

Article 27

Dr Andrzej Chmielarz, POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVITY IN OCCUPIED POLAND

Soon after the fighting in 1939 had stopped, Poland's pre-war political parties and movements set about rebuilding their organisational structures. The occupant's ensuing reign of terror as well as the emigration of some of the leaders resulted in considerable changes in party top management.

The occupation forced political parties to radically change their method of action. In order to avoid the occupant's repressions, it became essential to maintain anonymity in all political activities. Public debate was out of the question, so discussions concerning political programmes were generally conducted via the underground press. It is important to note that key decisions regarding staff and policies were now made by a very small group of party leaders.

The actions of political parties and groups were accompanied by a phenomenon which Gen Stefan Rowecki aptly described as a 'race of programmes'.

Everyone has started writing and formulating ideological programmes and also indicating as to what in their convictions would the rebuilding of an ideal Poland after throwing off the occupation.

This activity was utilised by the founders of the Polish Underground State, who steered discussions towards social and political questions concerning a future, reborn Poland as well as the creation of an administrative structure for the present Underground State. Thus the political parties clandestinely helped in its administration – in the Government Delegation for Poland – and also represented it in the Political Consultative Committee as well as subsequently the Home Political Representation and Council of National Unity.

The Socialist Movement

At the end of September 1939 the Polish Socialist Party was officially dissolved. However, in the second half of October 1939 the Town and Country Working Masses Movement was formed, which was also called the Polish Socialist Party – Freedom, Equality, Independence (PPS-WRN). This organisation excluded opposition activists as well as known pro-communist sympathisers. The PPS-WRN used the cryptonym *Koło* (Circle). Its leading politicians included Kazimierz Pużak, Tomasz Arciszewski, Zygmunt Zaremba and Józef Dzięgielewski. It had its own military wing, the WRN People's Guard, which at the turn of 1940 was subordinated to the Union of Armed Struggle (ZWZ). At first the WRN supported the Polish Government-in-Exile and its representative bodies within occupied Poland, but it objected to the Sikorski-Mayski Agreement of July 1941 and for one and a half years withdrew its representatives from the Political Consultative Committee and Government Delegation.

The Socialist left initially operated in several independent underground groups, among others those of: Stanisław Dubois, chiefly including members of OM TUR (Workers' University Society Youth Organisation) and the Red Scouts (later Freedom Barricade – *Barykada Wolność*), Norbert Barlicki, Adam Próchnik and Henryk Wachowicz's Łódź group as well as a Guard group above all comprising former activists from Leszek Raabe's Union of Independent Socialist Youths.

In September 1941 most of the above mentioned groups united to form a party called Polish Socialists (PS). Its leading members included: Adam Próchnik, Stanisław Chudoba, Henryk Wachowicz and Wincenty Markowski. The party had its own military organisation, the PPS Fighting Militia Formation headed by Leszek Raabe.

In April 1943, after Raabe and Markowski's groups left to join the PPS-WRN, the party changed its name Polish Socialist Workers' Party (RPPS). Its military wing, the RPPS People's Militia subsequently merged with the Defenders of Poland Command to form the Polish People's Army.

In the autumn of 1943 a group of RPPS activists headed by Edward Osóbka-Morawski started collaborating with the Polish Workers Party (PPR) and in 1944 joined the Homeland National Council (KRN). The rest of RPPS took part in creating the Chief Committee of the People's United Democratic and Socialist Parties (September 1943) and next, in February 1944, the Centralisation of Democratic, Socialist and Syndicalist Parties, which in the summer of 1944 opted for cooperation with the communists.

The People's Movement

The People's Movement (cryptonyms: *Trójkąt* – Triangle, or *Roch*) became active in the first months of the occupation by also taking into its ranks activists from the Rural Youth Union RP as well as from the *Siew* Young Country Central Union. The People's Party (SL) was the largest and at times the most influential political group in the Polish underground.

SL *Roch* was headed by the People's Party Central Administration (CKRL), which was called into being by Maciej Rataj in February 1940. The Administration included many well-known politicians, such as Józef Niecko, Stanisław Mierzwa, Jan Piekalkiewicz, Józef Grudziński, Stanisław Osiecki, and Stefan Korboński. The SL programme included postulates for post-war social reform (particularly with regard to agriculture) and a flexible attitude towards the USSR (accepting the necessity to improve relations). The SL created its own military wing, the Peasant Battalions (BCh), which as a result of the general unification of Polish resistance became to a large extent subordinate to the AK.

Pre-war activists of the Association of the People's Intelligentsia and Friends of the Countryside did not join SL *Roch*. In 1941 they created their own political organisation called People's Labour Union Orka, but they did maintain political ties with SL *Roch* and People's Party Central Administration.

Peasant activists from the pre-war *Siew* Young Countryside Central Union also acted independently. In October 1939 they formed the Revolutionary Union of Freedom, which soon changed its name to the *Racławice* Peasants' Freedom Organisation (ChOW). Initially, this group was associated with Ryszard Świętochowski's Independence Organisation Central Committee (CKON). However, in the spring of 1940 some of its members joined SL 'Roch'.

The Nationalist Camp

The nationalist camp comprised the National Party (SN) and several other organisations, including the National Confederation, the *Szaniec* (Rampart) National Radical Camp and Fatherland. The National Party began its underground activities in mid October 1939 under the cryptonym *Kwadrat* (Square). It was controlled by the Chief Administration, headed by Mieczysław Trajdos, and after his arrest in 1941, successively by Stefan Sacha, Władysław Jaworski, Stanisław Jasiukowicz and Aleksander Zwierzyński. As an active member of the PKP and Government Delegation the National Party propagated slogans for Polish territorial enlargement (from the Oder to the Dnieper).

The National Party had its own military wing: the National Military Organisation, which in 1942 joined the AK. Some members, however, did not agree with this move and instead, in the autumn of 1942, formed their own group, the *Szaniec* (Rampart) National Armed Forces.

The *Szaniec* National Radical Camp originated from the pre-war ABC National Radical Camp. It was controlled by the secret so-called 'Polish Organisation' (OP), formed in October 1939. The OP remained in political opposition to both the Government Delegation and the ZWZ-AK Supreme Command, forming

instead so-called external organisations, such as *Załoga* (Crew), which was active among workers, and the Union of People's Activists. Its military wing the Lizard Union (*Związek Jaszczurczy*), merged with the National Armed Forces (NSZ) in 1942.

In 1939 some of the SN activists, under the leadership of Karol Stojanowski, formed the National Radical Military Organisation. In mid 1940, together with members of the *Falanga* National Radical Camp, they formed the Confederation of the Nation, whose authority encompassed, among others, the Secret Polish Army, Union of Armed Action, *Pobudka* (Reveille) and the National Defence Guard. In 1941 the military wings of these political organisations became officially known as Confederated Military Detachments, and later as the Armed Confederation. That same year some of the groups left the Confederation and joined the ZWZ. The remainder changed its name back to Confederation of the Nation (KN) and formed a new military organisation called Cadre strike Battalions. Command of the KN was taken up by Bolesław Piasecki, the leader of the pre-war *Falanga*.

Ojczyzna (Fatherland) was founded in Poznań in October 1939 by Fr. Józef Prądzyński, Witold Grott and Jan Jacek Nikisch. After a number of arrests in the years 1940-1942, the group's leadership moved to Warsaw, where it set up the secret University of Western Lands. In April the group joined the National Organisations Agreement, which from July 1944 had a representative in the Council of National Unity.

Christian Democrat and Catholic movements

The Workers' Party (SP), cryptonym *Romb* (Rhombus), was initially the co-founder of the Independence Organisations Central Committee and only later, in June 1940, joined the Council of National Unity. That year the SP took in members of the Workers-Left National Party headed by Feliks Wida-Wirski, but at the start of 1943 these left to form their own National Rising Party (Stronnictwo Zrywu Narodowego).

In February 1943 the Union, which had been founded at the start of 1940, joined the Workers' Party on an autonomous basis. In the spring of 1944 the SP merged with the Front for the Rebirth of Poland, a Catholic organisation founded in Warsaw in the second half of 1941. Apart from members of the clergy, it included a group of lay activists headed by Witold Bieńkowski and the writer Zofia Kossak-Szczucka. Its leading politicians included Władysław Tempka, Franciszek Kwiecieński, Antoni Antczak, Józef Chaciński and Józef Kwasiborski.

The Christian Democrat and Catholic movement also included the conspiratorial group *Znak* (Sign), which was the political wing of the Secret Polish Army. In 1942 *Znak* reformed to become Union for National Rebirth, which in March 1944 declared its merger with the Workers' Party.

The Democratic Camp

The Democratic Party (SD), formed a few months before the outbreak of war, started its underground activity towards the end of 1939 and took on the cryptonym *Prostokąt* (Rectangle). Those of its members who held a negative stance towards the government first formed the Democratic Organisation within the SD and next a separate political entity called the Polish Democracy Party. In July 1944 this new party merged with Independent Poland and the Union for the Reconstruction of the Polish Republic to form the Democratic Union.

The Polish Democratic Party (SPD) also known as the Polish Democrats' Party was formed in July 1943, when it broke away from the SD. In February 1944 it participated in the Centralisation of Polish Democratic, Socialist and Syndicalist Parties, whereas in September that year it became a member of the Insurgent Democratic Council. Its youth organisation joined the KRN Youth Circle.

The Syndicalists

The Union of Polish Syndicalists (ZSP) came into being in April 1941 as a consequence of a process of transformations within the Freedom and People Union that had begun in October 1939. The ZSP's chief members included people associated with the Trades Unions' Union, the Stefan Żeromski Institute of Education and Culture, the Polish Western Union and, on the left, the Polish Democratic Youth Union. In September 1942 the ZSP helped create the Żegota Council to Aid Jews. In November that year it co-founded the Polish Left Patriotic Front, whereas in 1944 it co-founded the Centralisation of Democratic, Socialist and Syndicalist Parties.

Pro-Piłsudski Organisations

The chief groups in this political camp were the Independence Organisations Convention (KON) and the Camp of Fighting Poland (OPW). KON was founded by Zygmunt Hempel in Warsaw in 1942. It mainly included state officials as well as members of the Piłsudski's Legionists' Union, Polish Military Organisation (POW) and Riflemen's Union. The Convention's chief newspaper was called *Mysł Państwowa* (State Thought),

The OPW was a political and military organisation founded in 1942 by former activists and officers of the *Sanacja* (Sanation) regime, including Julian Piasecki, Bazyli Rogowski and Jan Zientarski. It collaborated closely with and in August 1942 incorporated the Poland Military Organisation, which had been formed in October 1939 by members of the POW Union.

In December 1944 KON and OPW merged to form the Independence Organisations Union.

The Communist Movement

Up until June 1941 the communists were basically inactive. Comintern guidelines presented the Polish September Campaign of 1939 as an unjust and imperialistic war, which in effect prohibited any actions to be undertaken against the Germans. At the start of 1942, communists specially brought over from the USSR set up Polish Workers' Party (PPR) and appointed Marcelli Nowotko as its general secretary. Whilst negating the actions of the Polish Government-in-Exile and unequivocally supporting the Soviet Union, the PPR tried to gain popular support by initially avoiding radical slogans and formulating a very general political programme.

The PPR's military wing was the People's Guard (GL), which in 1944 became the People's Army (AL). In January 1944 the party formed the Homeland National Council (KRN), which aspired to become Poland's government after the war though it had the support of only a small group of leftwing socialists and peasant activists.

Apart from the above mentioned major organisations, the Polish underground movement also included dozens of usually very small political groups with their own programmes and ambitions to act independently after the war.

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