fig. K10) and following the "trail of Wrymouth", Polish prince Bolesław Krzywousty (Wrymouth) ruled in the 12th century known for his wars with Germany, see fig. K11). Sometimes the propaganda stretched Polish historical borders to Szczecin (Stettin – only briefly within the Polish state in 10-11th centuries), calling it "the bastion of Bolesławs [greatest early medieval Polish rulers carried that name]" (see fig. K12).

The emphasis was also placed of Recovered Territories' importance to national economy (PKF 45/22) and appeals were made to encourage Polish settlement on these territories; as one chronicle presented it, these "territories torn away from the enemy need to be rejuvenated by a stream of Polishness" and it was in "the West that the future of the [Polish] Republic would be decided" (PKF 45/18). In order to emphasize the success of the regime, the propaganda focused on displaying Polish successes mostly in the Recovered Territories. Thus, "Polish engineering thought" triumphed in Wałbrzych's coking plant

“Bolesław Chrobry” (PKF 49/22) and first female *wójt* [communal administrator], Helena Wyrwał, was nominated in Lower Silesia to present the social progress and emancipation of women (PKF 49/07). The regime encouraged migration to Recovered Territories, especially agricultural, claiming that farmers would receive more and better land (PKF 47/20). On another occasion in 1947 the official propaganda boasted that 6 million Poles worked on the Recovered Territories, which “sealed the Polishness of these lands” (PKF 47/18). In 1948 the regime organised a large propaganda event – the Exhibition of Recovered Territories (PKF 48/33), which aimed to demonstrate the Polish history and achievements on these lands. The announcing poster alluded to the ancient Slavic mythology – the cuboid pole showing an eagle and workers on its left facet and a face on the right (see Ap. I Fig. 13) is an obvious allusion to the ancient Slavic god Svetovid, who was represented in a cuboid form with four faces directed to four sides of the world. Such an iconographic depiction served to emphasize the ancient Polish claim to these lands. The propaganda concerning the Recovered Territories was primarily driven by nationalist tones, emphasizing Polish victory over the German occupants, yielding territorial gains (while the lost territories in the East received no mention). Furthermore, the expulsion of Germans is also portrayed in the regime’s propaganda; one of the film chronicles fares well to Germans “for ever” (PKF 46/10), emphasising the totality of Polish victory and its security – an outright appeal to nationalism

Attitudes and responses

Propaganda served three major purposes – to convince Poles of Polish Soviet friendship; to promote the regime through negative comparisons with the pre-war regime; and to instil a sense of attachment to Poland’s new western borders. To all these, aspects the regime paid a considerable attention and resources through the press, posters and documentary films. Openly nationalist tunes and appeals aimed to reach a wider audience in a society that was, in general, rather suspicious of the new regime.

The first purpose of the propaganda – inspiring positive feelings towards USSR, Soviet Army and leadership – was a complete failure of the regime. As J.K. recalls, “the hatred towards the Soviets was widespread” (Personal communication on 05.02.2016). Stanisław Mikołajczyk’s secret informant in Poland reported that “hatred towards Russians in Poland is simply frightening and is present in all social echelons and classes” (HIA, DSM, sygn. 158, scan 9). The fear of persecution for open defiance resulted in official compliance, while anti-Soviet humour was widespread as a form of defiance. Mikołajczyk’s informant

gives an example of a joke circulating in late 1940s “Why all the dredges have been removed from Vistula? They will be used to deepen Polish-Soviet friendship” (HIA, DSM, sygn. 158, scan 140). J.U. claimed that “no one believed that Soviets were our friends” (Personal communication on 13.02.2016). The failure of this propaganda objective was confirmed by the overall results of the ethnographic study; the author encountered only one out of 3) interviewees positively inclined towards “Polish-Soviet friendship”; the remainder displayed outwardly negative attitudes as far as the USSR was concerned.

Secondly, the government attempted to present itself in a favourable light in order to gain popular acceptance. In this case, the communists also failed to achieve their goal. The main protégées of the regime – peasants and workers “hated the regime” (HIA, DSM, sygn. 158, scan 10). The dual identity was probably the most apparent in this case, as even party officials, after shouting propaganda slogans from the tribunes, “‘took skin off’ and mocked their own slogans” (HIA, DSM, sygn. 158, scan 10). The president, Bolesław Bierut, was one of “the most hated men in the country” (T.K. Personal communication 12.02.2016). Yet the fear of persecution in this case revealed the dual identity among Poles – officially compliant, some “were even forgiven for joining the party, if they did not do in their neighbours” (HIA, DSM, sygn. 158, scan 10). Yet again, humour served as a means of private defiance. Jokes like “what’s the difference between a cloth and the government? You can wipe your hands with a cloth and your ass with the government” or “Where does comrade Bierut live? At the rear of Marshall Stalin’s” (HIA, DSM, sygn. 158, scan 15). Ethnographic interviews revealed even more radical opinions. J.K. called the regime “those red sons of bitches” or “that red plague” (Personal communication on 05.02.2016); others like T.K. or E.H. used the word “traitors” (Personal communications on 12 and 18.02.2016). Most likely, the hardship of everyday life stood in stark contrast to the official propaganda. One of Mikołajczyk’s informants claimed that, under the communist regime in Poland, “the social gains of the working class vane” and poverty and exploitation are widespread (HIA, DSM, sygn. 158, scan 68). Even the nationalist undertones of the regime’s propaganda, could not win them widespread support. However, it is important to notice that Władysław Gomułka was widely popular on account of his defiance of Stalin; the popular opinion about him was that “Gomułka was a communist, but a Polish communist”. Thus the nation responded positively to expressions of nationalism, even when they came from top- ranking communist officials.

The only propaganda success of the regime could be observed in reference to the Recovered Territories. As early as January 1949, there were reports of “growing attachment to the Recovered Territories” (HIA, DSM, sygn. 158, scan 73). It is rather difficult, however, to solely contribute this success to communist propaganda. E. H’s claim probably best described the general sentiment of these lands as “a compensation [for territories in the East] we deserved. Furthermore, there is physical evidence testifying that these lands were Polish once” (18.02.2016). Most likely, the propaganda’s success was due to the fact that the point of view it tried to present was not so farfetched and the general population could not easily gague its falsity. However, as E.H. claimed, there were buildings all across these territories that could be identified as Polish since they were commissioned by Piast princes and completed while these land still had both political, cultural and ethnic ties with Poland – various Piast necropolises being an example. Furthermore, it appealed to Poland’s past, with all her myths and traditions. This area of the regime propaganda was solely nationalist in its substance, and thus could appeal more easily to larger portion of the population.

Conclusion

Communist propaganda in Poland was largely rejected. Only the narrative of the Recovered Territories gained popularity. The main issue, however, is that propaganda contained nationalist undertones throughout the period between 1944 and 1956. After 1948, the party might have fought for “peace and socialism” but it was always paired with the “greatness of our beloved Fatherland” (TR, 1951 nr. 118-1/35, p. 1). Polish communists did not try to promote solely the ideology of either socialism or nationalism. An analysis of the regime’s propaganda reveals a blend of socialist/communist ideology and advancement of the national cause. The regime emphasized Poland’s political isolation before the war and believed this to be the root cause of the defeat in 1939. The new ally was also Poland’s protector, and thus contributed to national security (TR, 1946 nr.1-1/31, p. 2). After the war, the regime could exploit two sentiments, anti-German and anti-Western, and such attempts are observable in the official regime narrative. However, even appeals to nationalism were not successful in many cases. The monopoly on information was not equal to shaping reality. Millions of Poles were exposed to harsh and worsening economic conditions, which was expressed in a popular joke “Why is it so bad if it is so good?” (J.K. 05.02.2016). Millions of Poles repatriated from the Soviet Union, or who survived the occupation of eastern borderlands between 1939 and 1941, were living testimonies to falsity of official propaganda. Poles were also exposed to Soviet troops stationed in Poland and the image of a good and

cheerful Soviet officer could not stand against the commonly observed image of “drunk brutes” (W.R. 13.02.2016). Moreover, as reports from Poland suggest, many party officials did not take the propaganda slogans seriously; they performed their official duty, but even to them, most propaganda appeared absurd and they mocked it. While an attitude of official compliance and obedience was prevalent in the public sphere, numerous anti-regime jokes confirmed the private resistance, if only in humour. The propaganda as a nation-building tool failed: rather than uniting the people with the regime through numerous appeals to national values and patriotism, it united the nation in mockery of it. The only plausible narrative, that of Recovered Territories, gained popularity, this can be ascribed to popular acceptance of *fait accompli*, since Poland was in no position to overturn these changes, and to the fact that it appealed to the distant history of independence and medieval grandeur, striking openly nationalist tones. Only these tones resonated successfully with Poles.

Chapter VIII: Church and State

Introduction

The post-1944 regime, advocating the Marxist and materialist doctrine, had a very complex and strained relationship with Polish religious institutions and with the Catholic Church in particular. The antipathy of the Catholic Church was the only consistent policy pursued by the Polish communist government, although the struggle varied in its intensity and tactics, depending on political and social circumstances (Dudek & Gryz, 2003). The issue of relations between the Church and the State in Poland has received considerable academic attention, which resulted in analyses of both the Stalinist period (Fijałkowska, 1999; Noszczak, 2008) and of the entire communist period (Dudek & Gryz, 2003; Żaryn, 2004). During both the Stalinist period and post-1956, the regime attempted to eradicate any influence of religion in public life (and that was not limited to the Catholic Church) and to establish a new secular identity, as Jakub Berman asserted when interviewed by Torańska (1985). The attitude towards the Catholic Church (and other Christian denominations) in the period investigated by this dissertation can be divided in two distinct chronological phases: first the period of tolerance and cooperation during the consolidation of the regime (1944-1948) followed by a period of open persecution, the destruction of Church's agency, and its subjugation to the state (1949-1956). The turbulent events of 1956 allowed the Church to regain and reassert its position within the Polish society, as well as forcing the state to abandon once and for all the tactic of open confrontation and persecution, which was replaced by tactics of surveillance and invigilation (Żaryn, 2004).

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the two distinct phases of communist tactics towards the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations and link them to the nation-building project launched by the communists in 1944. The dual identity in the case of Church and state relations did not manifest itself in a deviation from the Soviet model but rather on an individual level. While the state pursued and enforced anti-religious policies, individual members of the party administration cultivated Catholic traditions in secret and defiance of official party guidelines (Musiał & Szarek, 2008). Acknowledging the existence of other strains of Christianity, this chapter will focus mainly on Catholicism, as it was both statistically (Noszczak, 2008) and historically (Dudek & Gryz, 2003) the most significant in Polish history. In order to investigate this issue, this chapter will provide an historical overview of developments that elevated the Catholic Church in Polish society prior to 1944. This chapter will then examine the persecution phase, which climaxed in 1953 and finally failed in 1956. Illustrating the important point to draw out of these two phases is the

communist party's realisation of the inevitability of its dual identity; the persecution and effective elimination of religious influence from the public sphere was an essential part of the communist project, rejected by Polish society and moderated by the authorities post-1956.

Historical overview

The origins of Polish statehood are closely intertwined with Catholicism. The first historic ruler of Poland – Mieszko I – was baptised in 966, thus launching the Christianisation of his domain (Labuda, 1999). Even the first official document mentioning the Polish state can be found in the Vatican Archives – known as *Dagome iudex*. In this document from about 991, a duke called “Misca” offers his state (called Schinesghe) under the protection of the Holy See; the historical coincidence of dates allow us to probably identify Misca as Mieszko (Labuda, 1999, p. 160-161). In year 1000, the Polish state received its own ecclesiastical metropolis, based in Gniezno, and church administration in form of bishoprics were established in Kraków, Kołobrzeg and Wrocław, with the additional bishopric in Poznań, directly controlled by the Holy See existing from 968, confirming the political independence of the Polish state (Banaszak, 1989, p. 55). Further co-existence of the Church and state followed in a pattern similar to other European countries (Labuda, 1999).

The next milestone in the Church-state relations occurred in the 14th century, with the personal union between Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Prior to union with Poland, Lithuanian monarchs followed paganism, however their dominion stretched over vast territories inhabited by followers of the Orthodox Church (Jasienica, 1963/2008). The Polish clergy was charged with the task of Christianisation, thus expanding its influence eastwards. However, the Polish-Lithuanian union warranted that the state (established as formal federation by 1569) become religiously diversified, which became even more significant with the period of Reformation. Long-lasting religious diversity warranted that the period of religious Reformation was not marked with violence and persecution, which contrasted the patterns observed anywhere else in Europe at that time (Tazbir, 1967). By the second half of the 16th century, another event served to reinforce the role of the Catholic Church in Poland - the death of the last male heir of the Jagiellonian dynasty in 1572, beginning the period of elected monarchs until the third partition of Poland in 1795. During that period, monarchical succession was not determined by primogeniture, but by the will of the nobility (szlachta), who elected the king after his predecessor's death (Jasienica, 1963/2008). With the death of the last Jagiellon in 1572, the question arose, who should formally serve as the sovereign in

the absence of a king (interregnum)? This task was entrusted to the Polish Primate (archbishop of Gniezno), who would serve as *interrex* during every *interregnum* that occurred post-1572 and periodically fused the religious and secular authority, while the Catholic hierarchy served as a custodian of state integrity (Jasienica, 1963/2008).

As an ethnically and religiously diverse state, Poland was susceptible to calls of unification and these were provided by the Catholic Church and the counter-Reformation (Tazbir, 1982, p. 50). In fact, such attempts at religious unification were effected in 1596 by Union of Brześć (Jasienica, 1967/2007a). The union warranted that the Orthodox Church within the Polish-Lithuanian state should keep its rites, calendar and language, while accepting the primacy of Rome. Likowski argues that, by the end of the 17th century, all Orthodox hierarchs within the borders of the Polish-Lithuanian state joined the union (1907, p. 337) and his conclusion is supported by Kłoczkowski (1992), who however argues that the partitions and more than a hundred years of persecution were able to some extent revert the gains of the 1596 union of Churches.

In the turbulent 17th century, Poland-Lithuania was invaded by non-Catholic powers like Sweden, Russia and the Ottoman Empire (Jasienica 1967/2007a and b), which served to reinforce Catholic identity (Smith, 1991). Following the last partition of Poland, the Church served as a reminder of lost statehood and as a protector of national values (Prażmowska, 2011); the Catholic Church was always supportive and often engaged in Polish struggle for independence (Banaszak, 1991). With such a deep historical and cultural history, it was natural that the Catholic Church would assume a significant role in the new Polish state that re-emerged after 1918. The most obvious expression of the close relationship between Church and State was the concordat signed between the Republic of Poland and the Holy See on 10 February 1925 and ratified on 23 April the same year (Dz. U. 1925 nr. 47 poz. 324). The terms of the *Concordat* were probably the most favourable in Europe (Rzepecki, 2011). Article I allowed the Church to “freely exercise its ecclesiastical authority and jurisdiction as well as administration of its affairs and its property according to God’s and canon law” (reference). Article II allowed for free communication between Polish clergy and the Vatican and issuing of pastoral letters and directives. The government obliged itself to assist in carrying out the ecclesiastical decrees under Article IV, on the other side the Holy See agreed under Article IX that “no part of the Republic of Poland should not belong to a bishop whose

seat is located outside the borders of the Polish State” and while asserting that the nomination of bishops and archbishops is a prerogative solely reserved to the Pope “His Holiness agreed to consult the President of the Republic before nominating ... to assure the President has no issues, of political nature, to raise against that nomination” in Article XI.

These conditions ensured that the Catholic Church played an important role in Polish social and political life. The *Concordat* of 1925 embodied these traditions and reaffirmed the role of the Church. The communist project launched in Poland after 1944 had to take the Catholic Church into its political and social calculations, having in mind its prominence in Poland. The new project, although infused with ethnically based nationalism, drew heavily from Marxist doctrine, which was irreconcilable with religion (Kenez, 2003, p. 887). Thus, the government would display hostility towards the Church from the very beginning of its existence and eventually engage in a struggle with the Catholic Church: a struggle that would last until the fall of the communist regime in Poland in which the Church played a significant role (Żaryn, 2004).

Marx’s critique of religion and papacy’s critique of socialism

The relationship between the Marxist ideology and religion was marked by hostility from the very beginning of the Marxist movement. It was Karl Marx who famously called religion the “opium of the people” (Marx, 1844, p. x). In his critique he not only focused on Catholicism, but on all religious cults, claiming they provided an “illusory happiness” and a distraction from the real problems the workers faced (Marx, 1844). In his article concerning the Jewish question in Europe, he maintained that religion would always oppose the revolutionary movement and concluded “how is religious opposition made impossible? By abolishing religion” (Marx, 1844a). In his *Capital* vol. 1 (Chapter I, Section 4) Marx directly linked religion to the “bourgeois” system and argued that abolition of the old regime required the abolition of the cults it had produced. Therefore, anti-religious attitude was at the very core of Marxist ideals, warranting that states adopting the Marx’s doctrine would also, by default, attempt to eliminate religion from public life.

If Marx’s doctrine was openly anti-religious, then Catholic doctrine was equally anti-Marxist and anti-socialist. There are three papal encyclicals openly condemning the Marxist-inspired socialist movement: *Quod Apostolici Muneris*, *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. The first one, published in 1878, is blatantly clear on the papacy’s stand on the matter. Leo XIII claimed that:

the deadly plague that is creeping into the very fibers of human society and leading it on to the verge of destruction (...) We speak of that sect of men who, under various and almost barbarous names, are called socialists, communists, or nihilists. (1878, sec. 1).

In *Rerum Novarum*, Leo XIII contemplated the hard conditions of workers, yet the socialist doctrine is for him a “remedy ... manifestly against justice” (1891, sec. 6). In *Quadragesimo Anno*, published exactly 40 years after *Rerum Novarum*, Pius XI argued that socialism and Catholicism cannot coexist, although acknowledging some of its beneficial aspects, which are, however, not specified:

If Socialism, like all errors, contains some truth (which, moreover, the Supreme Pontiffs have never denied), it is based nevertheless on a theory of human society peculiar to itself and irreconcilable with true Christianity. Religious socialism, Christian socialism, are contradictory terms; no one can be at the same time a good Catholic and a true socialist (1931, sec. 120).

It is therefore evident not only that Marxism and socialism were against religion, but that Catholicism was vehemently anti-socialist and anti-Marxist; their coexistence within a state was impossible and they were bound to clash. Since Catholicism was so strong in Poland, and the episcopate loyal and freely communicating with the Vatican (under the terms of 1925 *Concordat*), it was likely to oppose the new regime.

The initial period (1944-1948)

Legislation, propaganda and agencies dealing with the Church

The position of the Catholic Church within the context of the post-war changes was most aptly summarised by Stefan Kisielewski, who argued that “communists, and furthermore Russian leaders, realized the importance of the Church in Polish life and understood that without the Church no Polish statehood, even the Marxist-socialist one, could not be built. At all, let alone in those times” (1990, pp. 72-3). Indeed, before the communists could consolidate their power, they followed a policy of non-confrontation (at least on a large scale) with the Catholic Church. In 1945, Bierut was supposed to have said “that no-one will persecute the Church in Poland” and that he himself had to attend mass every now and then (Łukasiewicz, 1987, p. 40) This section will thus explore the Communist government’s tactics and relations with the Church during the period of consolidation of power, during which time

the Catholic Church and the (officially) Marxist state coexisted rather peacefully and in fact, the Catholic Church proved instrumental in securing the Recovered Territories by establishing ecclesiastical structures for the regime (Jaworska, 2013).

The policy of non-confrontation was first expressed at the very beginning of the new regime and within one of its central aims – land reform. The decree on land reform issued by the Polish Committee of National Liberation openly stated that “the legal status of the landed estates belonging to the Catholic Church, or other religious communes, shall be determined by the Legislative Sejm” (Dz. U. 1944 nr. 4 poz. 17). Thus, for the time being, the religious property remained unaffected by nationalisation. However, soon after that apparent declaration of non-confrontation, the government unilaterally broke the *Concordat* of 1925, motivated by the fact that pope Pius XII appointed the bishop of Danzig Carl Maria Splett as Apostolic Administrator of Chełmno diocese. There was also an Apostolic Administrator for German Catholics appointed to Gniezno-Poznań archdiocese. The government claimed that this was a blatant violation of the *Concordat*, namely Article X, which expressly forbade any foreign bishop ecclesiastical authority on Polish state territory. On 12 September 1945, the Council of Ministers decided it was no longer in force, which was published in *the Voice of the People* (Głos Ludu) two days later (Rzepecki, 2011, p. 290-291). These actions and the phrasing of the Article 1e of the land reform decree demonstrate that the regime was prepared to confront the Church, but found itself too weak and isolated to attack the Church immediately after its takeover of Poland. Simultaneously, the regime issued three decrees that created a secular administration and authority, by introducing civil registers, over birth, marriage and death certificates, previously maintained by the Church (Dz. U. 1945 nr. 48 poz. 270, 271, 272). The party line was to allow the Church to operate unobstructed until the regime was consolidated enough to strike (Marecki & Musiał, 2007, p. 6).

The regime's hostility, from the very beginning, was further expressed by the creation of a department in the Ministry of Public security, the central coordination of the repressive apparatus. Initially, it was Department I; by late 1945, it was reorganised and Department V (Socio-Political) was created. Within it, Division V was established to supervise the clergy. Division V was subdivided into three sections: 1) dealing with Roman-Catholicism; 2) responsible for Greek Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical and other protestant churches and 3) supervising religious organisations. They operated under the supervision of Julia Brystygier (dubbed “bloody Luna”) until 1954 (Szwagrzyk, 2005, p. 34-35). The creation within the

repressive apparatus of units directly dealing with religious affairs highlights that the regime's intentions were hostile from the very beginning.

These hostile intentions were partially expressed during the transitional period; however, the regime needed the Church's legitimacy, and therefore, the Church took part in national celebrations, rituals and festivities until 1949 (Osęka, 2007). Public hospitals were "blessed" by Catholic priests (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 826, p. 47) and official celebrations began with a mass and sometimes a blessing of military banners (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 841, p. 2-3). In 1945, on 3 May (anniversary of the constitution of 1791) in all churches masses were held, thanking God for the liberation of the country, which was widely publicised by the regime (PKF 45/11). Moreover, not only in Poland but across the Soviet Bloc, the communist regimes found it necessary, at least temporarily, to use religion as a tool for maintaining social order in the period of transition (Mirescu, 2009, p. 58-59).

Corpus Christi was also celebrated with pomp and circumstance and the official propaganda announced that for the first time in six years "the bells tolled, prophesizing the truth of faith and liberty" (PKF 45/14). The same year, the 14th Pomeranian Division in Bydgoszcz, in the presence of the Marshall of Poland Michał "Rola" Żymierski, received their "blessed" banners (PKF 45/33). In 1946, celebrating the 155th anniversary of the 1791 constitution, high-ranking communist officials attended the mass in the Carmelite Church in Warsaw (PKF 1946/14) and on 22 July the same year, the Poniatowski Bridge in Warsaw was re-opened in a ceremony attended by Bierut himself and large priests "blessing" the newly reconstructed bridge (PKF 1946/24). In 1947 there was a state sponsored transition of ingress of the new bishop of Łódź (PKF 1947/18). In 1948, the Church as a positive feature disappeared from the official propaganda and in 1949, propaganda began to be openly hostile to the Catholic Church, having organised and transmitted gatherings condemning "the hostility of the politicized part of the clergy" (PKF 1949/15).

The reasons that the Church lent its legitimacy to the communist authority can be explained by the transitional nature of the communist regime: the Church officials could not be certain what form would the new regime assume, or how long would it last (Kenez, 2003, p. 884). Such an attitude was illustrated in a conversation between Gomułka and a priest in 1946, as Stanisław Mikołajczyk recalled. When asked by Gomułka "when will the Church finally agree with our government!?" the priest (although Mikołajczyk does not state his

name or position, it is possible to speculate that the priest was the Primate – August Hlond – the only cleric in a position to negotiate with the government) responded that

We have time. You know we have been in Poland for thousand years. After all, your party is less than three years old. Yes, we have time to wait; we are not impatient. And after all, we don't want to be hasty and make a new agreement because one will never know what will happen to you or the other people ruling your party. You will probably remember a very prominent Polish communist from before the war – Mr. Warski, as well as others who fled to Russia and later died in Russian concentration camps. We, as the Church, are dealing not with political matters, but with beliefs and morale of the People. Many generations will pass and many political systems will pass but the Church will remain the same. (HIA, DSM, sygn. 103 pp. 381-382)

It is apparent that Church officials were not certain about the longevity of the regime, but quite assured of the Church's position. Thus they decided not to confront the new authorities, resuming all public functions, following the tradition of Church's participation in public life. As the "priest" pointed out, Church would outlast the regime (as it did); therefore, the Church as an institution would not openly engage in a struggle with the government, nor would it enter any agreement with it. By claiming that the Church dealt with the "beliefs" and "morale" of the population, the "priest" implied that the Church would perform its ecclesiastical and public functions, in the same vein as it had done before the war. In fact, the Church even moved to exert its authority in the Recovered Territories.

The territories acquired post-1945 created a challenge for Polish communists, with a large German population (see Chapter IV) and virtually no Polish administration on these territories. The state found itself in a position to nationalise all the estates and property situated in the Recovered Territories. On 2 March 1945, the authorities issued a *Decree on abandoned and derelict property* (Dz. U. 1945 nr. 9 poz. 45), which was later awarded the status of a legislative act (Dz. U. 1945 nr. 17 poz. 97). In 1946, a *Decree on abandoned and post-German property* was issued, making the state the proprietor and administrator of all property found on the Recovered Territories. The 1945 bill also set up a *Liquidation Commission* to supervise the transfer of property to other state (and initially private) structures and organisations.

Almost simultaneously with the aforementioned legal proceedings, the Polish Catholic Church began establishing ecclesiastical structures on the Recovered Territories. Apostolic Administrators were appointed by the Polish primate August Hlond (who had in this case special procuration from the Holy See) in Gorzów Wielkopolski, Gdańsk, Wrocław, Olsztyn and Opole (Noszczak, 2008, p. 45). These nominations warranted that the Polish ecclesiastical administration in the Recovered Territories was established, even though German Catholic bishops, like Carl Maria Splett, were still officially holding their posts.

The establishment of the new ecclesiastical structure was intertwined with the process of the expulsion of Germans and re-settlement of Poles on these territories (see Chapter III). With the influx of Polish Catholic repatriates, the authorities were faced with the ever-growing demand for Catholic priests, who were also awarded a church building, which (under the bill of 6 May 1945) was state property.

Creating Church structures in the Recovered Territories – Church-State cooperation

The Catholic Church proved instrumental in establishing Polish authority in Recovered Territories (Zajac, 2005) and in fact the regime saw it as a tool of “re-polonising” its new territorial acquisitions (Chabasińska, 2009, p. 41). The letter of Szczecin Voivode (provincial administrator) to the Department V of the Ministry of Public Administration outlines that every priest arriving in the new diocese must receive “jurisdiction” from the local bishop and that German bishops were reluctant to grant jurisdiction to Polish priests. He informed the Ministry of a suggestion made by “a circle of Polish clergy” to “obtain in Rome an episcopal jurisdiction, for one of Polish priests, over the Recovered Territories” (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1288, p. 14). Indeed, such jurisdiction was granted to Primate Hlond, who was able to appoint Apostolic Administrators of dioceses incorporated into Poland (Noszczak, 2008). As the incorporation of newly acquired territories progressed, and the influx of Polish migrants and flight and expulsion of Germans continued, the communist administration found itself confronted with a popular “demand” for Catholic priests. Stefan Rawicz, administrator of Złotów County, on 15 September 1945, reported that there was “no population of other religious confession” in the area and therefore “five post-evangelical churches were allocated” to the Catholic Church. He asked for “allocation of an additional 12” (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1288, p. 32). At the same time, the authorities appeared to be concerned and assisted in establishing the Polish Catholic Administration in Recovered

Territories. The Government's Plenipotentiary for West Pomeranian District asked the Szczecin curia for a list of all priests and churches in its administration, adding that it also should "outline needs and wishes" (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1288, p. 77).

In some cases, communist officials were confused about the state approach to the Catholic Church and granting it former protestant property. In the case of former Cathedral in Kamień Pomorski (Cammin), consecrated by the Catholic Church, the County administrator asked the authorities if he could "at all issue such a document (granting the cathedral)" and if the authorities could provide guidelines concerning "future matters of the property of the evangelical church" (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1288, p. 303). In some cases, local officials appeared almost biased in their support of Catholic priests acquiring protestant property. On 18 February 1947, Aleksander Kraśnicki, priest of Polish National Catholic Church, lodged an official request for the acquisition (18.02.1947) of a church building on Mickiewicza 20 in Koszalin (former Schlosskirche), denied by Koszalin County (12.05.1947). Following that, Kraśnicki lodged an official complaint, which caused the Voivodeship Office to demand explanation from the County (19.12.1947). In its investigation, the Voivodeship Office revealed that there had been other church buildings granted without its knowledge to the Catholic Church in Koszalin area. However, the County responded that these churches had been already consecrated by Catholics; "thus the County" believed "the matter to be settled"; no further inquiries were made and Catholic Church was allowed to keep the buildings (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1290, p. 201, 207, 225, 225, 231, 232).

By 1947, some communist officials began to be concerned about the lenient approach towards the Catholic Church, often adopting the form of favouring the Catholics over other Christian faiths. On 10 June 1947, the director of Social-Political Department in Szczecin issued a letter to Voivode Leonard Borkowicz, which proposed a practice of granting a priest only one church building to "avoid a situation when a priest arriving in the County claims all church buildings ... in an attempt to prevent other faiths" from establishing themselves "on the Voivodeship territory". Leonard Borkowicz's response was brief, written on the letter itself, and read as follows: "An ill practice – causes unrest. These (church buildings) should be granted with the reservation of an adequate (minimal) number for <<other faiths>>" (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1293, p. 157). If local communist officials, often Catholics themselves, could have favoured the Catholic Church because of their religious denomination, Leonard Borkowicz, a lay Jew and an avid communist, was realising the party

line – and in the period between 1944 and 1948, the party line was to favour the Catholic Church. Appearing supportive of the Church created a sense of continuity and legitimacy to the regime.

Troubled relations in time of cooperation

Although initially the government followed a policy of non-confrontation, the period between 1944 and 1948 was marked by growing suspicion on both sides and was not free from clashes between officials and Catholic priests. Isakowicz-Zaleski, archdiocese of Cracow, points out that Catholic priests were often victims of political murder committed by communist authorities, giving the example of priests Michał Rapacz and Franciszek Flasiński (2007, p.31-32) and a Jesuit, Władysław Gorgacz (2007, p. 33). In other less extreme instances, the clergy itself was behind clashes with the local officials. In a letter from 24 April 1946, to Apostolic Administrator in Gorzów Wielkopolski, Starogórd (presently Stargard) County administrator Szmigielski reported the case of parish priest Tadeusz Długopolski, who announced that on masses held on 1, 3 and 9 May “party banners could not be carried into the church, since it would be a breach of canon law”; however, later Długopolski clarified that it “concerned only these parties who fight the Church”. Szmigielski was clear in stating “that there are no such political parties in Poland” and asked the Apostolic Administrator for his compliance and agreement: “otherwise celebrations will not be allowed” (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1288, p. 453). This issue clearly demonstrates that the clergy was suspicious, if not openly defiant, of the new regime, which on its part wanted to display (even forcefully) its religious affiliation.

On other occasion, a parson in Gostyń buried a man, Edward Zawadzki, without a death certificate from the local civil registry, a violation of the *Law of civil registry's acts* issued on 25 September 1945 (Dz. U. 1945 nr. 48 poz. 272). Asked why he had not followed the government law, the parson responded “that he did not know, since ... the authorities do not send him legislative registers” and on other occasion “that he cannot follow the secular ordinances, since the Polish state had broken the relations with the Vatican”. The parson’s practices of ignoring the local civil registry caused the local population to “avoid the civil registry” (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1290, p. 237). In this case. the authorities decided to plea to the Apostolic Administrator to remove the parson from Gostyń (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1290, p. 243), a letter that remained unanswered.

On the account of party members, clashes with the Church were more open and certainly more violent. On the night of 24/45 December 1946, several local members of the Polish Workers' Party "committed an assault on an administrator of the Roman-Catholic Church in Dobiesławów ... during his religious service they forcefully took the tabernacle with the Holy Sacrament and removed him from the church, thus publicly insulting an object of religious cult." In this case, the authorities had to react and the court proceedings reveal that three PWP members – Mikołaj Kwiatkowski, Tomasz Watras and Antoni Gembke – were sentenced for 3, 2 and 2.5 years of imprisonment respectively (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1290, p. 552-553). On another occasion, in Połczyn Dębski, an employee of the local Security Office, on the night of 19/20 June 1947, "drunkenly ... actively assaulted a depiction of the Virgin Mary ... slamming it against the ground and stomping on it ... using most vituperative words." In this case, the matter was supervised by the Voivode Borkowicz himself, which resulted in Dębski's arrest, on which Borkowicz's note "taken care of" written in the report testifies (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1293, p. 1).

Another occasion on which the authorities displayed suspicion of Church activity was Primate Hlond's tour of the West Pomeranian Voivodeship. Among some officials, this visit was yet another quagmire. Leon Malczewski, Pyrzyce County administrator, in a letter marked as urgent, on 27 October 1947, asked the Voivode: "1) Can I officially travel to County's limits to officially greet the Cardinal, 2) Can I speak and great officially at all, 3) How should I generally behave during reception?" (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1295, p. 25). All local officials reported to the Voivode about Primate's visit. Kołobrzeg official reported that a "triumphal gate" was set up from Zielenów direction, while Hlond arrived from Korlin (the opposite side of the city) allowing a local official "to suspect that the aforementioned (Hlond) was aware of quiet instructions of local County Office, forbidding an ostentatious welcome" (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1295, p.43). In Jastrów, Hlond "made a short speech without accents hostile to the democratic (communist) regime" (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1295, p. 47). The most problematic was Hlond's visit in Złotów County, where "decorations on Agriculture and Trade Cooperative's [which were government property] storefronts were discovered" and in Zakrzew "during the celebrations private and cooperative's stores were closed, while in the Communal Office there was only one employee." This triggered an official investigation; however, the authorities "could not establish which stores were closed" (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1295, p. 103, 104, 97).

It is possible to observe a pattern, in a period just after the war, in which the regime was supportive of the Catholic Church and benefitted from its advice and activity in the Recovered Territories. As the consolidation of power progressed, the authorities became more suspicious and sometimes openly hostile. The initial period is marked by the confusion of officials, who often did not know how to act towards the Church. Nevertheless, in the initial period, the Catholic Church actively participated in the public life, and its activity, with few exceptions, went on relatively uninterrupted. It is vital to emphasize that while conflicts and clashes did occur at the individual and local level, on the state and institutional level, cooperation and non-confrontation were the dominant policy.

Period of persecution (1949-1956)

Worsening relations

Official persecution of the Catholic Church escalated in 1948, signalling a change in state policy. On 29 May 1947, Edward Quirini (Director of Public Administration Department in Ministry of Recovered Territories) wrote in response to Borkowicz's request that "the Ministry would not like to instigate a state-wide action of limiting public [mostly run by the Church] fund-raisers. However, by 1948, all Church fund-raisers were disallowed, especially in the event of a state-run fund-raiser for the reconstruction of Warsaw (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1292, p. 1 and 5). With a letter of 8 August 1948, the Apostolic Administrator informed the Pomeranian authorities that militia in Charzyno dispersed a religious procession and, although it did trigger an investigation, it is possible to observe the escalation, since the Charzyno incident was not an individual attack, but engaged local militia structures (APSz, UWSz, sygn. 1295, p. 599). On 5 August 1949, the government issued a decree on *Protection of the freedom of conscience and faith*, which guaranteed freedom of religion (or lack thereof), but also stipulated that those "who abuse the freedom of faith and conscience for purposes hostile to the regime of the Republic of Poland shall serve a sentence of minimum 3 years" (Dz. U. 1949 nr. 45 poz. 334. Art. 8 § 1).

Confrontation and new legislation

By 1949, the government re-evaluated the policy of non-confrontation and began its assault on the Catholic Church. During the session of the Secretariat of the Politburo held on 20 January 1950, the issue of Caritas (a charity organisation run by the Church) was discussed and a "mandatory supervision of the 'Caritas' organisation" was issued by the Minister of Labour and Social Care (BN-Polona, Protocol nr. 5,5, p.2-3). A month

later the Politburo discussed issuing a government declaration that would “widely inform the society about the hostility of the leading circles of the episcopate towards People’s Poland” and further, the Politburo concluded that “it should not limit itself to issuing a declaration, but proceed to concrete actions. Nationalising Church property and creation of the Ecclesiastical Fund should be such a blow” (BN-Polona, Protocol nr. 58, pp. 1-2). Thus on 20 March 1950, the government issued a *Bill on State takeover of the dead hand property, the guarantee of parsons’ agricultural farms and creation of the Ecclesiastical Fund* which fulfilled the declaration of the 1944 land reform and, “in order to remove the remnants of squirearchal-feudalist privilege,” nationalised all landed estates of the Church (and all other religious communes) without compensation, thus depriving the Catholic Church and other faiths their material bases of operation (Dz. U. 1950 nr. 9 poz. 87). That very legislative act pushed the Church, hitherto following the policy of passive resistance, to seek a compromise with the government, which was signed on 23 April 1950 (HIA, DSM, sygn. 149, scan 554). The agreement was used as a propaganda tool for the authorities who did not intend to follow the agreement (Noszczak, 2008).

Having materially undermined the position of the Church, the government moved to subjugate the Church to the state. On 9 February 1953, the bill on *Filling of the church posts* was issued, giving the state the full authority to nominate parsons (local authorities) and bishops (the Council of Ministers), who also had to swear an oath of allegiance to the People’s Republic of Poland (Dz. U. 1953 nr. 10 poz. 32). The episcopate, headed by Stefan Wyszyński, issued a memorial, commonly known as *Non possumus* (We cannot allow), protesting against government’s persecution. The persecution and terror inflicted on the Church and the society, however, rendered any opposition ineffective.

Removal of Apostolic Administrators and bishops, show trials

Destruction of the Church’s financial independence was followed by removal of Apostolic Administrators appointed for the Recovered Territories. Such an action was motivated by the fact that the regime broke the *Concordat* and ecclesiastical authorities were no longer obliged to present episcopal nominees to the authorities for approval. The official confrontation policy was signalled in Bierut’s speech that called the military chaplains “to break with reactionary clergy and to intensively spread the ideals of Marxism, Leninism, Stalinism and the praise of the greatest leader of the mankind – Stalin” (HIA, DSM, sygn.

149, scan 525). The session of the Politburo held on 20 January 1951 discussed the issue and outlined the matter of changes in the church administration since

On Saturday 27 I the exchange of delimitation documents will occur [with the Democratic Republic of Germany, officially warranting Polish border on the Oder-Neisse line] the Political Bureau recommends launching a propaganda action this week through the press, film, radio, under slogans of:

1. Liquidation of the temporary state of ecclesiastical authorities on the Recovered Territories
2. Demanding the episcopate in Poland to assume a stance concerning the ecclesiastical administration on the Recovered Territories that is in accordance with national interests ...

The action of removing administrators of the apparatus and appointing of the vicars should be held on Friday 26 January 1951. (BN-Polona, Protocol nr. 49, p. 1)

The removal of the Apostolic Administrators blatantly broke the autonomy of the Church, yet still the Primate – Stefan Wyszyński – approved their nomination in February 1951 in order not to provoke the regime and to avoid the schism of five dioceses (Noszczak, 2008, p. 53). Although officially arguing for the strengthening of the Church structure in the Recovered Territories, the government indeed weakened it. Although the delimitation treaty was signed with Eastern Germany, Pius XII waited for “political sanctions” (HIA, DSM, sygn. 149, scan 807), which were only achieved in 1970 when Western Germany acknowledged the border in a separate treaty. The Church followed suit and the full Polish Church administration of the Recovered Territories was established by 1972 (Isakowicz-Zaleski, 2007, p. 23).

As Gomułka claimed “if the Church is almost untouchable, the struggle with clergy ... has long traditions in Poland” (as cited in Noszczak, 2008, p. 46). For as long as Gomułka was in power, the regime did not officially target the Church as an institution, but it targeted individual priests and bishops known for their defiance. The official tactics changed after his fall from power and the outward assault on both the clergy and the institution. These policies climaxed in show trials of high-ranking clergymen known as the “trial of Cracow’s curia”; second was the trial of Kielce Bishop Kaczmarek.

The process of Cracow’s Curia started on the 21 January 1953 and was recorded by the official press. The Worker’s Tribune (Trybuna Robotnicza) printed detailed reports of the

proceedings against “the spy gang” that included six clerics (Józef Lelito, Rudolf Schidt, Tadeusz Turowski, Franciszek Szymanek, Wit Brzycki and Jan Pochopień) as well as three civilians (Edward Chachalica, Michał Kowalik and Stafania Rospond) who confessed “revealing all odiousness ... history of treason and hatred” of their own nation (Trybuna Robotnicza, 1953a, p. 2). On 23 January, the Worker’s Tribune escalated its accusations by claiming that “the Vatican inspires German revisionism” and that the actions of the accused were “an anti-Polish crime” (Trybuna Robotnicza, 1953b, p. 2). On 27 January, the trial “revealed” that “the accused wanted to topple the people’s regime with the aid of Hitlerist-American bayonets” (Trybuna Robotnicza, 1953c, p. 2). The accused were sentenced on 28 January 1953; thus Józef Lelito, Michał Kowalik and Edward Chachalica were sentenced to death. Szymanek received a life sentence, Pochopień 8 years, and Rospond 6 years, a punishment that “they rightly deserved” (Trybuna Robotnicza, 1953d, p. 1)

In a similar vein, the trial of Kielce Bishop Kaczmarek was staged. The newspapers reported that he “admitted to collaboration with Hitlerist occupant and the secret services of the USA” and implicated the participation of the American ambassador Arthur Bliss Lane (Trybuna Robotnicza, 1953e, p. 1). Furthermore, the regime’s press reported that Kaczmarek, instructed by the Vatican, was planning and “counting on the third war” (Trybuna Robotnicza, 1953f, p. 2). The trial of Kaczmarek was recorded on film and included in the Polish Film Chronicle, where the Kielce bishop, in the vein of Stalinist show trials, confesses all, without any questions from the prosecutor (PKF 53/41). Furthermore, the so-called “patriot priests” (priests loyal to the regime) also appeared during the trial denouncing the bishop and expressly claiming that “there is no persecution (of the Church) in Poland” like priest Kotula or priest Czaja who claimed “the entire Catholic society condemns Bishop Kaczmarek’s activities” (PKF 53/42). The sentences in the September trial did not include death, but the main accused was to be imprisoned for 12 years (Trybuna Robotnicza, 1953g, p. 1)

The hostilities against the Church reached their apex a month after Bishop Kaczmarek’s trial. On 23 September 1953, the Politburo decided to arrest the head of Catholic Church in Poland – Primate Wyszyński (BN-Polona, Protocol nr. 261, p. 1), who was arrested in Primate’s Palace in Warsaw the night of 25/26 October 1953 (Noszczak, 2009, p. 292). Noszczak claims that after Wyszyński’s arrest, the Ministry of Public Security began preparation for his trial, which, however, was not staged (2008, p. 64). Deprived of its leader, the Catholic Church in Poland was effectively subjugated; priests were forced to

swear an oath of loyalty to the People's Republic of Poland. Noszczak claims that until 15 January 1954, 8750 priests complied, with only 630 failing to comply for various reasons (2008, p. 97). It is possible to observe that after the arrest of the Primate, the regime effectively destroyed the Church's opposition. The arrest of the head of the Catholic Church in Poland triggered voices of protest from the episcopate, which, however, were not able to effectively oppose the regime. The destruction of the Church's autonomy also allowed the regime to launch an action, codenamed X-2, during which many female convents were removed and their monasteries confiscated by the Church. X-2 was especially targeting Silesia, where still many German nuns resided, Noszczak argues, that the X-2 action was an attempt to introduce the "Czechoslovak option", where the Church was completely subjugated to the state (2008, p. 226).

Religion and schools

Another part of the state's anti-Church policy was the forcible removal of religion as a subject taught in schools. Before the war and right until 1949, religion and religious schools were an important part of the education system in Poland (Moraczewska, 2010). Every classroom had a crucifix and prayer was allowed. However, as T.T. recalls, in 1949 "they came at took all the crucifixes, pupils and teachers were no longer allowed to pray. Throughout my entire career this process was repeated three times, first in 1950s, then 1960s and for the last time in 1980s" (interview on 12.02.2016). This demonstrates that the communist regime was anti-religious throughout its existence. In 1949, the regime launched an investigation against a Jesuit-run school in Struda near Warsaw (HIA, DSM, sygn. 149, scan 543). By 1950, the archbishop of Cracow, Adam Sapieha, attempted to plead to the highest authorities. In his letter to Bierut, Sapieha outlined all forms of persecution that the Catholic Church had suffered since 1945, amongst them "a procedure of transforming public schools into the Association of the Friends of Children [Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci" that was based "only on removal of religion ... and following this procedure is caused by the struggle against religion in schools, without any legislative action." Furthermore, Sapieha emphasized that Catholic children in kindergartens "were isolated from all aspects of religious life and aspirations" ((HIA, DSM, sygn. 149, scan 513). This letter was written in September 1950, t several months after the compromise between the Church and state of April 1950, which demonstrates that the government used the compromise as a propaganda tool and did not intend to follow the agreement. The regime was quite successful in removing

religion from schools, especially primary schools; by the school year of 1955/1956, the percentage of schools, without religious teaching, across the country was almost complete:

Table 2– Religion in schools

| Voivodeship (province) | Percent of schools without religion as a subject (by 30 IX 1955 r.) AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, sygn. 417, p. 19) |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Białystok | 91,9 |
| Bydgoszcz | 92,8 |
| Gdańsk | 67,9 |
| Katowice | 95,4 |
| Kielce | 61,7 |
| Koszalin | 99,1 |
| Cracow | 40,4 |
| Lublin | 84,8 |
| Łódź (city) | 93,0 |
| Łódź (province) | 82,2 |
| Olsztyn | 98,3 |
| Opole | 99,3 |
| Poznań | 99,4 |
| Rzeszów | 40,1 |
| Szczecin | 98,6 |
| Warsaw (city) | 62,4 |
| Warsaw (province) | 85,1 |
| Wrocław | 90,3 |
| Zielona Góra | 94,8 |

Apart from in five provinces, religion was almost completely removed from primary schools across the country. The elimination of religion in secondary schools was also nearly complete; out of 792 secondary schools, 732 did not offer religion as a subject, and thus religion was removed from 92% of secondary schools, (Noszczak, 2008, p. 253).

There was also the case of the Catholic University of Lublin, established in 1918. Initially supported by the regime, by 1949 it underwent constant surveillance by the Secret Services - its publications were censored, and new students were forbidden admission to certain departments and degree. Nevertheless, the university was never closed down and

remained the only private tertiary education institution in the Soviet Bloc (Gałaszewska-Chilczuk, 2013).

In accordance with their Marxist principles, the Polish communist regime largely succeeded in removing religion from the public sphere. Just as the Church was removed from the sphere of state rituals by 1949, similarly religion was methodically removed from the education system from 1949 onwards. The process, almost complete, was halted and partially reversed by the events of 1956. The success of officially removing religion from all aspects of public life did not mean that Catholicism was completely subjugated. The public sphere of Polish life could not oppose the state openly; privately, however most continued to practice their religion and followed Catholic traditions, as will be demonstrated in following section.

Other religions

It is vital to acknowledge the other religions that were also present in Poland post-1945. However, the communist project of ethnic cleansing conducted between 1944 and 1948 (see Chapter III) warranted that Poland, previously ethnically and religiously diverse, drastically changed its character. Post-war Poland had 94% ethnic Poles as its citizens (Cordell and Dybczynski, 2005, s. 81) and 97.7% of the total population followed Catholicism (Noszczak, 2008, p. 39). Hence, the role other religions played, and the government attention they received, was considerably smaller than that of the Catholic Church.

There are only three legislative acts concerning the other strains of Christianity in Poland. The first one was a *Decree on relations with the Methodist Church* issued on 16 October 1945 and granting equal rights with other confessions, self-governance and “independence from any foreign authority” (Dz. U. 1945 nr. 46 poz. 259). In a similar vein, the amendment to the *Presidential Decree on relations with the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession* was issued, changing only the administrative area of the *Decree* to correlate with the new borders of Poland. It also stipulated that all property of the church, administered by the Evangelical-Augsburg Church at the time the decree was issued, should remain in its possession, whilst all other property was to be nationalised (Dz. U. 1946 nr. 54 poz. 304). By 1947, yet another amendment has been issued, which merged all protestant (Lutheran, Calvinist and Brethren’s Congregation from Herrnhut) churches into one administration on the Polish territory (Dz. U. 1947 nr. 52 poz. 272).

The smaller Christian churches were used instrumentally as a tool to combat the Catholic Church (Brzechczyn, 2008). However, due to their weakness and small number of followers, this practice was abandoned by 1949 and these congregations also fell victim of state organised persecution (Michalak, 2001). Some minor churches, like Jehovah's Witnesses, were branded a "sect," and territorial administration organs were ordered to engage in "close collaboration in order to combat" their activity (APSz, UWSz, WSP, sygn. 1290, p. 789) even before the official changes to policies concerning religion in 1949.

Similarly, a negative attitude was strong towards the Greek Catholic church and violent repressions occurred from the very first years of the regime. Such violence is best exemplified by the case of Uniate bishop of Przemyśl – Josaphat Kocylovsky. He was first arrested on 21 September 1945 and deported to USSR on 16 January 1946; however, he was allowed to return five days later (Motyka, 2011, p. 394). His second arrest occurred on 6 June 1946, when he was forcibly removed and again deported to the USSR, subjected to torture and sentenced to 10 years in gulag, where he died in November 1947 (Smolij, ed., 2009, p. 246). By the fall of 1946, the ecclesiastical structures of the Greek Catholic Church in Poland was completely destroyed; hence Pope Pius XII equipped Cardinal Hlond with special prerogatives to administer the Greek Catholics on 16 December 1946 (Hałagida, 2008, p. 295).

It is possible to observe various approaches of the communist regime to different religions within Poland, from utilitarian to openly hostile. The other religions in the post-war Poland, however, constituted only a fraction of the overall population. They neither had the resources, nor the numerical and organisational strength of the Catholic Church, and thus were not considered an important threat to the regime. They were easily subjugated by the authorities by 1949 (Michalak, 2001) using a fraction of resources allocated to fight the Catholic Church. Their numerical weakness warranted that when the regime began its attempt to subjugate the Church in 1949, they suffered considerably more, in a material sense at least, than the Catholic Church (Brzechczyn, 2008).

Attitudes and responses

The communist regime in Poland allocated considerable resources to combatting the Church, yet "the results could not compare to their comrades in other real-socialist states" (Eisler, 2004, p. 386). The regime's failure can be explained by two major factors: the ethno-religious structure they had created by 1948 and the unique role that the

Catholic Church played in Polish life. The first warranted that the assault on Catholic Church would be an assault on values and tradition of the vast majority of the nation, already hostile to the communist regime. The second issue arose from the dual identity of most party members themselves (see Chapter II) and their surprisingly strong attachment to the Catholic tradition.

The anti-religious policies of the communist regime were greatly undermined by the considerable attachment to the Catholic Church by the multitude of party members themselves. It appears a rather bizarre fact that Bolesław Bierut, during whose period of power the Church suffered the most, married his wife, Janina Górczyńska, on 3 July 1921 in the St. John (Cathedral) parish in Lublin (Lublin Roman Catholic Church Books, 1784-1964, p. 43), the same year he re-joined the Communist Party of Poland (Eiser, 2014). Even Stalin's allegedly (Eisler, 2014) most avid follower followed the Catholic tradition. However, the top party members often did not follow Catholic practices (especially since many top officials were of Jewish origin); the lower in the party ranks, the greater the likelihood of finding a practicing Catholic. J.K. recalled in the interview, that her uncle was a senior local official in Wałbrzych region, yet

He and his wife Ziuta married in the Red Church (Holy Guardian Angels parish), however they had to do it in secret [religious nuptials were forbidden for party members]. They also secretly baptised their daughter and she attended her first communion with me in Piaskowa Góra [suburb in Wałbrzych], although parents were not present during the celebration, as it was forbidden for party officials. (Personal communication on 05.02.2016)

There were instances where Polish Workers' Party Women Association in Silesia staged *The Life of St. Genevieve*, participated in a mass and received sacraments (Musiał & Szarek, 2008, p. 25). In 1951, before the Church celebration of recommending Poland to the Virgin Mary, in Katowice alone, secret service functionaries spotted 150 party members attending the mass (Musiał & Szarek eds. 2008, p. 25). Such instances were numerous; E.H. recalled that Sykus, director of Wałbrzych Glassworks, whom she described as "an avid communist," apparently "would never miss a mass on Sunday" (Personal communication on 18.02.2016).

If even the communist officials were often practicing Catholics, the general population *en masse* continued the Polish Catholic tradition. In Świdnica's parish church in 1950s [former Pfarrkirche, now the cathedral], "there were no seated places, people stood

wherever they could find a place” (T.T. Personal communication on 13.02.2016). After religion was removed from schools, “parents would send them [children] to churches to learn after the Sunday mass” (T.T. Personal communication on 13.02.2016). J.K. also remembers that “my parents always received the priest after Christmas [popularly known as “the carol - kolęda”]: it is a tradition of pastoral visits to homes of the members of the parish] and it was always a festive event” (Personal communication on 05.02.2016). Thus it is possible to observe that although religious practices disappeared from public life, in private many practiced and cultivated the Catholic traditions.

Conclusion

The aim of the regime, as outlined by Jakub Berman, was not about “education or eradicating illiteracy, these were only details, but about changing the concept of the country, the creation of new Poland, of shape and structure completely dissimilar to the one known from history (in Torańska, 1985, p. 599). The removal of religion from the public sphere was part of this project. Polish society underwent a process “of subjective secularisation – which contrary to objective secularisation, which is a natural consequence of civilizational development – was a controlled action” (Noszczak, 2008, p. 234), and forceful in addition. Polish national identity was uniquely intertwined with Catholicism, a result of a long historical process. The demographic changes effected post-1945 elevated Catholicism to the position of “national” religion, as an overwhelming majority identified themselves as Catholics, a unity that was found nowhere else in the Soviet Bloc (Babiuch & Luxmoore, 1999, Noszczak, 2008). The attitude of the episcopate and the faithful was especially praised in the Vatican, which expressed its awe for “courage and resolution of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Poland, and also the bravery and attachment to faith on the part of the faithful”, further adding “that sad examples of Czechs, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania etc. – where there exist ‘national churches’ i.e. psedo-Catholic and severed from Rome – opened the eyes of the most, bringing out the different attitude of Polish Catholics” (HIA, DSM, sygn. 149, scan 565).

The strength of the Catholic tradition is illustrated by the fact that many party members were practicing Catholics in private, yet followed the official party line in their public activity. Noszczak (2008) emphasizes that even the imprisonment of Wyszyński in 1953 did not produce a public outcry; the society was terrorised and largely compliant, the episcopate almost completely subjugated. Yet from the evidence presented, it is possible to

observe the dichotomous Polish identity – officially everyone accepted (or at least did not protest) the official secularisation and the attack on the Church in Poland and privately, Poles continued to cultivate their religious traditions, finding a way (teaching of religion in churches) to minimise the impact of the forced secularisation on their children. Yet again, the private sphere created a difficult obstacle for the regime in its project of re-shaping Polish national identity. The initial compromise, and even endorsement, of religion in public life was dictated by the powerful position of the Church and weakness of the communists (Czwołek, 2011), a tactic of alignment that the regime would often employ when it lost its grip on power, as it did in 1956.

With the changes resulting from Stalin's, and later Bierut's, death, the regime, plunged into factional struggles that effectively loosened the terror and relaxed its rule, which resulted in an unprecedented outburst of popular discontent and effective disobedience, shaking the very foundations of the regime (Machcewicz, 2009). The communist project in its prior form and methods could continue. Similar to the period of 1944-1948, the regime once again endorsed the Church. On 28 October 1956, the regime released Primate Wyszyński and allowed him to return to Warsaw to resume all his official duties (Noszczak, 2008, p. 387). On 3 December 1956, the government annulled its bill *On filling of the church posts* passed in 1953. The *Decree on filling of the church posts* gave the regime powers to remove an uncomfortable Church official, but the power to nominate and elect bishops and priests was transferred back to the Church (Dz. U. 1957 nr. 1 poz. 6). Wyszyński, personally asked by Gomułka, calmed down the situation, complied and after his return to Warsaw called for moderation that effectively de-escalated the conflict and spared any bloodshed (Noszczak, 2008, p. 388). Even after regaining stability the regime resumed its conflict with the Church (Czwołek, 2011), but it was never again as open, and the regime never close to the subjugation the Church. Although it fought Catholicism till its very end, the regime had not achieved its goal of eliminating the Church from both public and private spheres. The duality of the Polish communist regime, in this respect, manifested itself in the tension between religion and ideology. Even though the regime opposed various other Soviet instruments of power and ideology, it embraced the Marxist principle of opposition to religion. This contradiction is further emphasized by the fact that Catholicism was a central component of the nationalistic idea that the regime attempted to reconcile with the communist ideology. Furthermore, the failure to subjugate the Church and a subsequent need to reach a compromise with it reinforce the ethno-symbolist claim that national identities and their components are a result of a long historical process and prove extremely durable.

Chapter IX:

Conclusion

Introduction

As I have argued, nationalism and ideology were uneasy bedfellows in the post-war communist regime in Poland. In fact, the communist regime was undermined by the tension between these two forces, which produced its dual identity. This dual identity explains why often contradictory policies of the regime and its delicate balance between seeking legitimacy and appeasing its Soviet masters and its own ideology. The dual identity of the Polish regime serves to highlight the strength of nationalism in Poland because the regime found that, in order to survive, it had to replace its ideological narrative with a nationalist one. The dual identity of the regime enabled it eventually to forge a unique compromise with the USSR.

Stalin's death in 1953 was crucial for the communist regimes of Eastern Europe. From that point onwards, it was possible to observe the gradual erosion of the communist regime in Poland. A crucial role in undermining the regime was played by Józef Światło, one of the top ranking officials within the Ministry of Public Security, who defected to the West in December 1953. From September 1954 Światło began exposing the most compromising secrets of the regime - concerning the methods of torture, economic subservience to the USSR, and the wealth and opulence that members of the regime surrounded themselves with - through the Polish section of Radio Free Europe (HIA, DSM, sygn. 158, scan 406). To salvage its image, the regime dissolved the Ministry of Public Security. Trained its top officials, including the Minister – Stanisław Radkiewicz, as well the Politburo member responsible for the repression apparatus – Jakub Berman, who were expressly named by Światło as those responsible for the terror and abuses of power. The secret police were placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior (HIA, DSM, sygn. 158, scan 406). It is important to emphasize that the restructuring launched by Światło's defection severely limited the regime's ability to control society as effectively as it had done hitherto (Eisler, 2014). Furthermore, in February 1955, the Free Europe Press division of Free Europe Committee launched operation "Spotlight" – flying balloons over Poland containing anti-regime leaflets – the most important one was Światło's brochure "Behind the scenes of the security force and the party" – which numbered 130 million by February 1955 (HIA, DSM, sygn. 73, scan 391) fuelling the discontent of an already rebellious society.

The ongoing crisis of the regime was further aggravated by Khrushchev's Secret Speech delivered on 28 February 1956 and signalled the de-Stalinisation process across the entire Soviet bloc (Czubiński, 1992). Coupled with that was the death of PZPR's First

Secretary, Bolesław Bierut, in Moscow on 12 March 1956, attributed to the shock caused by Khrushchev's Secret Speech by popular opinion in Poland (Eisler, 2014, p. 160).

Notwithstanding the causes, Bierut's death and Khrushchev's speech triggered yet another struggle for power within the PZPR. On the 20 March 1956, the VI Plenum of the Central Committee of the PZPR assembled to elect the new First Secretary and it was the first instance when the Soviet leader personally participated in the Plenum to assure the election of his candidate (Eisler, 2014, p. 213). Accordingly, Edward Ochab, a member of the Central Committee, was elected as the First Secretary. The struggle for power within the communist party was far from over in the spring of 1956, weakening the party and causing "the erosion of the existing system of power" (Eisler, 2014, p. 219). There were two groups bidding for power "Natolińczycy" (hardliners) and "Puławianie" (reformists) as Jedlicki – one of contemporary observers and journalists and effectively member of the regime working for State Publication Institute - argues (1963, p. 28). Regardless of their personal convictions regarding the communist ideology, the struggle between these two weakened the regimes's grip on power and caused social awakening and a demand for liberalisation (Eisler, 2014) to such an extent that even the Sejm - rubber-stamping institution by then – passed the *Bill of Amnesty* on 27 April 1956 pardoning all the political prisoners of the regime (Dz. U. 1956, nr. 11 poz. 57).

The weakened central authority and the failure of the Six Year Plan (1950-1955) encouraged the society to demand reform through strikes and demonstrations. The first such strikes occurred in Poznań in June 1956. The regime reacted impulsively and violently in quelling the protests. Ten thousand troops equipped with 359 tanks, 31 assault guns and other kinds of lethal ammunition (Eisler, 2014, p. 229) caused a further deterioration in the situation and increased tensions within the communist party. The only candidate acceptable for both groups fighting for power was Gomułka, and his return to power was informally proposed as early as summer of 1956 (Eisler, 2008). Amidst the deteriorating domestic situation and increasing threat from the Soviet Union, Edward Ochab led the Polish delegation on the visit to the People's Republic of China in September 1956, where he implied the possible threat of Soviet intervention in Poland to Zhou Enlai (as cited in Torąńska, 1985, p. 153). In October, the Central Committee called for the new Plenum to be held on 19 October to elect the new First Secretary, presumptively Gomułka. On the morning of 19 October 1956, the Soviet delegation headed by Nikita Khrushchev himself arrived uninvited in Warsaw. Ochab recalls Khrushchev's hostile attitude and claimed that "the game

was difficult and delicate. Khrushchev found out about it, that's why he yelled at the airport, when he flew to Warsaw during the VIII Plenum: we know who the enemy of the Soviet Union is" (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 161). Eisler claimed that in October, the Soviet invasion had already effectively begun. Soviet troops stationed in West Pomerania and Lower Silesia began marching towards Warsaw, Battleship "Zhdanov" forced its way into the Gdańsk Bay accompanied by numerous smaller vessels, and Soviet troops in the GDR were fully mobilized (2014, pp. 248-249).

Polish communist leaders negotiated with Khrushchev over the impending invasion. Roman Zambrowski recalled that, during the talks, Gomułka "lost his head" and began a screed in Polish with which, Khrushchev later admitted, "he was greatly impressed ... Only a man certain of his convictions could have lost his head to such a degree". Negotiations however were not recorded and Zambrowski's account being the only surviving one was rather fragmentary and vague. (as cited in Eisler, 2008, p. 173). Furthermore, in October 1956 Zhou Enlai called the Kremlin and "said he will not agree for an intervention in Poland" (Ochab in Torańska, 1985, p. 150). The entire Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party managed to convince Khrushchev to abandon the intervention scenario. As Eisler argues Ochab, that true communist, thought in Polish national terms at the most important moment of his life. Together with the others, he concluded that it was of the utmost importance to prevent the Soviet intervention, (2014, p. 262).

Gomułka became the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party on the 21st and on 24 October and he made yet another speech, which signalled the primacy of nationalism over ideology claiming that "every country needs a full sovereignty and independence and the right of every sovereign nation to rule an independent state must be fully and mutually respected" (Polskie radio, 24.10.2012). The attitude of Polish communists towards the Soviets is probably best summarised by Ochab's statement that "no one pulled off a number on our Soviet friends, before and after, like we did" (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p.154). Polish-Soviet relations were formalised on 17 December 1956 through an agreement concerning the stationing of the Soviet troops in Poland; under Article 1 of this agreement, "the temporary stationing of the Soviet troops cannot in any case infringe the sovereignty of the Polish state and it cannot lead to their interference with the domestic affairs of the People's Republic of Poland" (Dz. U. 1957, nr. 29 poz. 127, p. 380). Although Poland was not capable of enforcing this treaty, the very fact of its existence made Poland unique in the

Soviet Bloc (Esiler, 2014, p. 400) and was testament to Soviet recognition of the strength of Polish nationalism. It is possible to link the “Polish October” with the events in Hungary. In both cases the nationalist sentiment and the eruption of discontent undermined the foundation of the communist regime and forced changes in leadership.

Although it is vital to acknowledge the fact that the Polish crisis started after Bierut’s death in Moscow on 12 March 1956 and lasted until Gomułka’s re-election as the First Secretary on 21 October 1956, it was effectively resolved by the time the Hungarian Revolution broke out on 23 October 1956. These events demonstrate that Poland’s communist leadership was much more skillful and flexible in their negotiations, as Soviets effectively acknowledged, and approved the new narrative of the regime. Poland was allowed to be nationalist for as long as it officially belonged to the Soviet Bloc, which Gomułka never denied, nor did he openly ask for the removal of Soviet troops. Instead the Polish leadership moved to normalize and formalize the status of Soviet troops. This degree of flexibility, which Nagy failed to present, prevented Poland from Soviet intervention. Nagy to some extent got carried away by nationalist outburst in Hungary, while Gomułka used the “Polish October” as a bargaining tool, while trying to salvage the most elements of the socialist governance – a situation that perfectly illustrates the dual nature of Polish regime’s mindset.

With the signing of the agreement, the Polish communists reverted to their dual identity in their dealings with the Soviets: on the one hand praising the Soviet Union and its fraternal relations with Poland and, on the other, playing a delicate game of deception and defiance. This tension was most apparent in 1956, when the communist leadership went to extreme lengths to prevent the Soviet intervention (Esiler, 2014). It is hard not to agree with Jedlicki (1963) who argues that 1956 was not the struggle for liberalisation of the regime; the political situation post-1957 proves that Polish communists did not push for greater liberalisation, although the regime needed to abandon its “omnipotence” (Esiler, 2014, p. 412). The regime transformed itself into a nationalist one; as such it was a turning point, the ultimate acknowledgement of the power of Polish nationalism. Nationalist transformation notwithstanding, the regime never intended to abandon its quasi-totalitarian nature. Liberalisation and democratisation lasted for as long as the regime was in crisis. As soon as the authority in Warsaw was stabilised, the regime began a crackdown on civil liberties. Indeed, the struggle of 1956 was conducted to salvage the appearance of independence and to secure even greater autonomy within the Soviet dominated system, a struggle that Polish

communists effectively won by signing formalising the status of Soviet troops stationing in Poland (Dz. U. 1957, nr. 29 poz. 127, p. 380) and subsequently re-polonising the state and army apparatus (Eisler, 2014), which can be viewed in purely nationalist terms. The transformation is also confirmed by the regime's re-instatement of the Church to its previous role. Furthermore, it never launched an open attack, as it did between 1950 and 1954, on the institutions and clergy ever again. Finally, the Church became a nation-wide platform for the opposition and played a crucial role in bringing down the regime in late 1980s.

The importance of the dual-identity and its impact on the communist project

In order to re-emphasize the importance of the dual identity, it is vital to re-state what that duality meant and how it manifested itself. First and foremost, it manifested itself in the rejection of the Soviet model. Regardless of Polish communists' intimate knowledge of the Soviet system and their negative experience, they "do it better" (as cited in Torańska, 1985, p. 457); however, "it" still refers to the communist project. They sought an accommodation and improvement of the ideological framework, not its outright rejection. The regime was moderate in its use of terror; however, it still had all the major trappings of a totalitarian state – the secret police, a network of prisons and labour camps in which any individual could be placed without trial or any formal accusation. The small number of political prisoners (see Chapter III) emphasized only the regime's moderation in its use of totalitarian methods. The examples of the fight with the anti-communist underground and the brutal pacification of Poznań illustrate that the regime had an arsenal of coercive and brutal methods and was not reluctant to use them, when it deemed it necessary. Furthermore, duality is manifested by regime's (and particularly Gomułka's) distrust and at times open hostility to the Soviets (Prażmowska, 2016). Nevertheless, as Eisler (2014) argues, he deemed an alliance with the Soviet Union necessary for the territorial integrity of Poland. In the same vein, the regime established complete control over the major branches of economy, while resources contributed to establishing control over agricultural production were limited and yielded insignificant results. Even the case of the popular discontent and turmoil that spread in 1956 and nearly brought on a Soviet intervention, displayed characteristics of regime's dual identity. The Polish politburo and Gomułka persuaded Khrushchev not to intervene (and indeed went to extreme lengths to achieve that) driven, as Eisler argues, by national sentiments (2014). That indeed can be seen as partially correct, bearing in mind the importance of nationalism even within the communist regime. But as Prażmowska (2016) argues, Polish October was a complex struggle. Its main objective concerned Poland's right to reform and to assert her own version of socialism. Even the phrase "the Polish road" to

socialism encapsulated the dual character of the regime – it was Polish, thus nationalist, and the road headed to the ideological goal of socialism. In case of Poland, the regime was aware of its unpopularity and responded by adjusting socialism to suit Polish circumstances. Although all the areas of regime’s activity were never devoid of nationalist elements (as I demonstrated), the ultimate goal was always socialism. The goal was to transform Poland ethnically, geographically and ideologically. The intensity of Polish nationalism undermined the project and forced the regime to deviate from the Soviet model and to attempt to establish a Polish national version of socialism. And that attempt – the attempt to fuse socialism and nationalism – left the regime vulnerable. In times of crisis or weakness, the regime always reinforced the nationalist narrative – as it did between 1944 and 1948. When the crisis of 1956 threatened the regime’s very existence, it again turned towards openly nationalist rhetoric. Gomułka’s return to power was a clear signal that regime would yet again endorse and nurture national sentiments – as he did when comrade “Wiesław” (the most popular pseudonym for Gomułka) was in power previously. Notwithstanding the change of the dominant narrative, Poland remained a socialist state and all reforms for as long as the regime could maintain its power, and all activities were conducted and implemented within the socialist framework (Eisler, 2014)

I have argued previously that Polish national sentiment was extremely strong, its intensity resulting from long and tumultuous history of Poland. I have also emphasized that the communists understood the importance and strength of Polish nationalism (see Chapter II). It is possible to observe a certain pattern that the regime followed throughout its history – whenever it was weak, it embraced nationalism as a dominant ideology. However, the initial outburst of nationalist narrative between 1944 and 1948 was a deliberate tactic to provide the regime with the legitimacy and the broader support base it lacked (Zaremba, 2002). The nationalist narrative, however, was short-lived and soon eclipsed by an ideological narrative. The regime, after Gomułka’s fall from power, endorsed the internationalist narrative of the communist ideology and effectively began a struggle against Polish nationalism. The regime might have officially discouraged the national narrative in favour of the ideological one [however, as all chapters demonstrate, the regime was never fully capable of completely abandoning nationalist elements and that inability permeated all levels of government. The regime itself had an uneasy relationship with Soviet-inspired communist ideology. Światło aptly explained the reasons behind these particular features of the Eastern European communist regimes resulted from a fact that communism was not monolithic in Eastern Europe and, prior to 1945, was not a mass movement. In order to gain legitimacy and

support, the communists enlisted people “still attached to national values,” which effectively resulted in a “strong drive for national communism” (HIA, DSM, sygn. 73, scan 420).

In the light of this argument it is impossible to emphasize that the Polish regime was unique in attempts to find its own way to socialism. However, “the Polish road had become the worst road to socialism” and it ultimately failed to transform Polish society along ideological lines (Taras, 1992, p. 82-3). The reason behind this failure lies not only with the popular rejection of the regime, but also with the regime itself. It never fully abandoned nationalism in favour of ideology; thus the communist project was somewhat sabotaged by the very people in charge of implementing it. I have already drawn a distinction between nationalist “tactic” and nationalist “thinking” in the introduction. However, it is vital to emphasize that the nationalist policies of 1944-1948m serving to popularise the regime, namely the resettlements of Germans, Ukrainians and Lemkos, were the most successful policies launched by the regime in its formative period. These policies might have been backed by the Soviets, but their origin and implementation owed everything to long-standing Polish national aspirations for an ethnic-based state. Thus, all other major areas of the communist project aiming to re-shape post-war Poland had nationalist underpinnings. The new set of national symbols and rituals failed to distinctively break with Poland’s pre-war traditions. The nation-wide education project was carried out with a clear ideological purpose, yet it never entirely broke with the Polish nationalist tradition of struggle for independence. The economy was centrally planned, yet the private retail sector was treated leniently and agricultural production remained largely in private hands. Propaganda aimed to inspire love and devotion to the regime (and its main ally, the USSR) and hatred of the West. Yet it also promoted national pride by popularising the images of the national effort to rebuild the country destroyed by war. Socialist secularism pushed the regime towards the confrontation with one of the main pillars of Polish national identity – the Catholic Church. The struggle can be viewed not only in the terms of ideology but also as a struggle for power. Ultimately, even at the height of anti-Church persecutions, many party members found themselves still following the Polish tradition – they married with the Church’s blessing, baptized their children, attended mass and received pastoral visits.

The regime’s conflicting allegiances and approaches were of serious consequence to the communist project in Poland and the dual identity was projected onto the nation itself. In the public sphere Poles, did not challenge the regime, while privately they mocked and defied it. Of course, public compliance was only reserved for the periods when the regime’s grip on

power was strong. The events of 1956 show that Poles almost immediately challenged the regime when it was weakened by the internal struggle. Such a scenario would be repeated multiple times throughout the regime's history – in 1968, 1970, 1976 and 1980-1981 (Eilsler, 2008). In this respect, Poland was unique among other Eastern European regimes (Taras, 1992, p. 81), displaying a consistently strong desire for national liberation. However, this sentiment was also shared by some members of the regime, particularly by Władysław Gomułka. His case probably best exemplifies the communist experience in Poland in the 1940s and 1950s. He was known for his strong nationalist sentiment during his rule between 1944 and 1948 as the party's First Secretary (de facto ruler of the country), which coincided with the most openly nationalist narrative of the regime. By 1948, the communists had already eliminated the opposition inside the country and the Soviet Union grounded its position in Eastern Europe. A legitimising nationalist narrative was no longer needed; neither was Gomułka, who was toppled and imprisoned. The importance of nationalism within the Polish regime was proven by the events of 1956 and Gomułka's return to power. From that point onwards, the regime redefined itself in nationalist terms, while still endorsing socialist ideology. Gomułka's second tenure (1956-1970) is known as the period of "little stabilization" (Taras, 1992, p. 81) and that was the period when the regime openly adopted nationalism, within a socialist framework, as a dominant narrative (Eilsler, 2014). The strength of Polish national sentiment, even among the members of the regime, forced the Soviets to validate and effectively allow the abandonment of ideology as the dominant narrative in favour of nationalism for as long as Poland remained within the Soviet sphere of influence.

Analytical Framework

This project has demonstrated how Polish nationalism undermined the communist project in Poland between 1944 and 1956. The theoretical perspective adopted by this project allows a more accurate explanation for communism's failure in Poland as early as 1956, since from that point, nationalism ascended as the dominant narrative of the regime. Ethno-symbolism argues that a nation is not an occurrence but that its development is a long historical process in which an ethnic culture (language, values, traditions, myths and symbols) is formed. Initially, this ethnic culture is confined to the ruling elites (what Anthony Smith called a *lateral ethnies*, 1991) and as historical developments progress – in the form of industrialisation, nationalist philosophy, political climate and military conflict, the set of national values began to encompass increasingly wider strata of the society until the ethnic

culture is shared by all members of the *ethnie*. As Smith argued (1991), once the ethnic culture encompasses all elements of the society, the national identity is formed; once formed, it proves durable and resistant to change. In line of Smith's argument, it is now possible to better understand why even the members of the regime never entirely surrendered to the communist ideology. Poland's history (see Chapter I) was a turbulent one; exposure to external factors through military conflicts sharpened the Polish national identity. The period of partitions (1795-1918) exposed Poles to foreign domination, language and religion. Ironically, a nation that lost its state became intensely aware of its identity and, in effect, developed a tendency to resist foreign domination or influences. That explains why the regime was widely unpopular and rejected from the very beginning. These circumstances also shed additional light on the motives behind the regime's adamant endorsement of nationalism while it was still consolidating its power. Most importantly it illuminates the dual identity developed by the members of the regime. Polish national identity proved too strong to succumb to the internationalist appeals of the communist ideology, even among those who were charged with implementing the communist project in Poland. The intensity and strength of Polish national identity proved an obstacle for the regime, which could never fully endorse the communist doctrine. Such underlying tensions produced the "Polish road to socialism" where nationalism played a dominant role in the regime narrative. The period between 1948 and 1956, when the regime officially abandoned the nationalist narrative and imposed an ideological one (and was thus incompatible with Polish nationalism), ended in a nation-wide outcry bordering on rebellion (Machcewicz, 2009), nearly toppling the regime and bringing the threat of Soviet intervention. These troubled times and complex reactions cannot be explained by a single theory of nationalism; hence my use of synthesis. The ethno-symbolist argument emphasizes the durability of a once-established national identity, as I have demonstrated previously. It also reinforces the dual identity argument, as the Polish regime never entirely freed itself from nationalist sentiments. All the policies analyzed in this thesis (ethnic cleansing, national education, propaganda, state symbols and rituals) are frequently analysed by modernists as tools of nation building and with similar intentions these policies were launched in Poland – to construct a nation along Marxist lines. Ironically they proved to strengthen the pre-existing national identity, rather than reinvent it. Dmowski's argument that pre-existing national identity is only disseminated more broadly by the means that modernity provides, serves to reinforce my argument. The communists could never be entirely free of their national background, a fact which undermined their ideological convictions. These factors led to a struggle for Poland's own version of socialism – one infused with national

values. By 1956, the project had to be redefined as the full embrace of Marxist ideology caused a nation-wide resistance. In order to maintain power, the regime further moderated its ideological stance (as well as the use of totalitarian methods) and more openly endorsed a national narrative. Such alteration can further be explained by the undemocratic nature of the regime. While in democratic regimes, political power can be transferred to a political party offering alternative narratives and policies, in undemocratic regimes such alterations must be made by the incumbent authoritarian (or totalitarian) leaders. Hence every transformation or a change of narrative occurs after a major crisis of the system. In order to avoid being ousted from power, the undemocratic government must transform itself – be it in official narrative and policy or personal changes; both could be observed in Poland not only in 1956 alone, but in 1970 and 1980 as well, when regime was in crisis.

Research Questions

1. To what extent did the Polish communist party seek accommodation with Polish nationalism?

This project demonstrated that attempts to integrate nationalism within the communist regime occurred in all areas of regime's activity. During the period of consolidation of power, the communists directly engaged with an openly nationalist discourse. This approach culminated in the policies of ethnic cleansing instigated by the regime that effectively transformed the ethnic structure of post-war Poland. However, all other aspects covered by this project demonstrate nationalist undertones. New national symbols reflected past traditions; education aimed to indoctrinate along the lines of socialist internationalism but was never entirely devoid of national values and patriotic appeals.

The regime adopted traces of Soviet totalitarianism in the form of propaganda; however, this propaganda often inspired national pride and, in many instances, especially concerning the Germans, aimed to sharpen the ethnic differentiation. The regime also engaged in a struggle with the Catholic Church, one of the central elements of Polish nationalism. The regime implemented policies to subjugate the Church as an institution, achieved to a large extent between 1950 and 1956, yet the Catholic tradition and practices, even among communist party members, remained outside the regime's control and continued to flourish. Additionally, when in crisis, the regime turned again to the Church to benefit from its legitimacy. The socialist and totalitarian nature of the regime notwithstanding, nationalism was always present to some extent in the regime narrative.

2. In what ways did that accommodation produce the dual identity in the Polish communist party?

The issue of dual identity is analysed predominantly in Chapter II. The strength of Polish national identity and close knowledge of the Soviet model produced a need for moderation within the Polish regime. In many cases, the Soviet conquest of Poland produced tensions between Poles and the USSR, causing the former to reject certain Soviet solutions – namely collectivisation – or more moderate application of some methods like the terror. Poland followed a model of strict state control over the industry, but failed to eradicate private

enterprises or agricultural production. In many cases, the regime attempted to minimise the impacts of Soviet political interventions or secretly defied orders from Moscow, displaying a strong desire to emancipate itself from Soviet control.

3. In what ways did the Polish communist party use their dual identity to shape post-war Poland?

This research question is addressed by chapters III through VIII, referring to specific policies launched by the regime. The dual identity manifested itself in inconsistency of the Polish approach with the Soviet model. Although the Stalinist regime was established in Poland by 1948, mainly due to pressures from the USSR itself, the regime effectively could not establish a coherent narrative, combining elements of nationalism and ideology. These policies and the lack of a coherent narrative resulted in negative responses in the society. Policies aiming to re-shape Polish society effectively served to strengthen the national identity and form of Polish nationalism that developed through history.

4. How did the dual identity impact relations with the USSR and Poles?

The regime's struggle to balance nationalism and ideology had serious consequences. On one side, it led to popular rejection of the regime by the society, although periods of open endorsement of nationalism by Gomułka provided the regime (and Gomułka himself) some degree of the legitimacy and popularity it sought. Despite that, the regime and its values had been largely opposed by society, which resulted in a public/private dichotomy. In public, many complied with the regime's political and ideological line, while in private people continued to follow Polish traditions and mocked the regime, its policies and values. The uneasy balance and moderated Polish approach caused the USSR and its leaders to be

suspicious of the Polish regime's ideological purity and devotion to the Marxist cause. As Taras (1992) argues, for the Soviets, the Polish regime became synonymous with aberration of ideology. The dual identity, and policies influenced by it, ensured that Polish communists received critique both from the Polish society – for being overly ideological – and the USSR – for being overly nationalist and deviating from the ideological model. It seems that the Polish regime tried to satisfy both Poles and Soviets by their approach to ideology and nationalism; effectively, they failed to satisfy either and ultimately lacked legitimacy in the eyes of Poles, who questioned their national affiliation, as well as the Soviets, who questioned their ideological convictions.

5. How did that dual identity impact the communist project in Poland?

The communist project was undermined by nationalism from within since the very beginning of the communist experiment in Poland. Effectively, by 1956 the ideological project failed and the regime nearly collapsed. With rehabilitation of Gomułka, the regime re-adopted an openly nationalist narrative. Ideological solutions were sidelined and the regime lost its quasi-totalitarian position. The most compelling evidence of the failure of the communist project in Poland in 1956 was Soviet complacency. Khrushchev effectively allowed the Polish regime to minimize the role of communist ideology in favor of nationalism, for as long as Poland still officially endorsed the alliance with the Soviet Union and its dominant role in the region.

Appendices

Appendix A:

Information letter



INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Polish national identity and communist party policies between 1945 and 1956

Dear Participant,

We would like to invite you to participate in research investigating how modern Polish national identity has been influenced by communist party policies initiated between 1945 and 1956. It will include span of various policies, from education to resettlement and treatment of ethnic minorities in order to assess the degree it influenced the Poles and their self-perception.

What does participation involve?

You will be presented with a set of questions mainly concerning your experience with national curriculum in early education and the way national celebrations intended to inspire patriotic feelings. These questions serve only to guide my understanding and represent my main interests in the field, however your story and personal experiences will receive most of my attention. During the interview I will be using a digital voice recorder in order to store your recollections, that later will be transcribed, translated and used in my research project. I intend to conduct group or individual interviews, depending on your preferences. I understand the period in question might bring traumatic or uncomfortable memories, in case that occurs you can stop the interview and ask for assistance or counselling, which should be subsequently provided. We will meet at a location convenient to you and depending on the distance, I will reimburse your travel costs, should that be the case. The interview should take at most 1 hour, although I will not constrain or interrupt your talk if the time allocated is exceeded.

Voluntary participation and right to withdraw

Participation in this research project is voluntary and have the right to withdraw from the project at any stage during the interview.

What will happen to the information collected and is privacy and confidentiality assured?

Your name will not be recorded and your identity will not be disclosed at any time unless you give your expressed and written approval to disclose your identity. All data collected will be, if necessary, anonymous and any information that inadvertently identifies you will be removed from the data collected by the researchers. The data will be stored for a minimum period of 5 years as required by university protocols. Anonymous summary data will be available for secondary research. The findings of the research will be used to assess the

effectiveness of communist party policies in creating the modern Polish national identity and will be used for professional publications.

Has the research been approved?

The research has not yet been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Edith Cowan University.

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study with a member of the research team, please contact

Jan Kozdra on +61 4 864 340 (in Australia); + 48 512 973 655 (in Poland) or
jkozdra@our.ecu.edu.au

If you have any concerns about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Research Ethics Officer
Edith Cowan University
Phone: (+61 8) 6304 2170
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

This information letter is for you to keep.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix B

Consent form:



Consent for Participation in Interview Research

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Jan Kozdra from Edith Cowan University. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about the impact of communist party policies between 1945 and 1956 in creating modern Polish national identity. I will be one of people being interviewed for this research.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
2. I understand that if I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
3. Participation involves being interviewed by researchers from Century University. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview and the conversation will be taped. If I don't want to be taped, I will not be able to participate in the study.
4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
5. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Edith Cowan University. For research problems or questions regarding subjects, the Human Research Ethics Committee may be contacted through

Research Ethics Officer
Edith Cowan University
Phone: (+61 8) 6304 2170
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

6. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
7. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

My Signature

Date

My Printed Name

Signature of the Researcher

For further information, please contact:

Jan Ryszard Kozdra

Phone: + 48 512 973 655 (in Poland); +61 4 864 340 (in Australia)

E-mail: jkozdra@our.ecu.edu.au

Appendix C:

Interview guideline:

1. What does it mean to be Polish, to you?
2. Could you identify any criteria of Polishness?
3. What, do you think, makes Poles different from other European nations?
4. What did you make of the national celebrations, like 1st of May, 9th of May or the 22nd of July, as a child?
5. What kind of feelings were triggered by these celebrations?
6. How different was the attitude towards the state in your family, to the one you experienced at school?
7. To what extent school try to define Polishness?
8. How did your school make you feel about the country you lived in?
9. To what extent did the school try to instil a sense of pride about being Polish?
10. What was the version of history thought? Were there any national heroes? Historic foes? What was most emphasized?
11. To what extent did sport and sport events play a part in creating a feeling of belonging/inclusion?
12. To what extent were patriotic (propaganda) posters visible in everyday life and what effect did these have on your self-perception?
13. Was loyalty to the state stressed at school and how did that make you feel?
14. Could you describe any feelings that you felt towards your country in your childhood?

Appendix D:

List of abbreviations:

AAN – Archiwum Akt Nowych – Archive of New Files

AP/O/Sz/Wr – Archiwum Państwowe/w Olsztynie/w Szczecinie/we Wrocławiu – State Archive/in Olsztyn/in Szczecin/in Wrocław

BS – Biblioteka Sejmowa – Library of the Sejm

CAW – Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe – Central Military Archive

DVL – Deutsche Volksliste – German National Lists

Dz.U. – Dziennik Ustaw - Legislative Register

GRU - Главное разведывательное управление, *Glavnoye razvedyvatel'noye upravleniye* – Central Intelligence Agency

GULag (ГУЛАГ) – Главное управление исправительно-трудовых лагерей и колоний or Главное управление лагерей и мест заключения (*Glavnoye Upravleniye istravitel'no-trudovych lagyeriey i klonyi or Glavnoye Upravleniye lagyeriey i myest zaklutscheniya*) – Central Administration of correctional-labour camps and colonies or Central Administration of Camps and places of imprisonment

GUS – Główny Urząd Statystyczny – Central Bureau of Statistics

KC – Komitet Centralny – Central Committee

KOSSz – Kuratorium Okręgu Szkolnego Szczecińskiego – Office of the Education Superintendent for Szczecin School District

KRN – Krajowa Rada Narodowa – National Council of the Homeland

LWP – Ludowe Wojsko Polskie – Polish People's Army

MAP – Ministerstwo Administracji Publicznej – Ministry of Public Administration

MBP – Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego – Ministry of Public Security

MO – Milicja Obywatelska – Citizen Militia

MOśw – Ministerstwo Oświaty – Ministry of Education

MZO – Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych – Ministry of Recovered Territories

M. P. – Monitor Polski – Polish Monitor – Administrative register for the Council of Ministers

NKVD – Народный комиссариат внутренних дел, *Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del* – People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs

PKF – Polska Kronika Filmowa - Polish Film Chronicle (Newsreel)

PKWN – Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego – Polish Committee of National Liberation

PPR – Polska Partia Robotnicza – Polish Workers' Party

PZPR – Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza – Polish United Workers' Party

Stasi – Ministerium für Staatssicherheit – Ministry of State Security

UB – Urząd Bezpieczeństwa – Security Office

UW/O/S/Wr – Urząd Wojewódzki/Olsztyński/Szczeciński/Wrocławski – Voivodeship Office of/Olsztyn/Szczecin/Wrocław

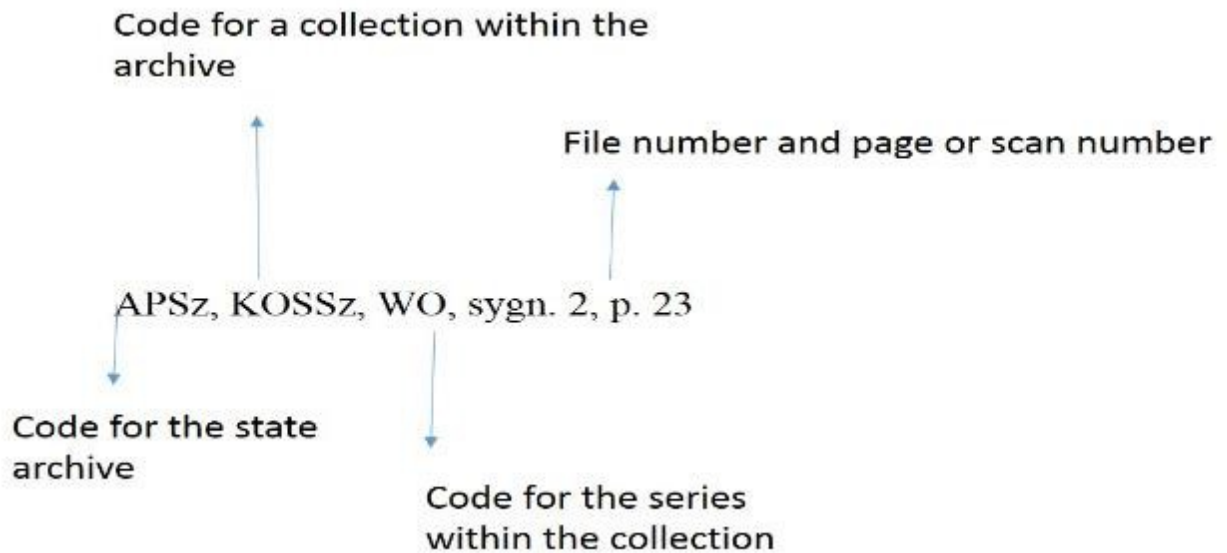
TRJN – Tymczasowy Rząd Jedności Narodowej – Provisional Government of National Unity

WiN – Wolność i Niezawisłość – Liberty and Independence

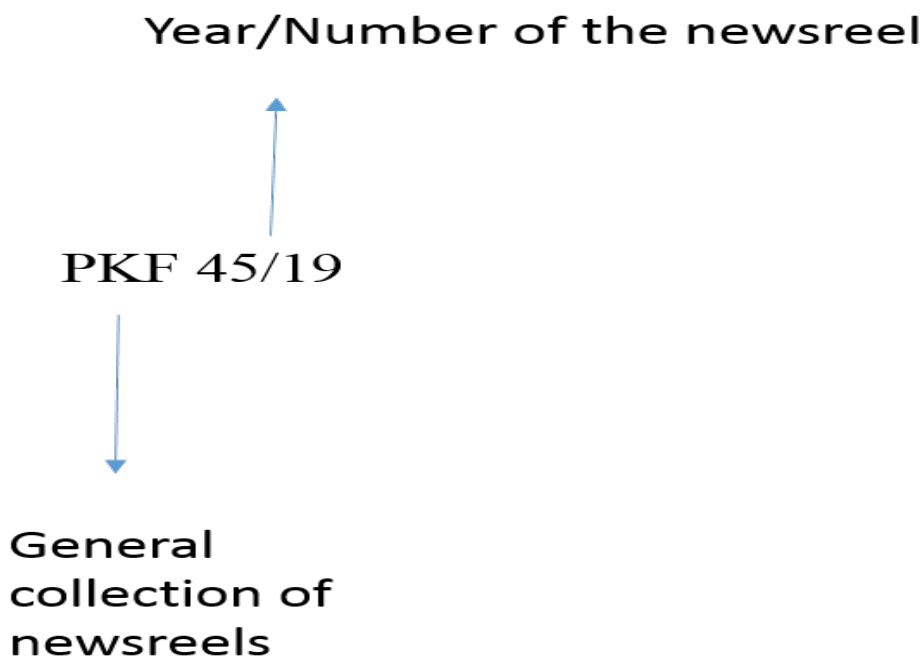
Złp – Złoty Polski – Polish Zloty (national currency)

Appednix E:

Internal reference concerning archival sources:



PKF:



Appendix F:

Relating to Chapter II

Backgrounds:

Celina Budzyńska (1907-1993) - In 1927 left for Moscow, where she graduated from Communist University of National Minorities of the West, arrested and sentenced for 8 years in labour camp in 1937. Released and allowed to return to Poland in 1945. Member of Parliament between 1952 and 1956.

Leon Chajn (1910-1983) – communist activist and lawyer, undersecretary in Ministry of Justice between 1944 and 1949, vice-chairman of the Supreme Audit Office, 1949-1952, then undersecretary in Ministry of Labour and Social Care until 1957.

Stefan Staszewski/Szuster (1906-1989) – member of the Voivodeship Committee of Polish Workers' Party in Katowice (1945-1947) between 1948 and 1949 member of the Central Committee, I Secretary of Warsaw Committee between 1955 and 1957. Arrested in 1938 and sentenced for 15 years in labour camp of Kolyma, from where he was released in 1945 and returned to Poland (BIP/IPN).

Table F1: Ministry of Public Security: Structure (as given by Józef Światło, HIA, DSM, sygn. 73, scans 427-429)

| | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Jakub Berman (Politburo member responsible for the apparatus of repression) | | | |
| Minister Stanisław Radkiewicz | | Executive Supervisor Soviet General Lalin | |
| Deputy Ministers: | | | |
| Romkowski, Mietkowski, Swietlik, Ptasiński | | | |
| Department nr. | Purpose/task | Polish director | Soviet director |
| I | Counterintelligence | Colonel Antosiewicz | Colonel Grayevsky |
| II | Archives. Censorship of foreign correspondence, technical assistance for other departments | - | Colonel Taborysky (Belorussian) |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| III | Combatting all underground (guerrilla) organisations | Leon Andrzejewski | Colonel Shaburin |
| IV | Combatting espionage and sabotage in light industry, agriculture and banking | - | Colonel Goltschevsky (had Polish background) |
| V | Combatting all foreign (except Soviet) influences in the party | Julia Brystygier | - |
| VI | Organisation, supervision and maintenance of labour camps | - | Colonel Dulyash |
| VII | Intelligence in the West | Colonel Sienkiewicz (former Soviet officer) | - |
| VIII | Supervision on transport and shipping (land, air and maritime) | - | Colonel Zabavsky (Belorussian) |
| IX | Protection of the heavy industry | Podpolkownik Górecki | - |
| X | “counterintelligence within the party”, had its own investigation department | Colonel Anatol Fejgin | - |
| XI | Combatting the Church | Colonel Więckowski | - |
| Investigation | Investigations in all cases, which did not concern party members | Colonel Józef Różański | - |
| Human Resources | Managing and selecting cadres; “department composed primarily of Russians and Belorussians” | | Colonel Nikolay Orehva |
| Government Protection | Providing security for members of the government | - | Colonel Grzybovsky |

| | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | Podpolkovnik Lahovsky – Head of Bierut’s detail |
| General | Providing weapons for functionaries, boarder passes | - | Colonel Dovkan |
| Communications | Surveillance of telephone calls, jamming foreign broadcasts | - | Colonel Sushek |
| Training | Training and preparation | Colonel Józef Kratko | - |
| Financial | Managing operational funds | - | Colonel Kiselev |
| Military Office | Mobilisation plans. Arresting of oppositionists | Colonel Garbowski | - |

Appendix G:

Relating to Chapter IV

Table G1: Population transfers 1944-199

| Ethnic group | Estimated number | Year of expulsion | Origin | Destination |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Germans | 593 400 (Nitschke, 2000, p. 162) | 1945 | Silesia, Western Pomerania, Pomerania, Masuria | Soviet Occupation Zone in Germany; British Occupation Zone in Germany |
| | 1 649 088 (Nitschke, 2000, p. 190) | 1946 | “ | “ |
| | 538 526 (AAN, ZC PUR, sygn. I/3, p. 4) | 1947 | “ | “ |
| | 42 740 (AAN, ZC PUR, sygn. I/3, p. 4) | 1948 | “ | “ |
| | 61 449 (GUS, Rocznik Statystyczny, 1950, p. 22) | 1949 | | |
| Ukrainians and Lemkos | 482 662 (Mironowicz, 2000, p. 59) | Between 1944 and 1946 | Poland – Lublin and Rzeszow and Lesser Poland | Ukrainian SSR “ “ |
| | 140 000 (Mironowicz, 2000, p. 62) | 1947-1948 | | Recovered Territories in Poland |
| Belarusians | 38 000 (Mironowicz, 2000, p. 200) | Between 1944 and 1946 | Poland – North Eastern provinces | Belarussian SSR |
| Lithuanians | 12 000 (Sidor, 2004, p. 137) | 1941 | Poland – North Eastern provinces | German occupied Lithuania |
| | 18 (Tarka, 2013, p. 16-17) | 1944-1945 | | Lithuanian SSR |
| Poles (GUS, Rocznik Statystyczny, 1950, p. 22) | 117 212 | 1944 | RFSSR, Lithuanian, Belorussian and Ukrainian SSRs | Poland |
| | 723 488 | 1945 | | |
| | 644 347 | 1946 | | |
| | 10 801 | 1947 | | |
| | 7 325 | 1948 | | |
| | 3 420 | 1949 | | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Poles (GUS, Rocznik Statystyczny, 1950, p. 22) | 1 482 042 | Between 1945 and 1949 | Western and Southern Europe | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--|

Appendix H:

Relating to Chapter IV

1. Polish national anthem remained unchanged throughout the period of communism

Text:

Poland has not yet perished,
 So long as we still live.
 What the alien force has taken from us,
 We shall retrieve with a sabre.
 March, march, Dąbrowski,
 From the Italian land to Poland.
 Under your command
 We shall re-join the nation.
 We'll cross the Vistula and the Warta,
 We shall be Polish.
 Bonaparte has given us the example
 Of how we should prevail.
 March, march...
 Like Czarniecki to Poznań
 After the Swedish occupation,
 To save our homeland,
 We shall return across the sea.
 March, march...
 A father, in tears,
 Says to his Basia
 Listen, our boys are said
 To be beating the tarabans.
 March, march...

2. "Rota" is a poem written by Maria Konopnicka in early 20th century as a response to Kulturkampf

Text:

We won't let our speech be buried.
We are the Polish nation, the Polish people,
From the royal line of Piast.
We won't let the enemy oppress us.

So help us God!
So help us God!

To the last blood drop in our veins
We will defend our Spirit
Till into dust and ash shall fall,
The Teutonic Order's windstorm.
Every doorsill shall be a fortress.

So help us God!
So help us God!

The German won't spit in our face,
Nor Germanise our children,
Our host will arise in arms,
Spirit will lead the way.
We will go when the golden horn sounds.

Fig. 1. National coat of arms from 1919:



Fig. 2. National flag from 1919:



Fig. 3. Coat of arms from 1927:



Figure 4 – Eagle on official state documents issued in 1945 (BS/KRN6)



Figure 5. Coat of arms from 1955



Appendix J:

Relating to Chapter VI

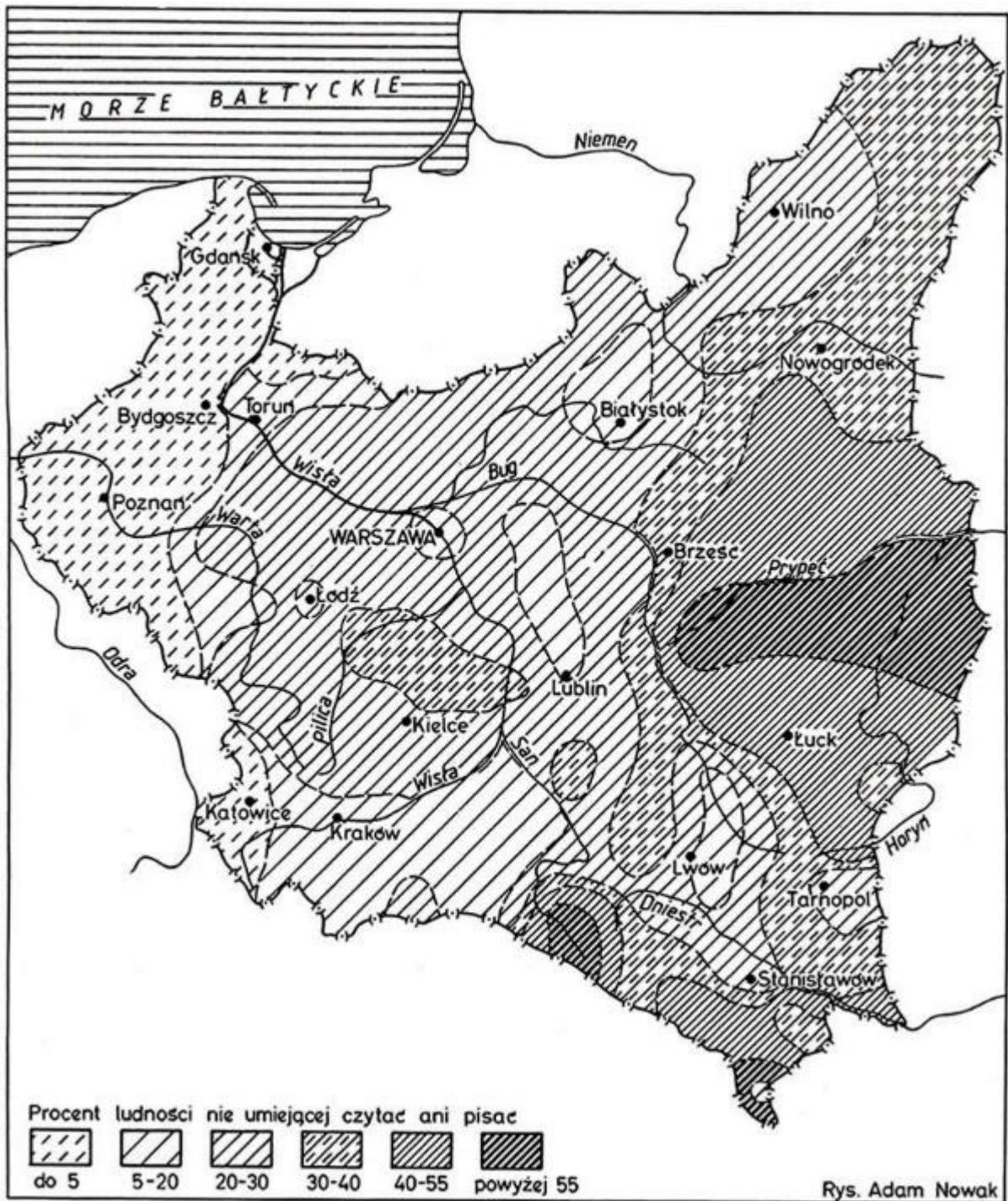


Figure 1 - Illiteracy rates in Poland (1931)

Appendix K:

Relating to Chapter VII



Figure 1 – Polish-Soviet friendship



Figure 2 – Truman and Eisenhower

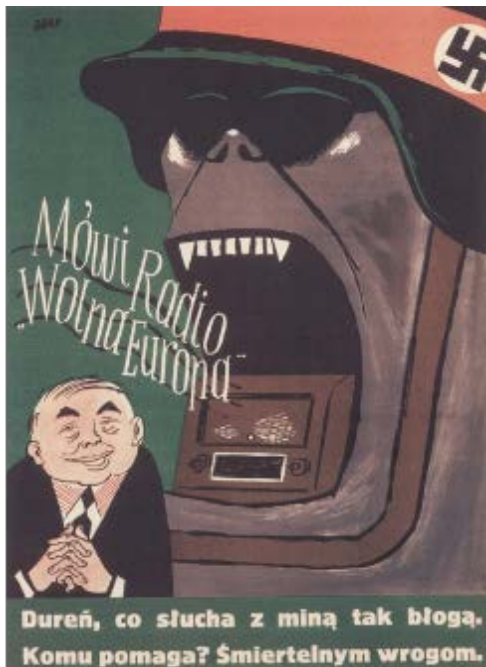


Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7 – Home Army and People's Army

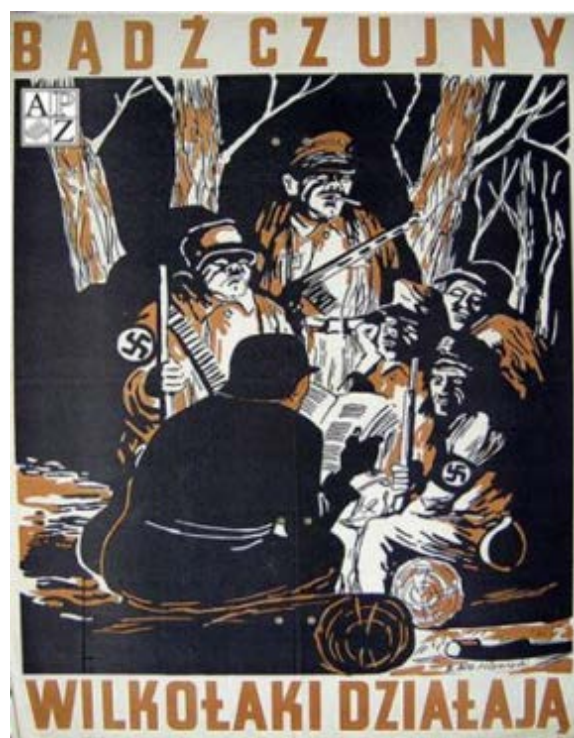


Figure 8 – Be cautious. Wolves are acting



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12

Fig. 13 – Exhibition of the Recovered Territories



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